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Altar Barrier from Dranda Church: New Facts

Ekaterina Yu. Endoltseva*
Dorotheos Dbar (archimandrite)**

Abstract

The present article deals with a decoration of the altar barrier from the medieval church of Dranda village (Abkhazia), which has not retained its original form. Two slabs with figurative compositions have been published by Countess P. S. Uvarova at the end of the 19th century; they have been lost since then. Modern researchers know them only from the photo prints made by Uvarova. Some fragments from Dranda church are preserved in the collection of the Abkhazian State Museum in Sukhum. A new fragment (not known before) with a representation of Jonas prophet devoured by the sea monster has been discovered in the collection of the Archaeological Museum of Saint Metropolis of Abkhazia (New Athos). There are four further fragments of the architectural decoration of Dranda church, their dating being disputed by researchers. The authors of the article propose the X century for all the fragments of the shattered altar barrier.

Keywords: architectural decoration, Abkhazia, altar barrier, outer facing, Christian iconography, sea monster, Prophet Jonas.

Fragments of the architectural decoration and of the altar barrier from Dranda church (Republic of Abkhazia) have been known since the 1860s, being published and dated. In spite of some disputes among the scholars, most of them agree upon Paleo Christian or medieval times; another problem being discussed as well: if all the fragments of the altar barrier have been created simultaneously or they belong to different periods of the decoration

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of the church. The present research focuses on some fragments of the architectural decoration from Dranda church, not known before, preserved in the funds of the Archaeological Museum of the Holy Metropole of Abkhazia (New Athos). Their analysis helps researchers to date and reconstruct the altar barrier from Dranda church.

Being a Swiss traveler, ethnographer and archeologist, F. Dubois de Montpéroux was the first to see the altar barrier in Dranda church. Having traveled to Crimea and Caucasus, the scholar published a 6-volume work titled “Voyage autour du Caucase, chez les Tcherkesses et les Abkhases, en Colchide, en Géorgie, en Arménie et en Crimée”¹, mentioning Dranda church in the first volume. He described the altar barrier in detail and its losses². A well-known archeologist and traveler S.

Sablin provided another description of the barrier³. Later, Countess P. S. Uvarova published photo types of two slabs of the altar barrier that have been lost since⁴, being the first to date it. One more fragment of the structure is published by L. Khroushkova⁵, who proposes two hypotheses for dating diverse fragments of the barrier⁶, these versions being contestable. A. Yu. Vinogradov analyzed a style of the compositions of two slabs, proposing his own conjecture⁷. Besides, a previous year a new study⁸ on the medieval

¹ Dubois de Montpéroux F., *Voyage autour du Caucase, chez les Tcherkesses et les Abkhases, en Colchide, en Géorgie, en Arménie et en Crimée*, Vol. I / F. Dubois de Montpéroux, Paris, Libr. de Gide, 1839.

² *Ibidem*, p. 318.

³ Sablin S., “Drevniy genuezskiy kham v ukrepleni Drandy [Ancient Genoese church in Dranda fortress]”, *Kavkaz*, 1846, № 8, p. 32.

⁴ Uvarova P.S., “Khristianskie pamyatniki [Christian monuments]”, *Materialy po arkheologii Kavkaza* [Materials on the Archeology of Caucasus], 1894, Vol. 4, p. 30. Tav. XII.

⁵ Khroushkova L.G., *Rannekhristianskie pamyatniki Vostochnogo Prichernomorya (IV–VII)* [Early Christian monuments of the Eastern Coast of the Black Sea of the IV–VII Centuries], Moscow, Nauka Publ., 2002, p. 270–273, Tav. LXIII, 1, Tav. LXII, 1.

⁶ Khroushkova L. G., *Skulptura rannesrednevekovoy Abkhazii V–X vv.* [Sculpture of Early Medieval Abkhazia of the V–X Centuries], Tbilisi, Metsniereba Publ., 1980, p. 38. Khroushkova L. Les monuments chrétiens de la côte orientale de la mer Noire. Abkhazie IV–XIV siècles / L. Khroushkova. – Turnhout: Brepols, 2006, p. 77–78, pl. 51 a.

⁷ Vinogradov A. Y., *Dranda, Pravoslavnyaya entsiklopediya* [Orthodox encyclopedia]. Vol. 17, Moscow, Tserkovno-nauch. tsentr «Pravoslavnyaya entsiklopediya», 2007, p. 129–131.

sculpture of Georgia has been published, mentioning a fragment of the altar barrier from Dranda church (one with an image of Jonas), dating it back to the 10th century. Unfortunately, this publication gives an incorrect piece of information on the actual location of the object, its photos are very scanty and of a poor quality, no analysis of technical and stylistic characteristics being attempted.

Dubois de Montpéroux was the first to describe in a very detailed way the altar barrier in question and its state of preservation at the time of his visit. The researcher noted that it was composed of “the columns of white marble and of entablature, its pieces being united with metal ties”⁹. He saw a templon being ruined, with only an upper part of the construction (without metal elements) *in situ*¹⁰. S. Sablin noted in a description of Dranda church published in 1846 that its altar barrier was decorated with six big marble columns whose fragments could be found inside the church and near it¹¹. He went on mentioning that the window openings of Dranda church were “framed with marble and reliefs of fine work”¹². Countess Uvarova noted, after having seen the fragments of the altar barrier (its carved columns) in the churchyard mixed with construction waste¹³, while two limestone slabs were stored at the time by Mr. Vvedensky, the head of Sukhum department¹⁴, their actual location being unknown. In summer 2018, one of the authors has seen two fragments of it (a small part of an angel’s wing on one slab and a part of the decorative arcade on the other) among the pieces of architectural decoration gathered by the abbot of Dranda church in its narthex. Uvarova made photo types of the above-mentioned slabs, publishing them. One more fragment of the templon has been published by L. Khroushkova¹⁵. It is made of limestone (the researcher mistook it for marble) decorated with an arcade motif. According to her, “it lied on the line of the altar barrier, being its possible original location”¹⁶. The analysis of stylistic and technical properties of the most representative parts of the templon (slabs with figurative compositions) is thus hampered, being possible only through its photos

⁸ Dadiani, T., Khundadze T., Kvachatadze E., *Medieval Georgian sculpture*. Tbilisi: George Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation, 2017, p. 111.

⁹ Dubois de Montpéroux F., *op. cit.*, p. 318.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ Sablin S., *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ Uvarova P.S., *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ Khroushkova L.G., *Rannekhristianskie pamyatniki ...op. cit.*, p. 270-273. Tav. LXIII, 1, Tav. LXII, 1.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 272.

published by Uvarova, the exact measurements of both objects remaining unknown, unfortunately. A reconstruction of the altar barrier is likewise impeded.

The first slab represented the blessing of the enthroned Jesus amongst the angels approaching Him¹⁷ (only two on the right side being preserved). The figure of Christ was monumental; His head was shown frontally, framed with the crossed nimbus. The folds of His clothing were shaped in deep parallel fissure modeling body, naturalistic enough to determine Christ's position. The clothing and wings of two preserved angels were carved in the same technique as a vestment of Christ. Both angels were shown frontally as well, their right hands being uplifted and turned to Christ; their left hands were on their breasts.

The second slab must have represented the Deesis, the images of Christ and Virgin (in profile) being preserved only. Each figure was in a richly decorated niche topped with a triangular pediment. The niches were separated from each other by ornamental pilasters. Christ standing, the crossed nimbus surrounded His head. The folds of His tunic and himation defined His posture similar to the first slab. The right hand of Christ was uplifted like those of the angels of the first slab, His left hand being covered and bent at the chest level. The figure of the Virgin was in profile, being lower than Christ, Her covered hands turned to Christ. The pilasters supporting the pediments of the preserved parts of the arcade were richly decorated with a deepening of triangular form made of plant motifs. The capital of the principal pilaster separating the figures of Christ and the Virgin was additionally decorated with a motif of two leaves in profile turned to one another. Its base was composed of a further decorative element: a row of three arches with semicircular endings. The extreme pilaster (on Virgin's side) was covered in four ranges of rectangular arches arranged by two. Different hypotheses concerning the date of the two slabs exist. Uvarova insisted that the two slabs were carved at different moments, considering the first to be a work of the Paleo Christian artisans, the second dated by her to a later period¹⁸. Khrushkova dated the first slab as being from the 5th¹⁹ or the 6th²⁰ century, the second slab together with a fragment with an arcade motif by the 10th century²¹. Vinogradov objected that the style of both reliefs was "identical... the treatment of the folds, the head type and the nimbus of

¹⁷ Uvarova P.S., *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ Khrushkova L.G. *Rannekhristianskie pamyatniki...*, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

²⁰ Khrushkova L. G. *Skulptura rannesrednevekovoy Abkhazii...*, *op. cit.*, p. 38. Khroushkova L. *Les monuments chrétiens de la côte orientale de la mer Noire. Abkhazie IV–XIV siècles*. Turnhout, Brepols, 2006, p. 78.

²¹ Khroushkova L., *Les monuments chrétiens...* *op. cit.*, p. 78.

Christ, the ornaments with keeled endings were the same in both cases”²². He proposed to date both slabs as part of the 9th – 11th centuries²³.

Five fragments of architectural decoration from Dranda church are stored in the funds of the Ecclesiastical Archaeological Museum of the Holy Metropole of Abkhazia in New Athos monastery²⁴. The first of them (fig. 1), a limestone block of rectangular shape (a frontal part is 220×18 cm; lateral parts are 23×18, 16×15,5 cm, 16×16 cm), probably made a part of the altar barrier. Its frontal part is decorated with a stylized plant ornament. It reminds us of the motif that decorates the capital of the pilaster separating Christ from the Virgin on the second slab published by Uvarova.



Fig. 1. Fragment of carving from the funds of the Church and Archaeological Museum of Holy Metropolis of Abkhazia (New Athos). Limestone.

²²Vinogradov A. Y, *op.cit*, pp. 129–131.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 130.

²⁴ <https://anyha.org/drandatwy-anyha-dekor-afragmentkua/>. (Retrieved on the 25th of October, 2018).

The second block made of limestone as well (fig. 2) (the frontal part is 47×19; lateral parts are 21,5×15,5; 21,5×18; 15,5×21,5; 21,5×16; 21,5×14) is decorated with arches alternating with double semi-columns.



Fig. 2. Fragment of altar barrier from the funds of the Church and Archaeological Museum of Holy Metropolis of Abkhazia (New Athos). Limestone.

This fragment could make a part of the altar barrier as well. It reminds us of the block published by Khroushkova in 2002²⁵. Five further fragments of limestone blocks decorated in the same way have been stored in the funds of the Abkhazian State Museum in Sukhum before its reconstruction in 2010–2012 (inventory ## 81–96)²⁶.

The third fragment (fig. 3) represents double semi-columns with sheaf-like capitals (the frontal part is 26×24; an upper face is 25×16; lateral faces are 25×18 and 26×18).

The fragment with a similar decoration has also been stored in the Abkhazian State Museum before its reconstruction²⁷. Furthermore, three identical fragments are exposed in the narthex of Dranda church.



Fig. 3. Fragment of architectural decoration from the funds of the Church and Archaeological Museum of Holy Metropolis of Abkhazia (New Athos). Limestone.

²⁵ Khroushkova L.G. *Rannekhristianskie pamyatniki... op. cit.*, Tav. LXIII, 1.

²⁶ The authors are grateful to M. K. Inal-Ipa for a permission to see the funds in 2008.

²⁷ ## 81–96.



Fig. 4. Marble item from the funds of the Church and Archaeological Museum of Holy Metropolis of Abkhazia (New Athos). Limestone.

The forth block (fig. 4) is unlike the others by its style and material. It is the only one carved in marble (the frontal part is 27×16; the lateral faces are 27×16 and 16×17), decorated with a stylized plant ornament resembling the ornament carved on the capital of the semi-column of the lost Deesis slab.

The last fragment is the most interesting (fig. 5). It has been published for the first time in 2017 by Georgian researchers²⁸. However, its description has been done negligently (the authors erroneously identified it as a capital), its whereabouts given incorrectly as well. The fragment's measurements have not been indicated, the photos being of a very poor quality and scanty. The iconographical sources of the composition have not been analyzed²⁹.

²⁸ Dadiani T., *Medieval Georgian Sculpture... op. cit.*, p. 111.

²⁹ The provenance of the photos is not given although it is clear that they are taken from the internet site of the New Athos monastery (<https://anyha.org/drandatwy-anyha-dekor-afragmentkua/>, Retrieved on the 25th of October, 2018).

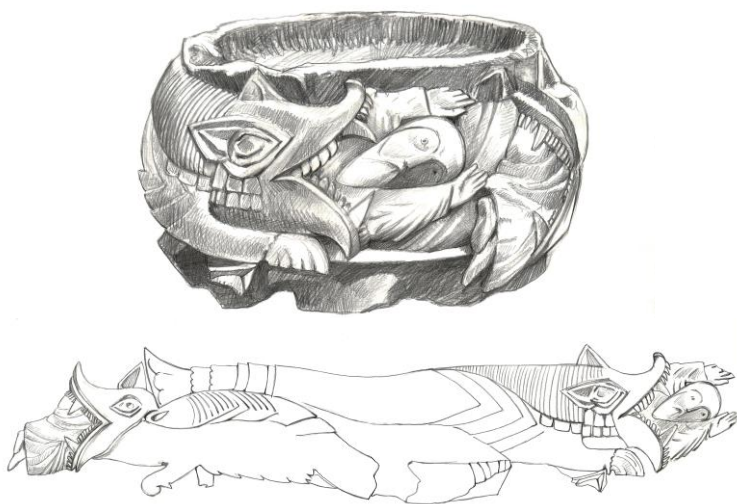


Fig. 5. Drawing of a scene with the prophet Jonah, absorbed by the whale, on a fragment from the funds of the Church and Archaeological Museum of Holy Metropolis of Abkhazia (New Athos).

An iconographically quite rare scene of “the prophet Jonas devoured by the sea monster” is represented in series (the inner diameter is 27 cm; the outer diameter is 32 cm; the height is 23 cm) in a circular form in the cross section limestone block (it may have been a column’s base). The whale is shown twice, its body encircling the block. One whale’s tail finishes by the head of the other. Once the prophet’s torso with uplifted hands is shown in the jaws of the whale, the second time his legs disappear there. The head of the prophet is shown frontally with a high forehead and bald patches, a tapering face, a pointed beard, big amygdaloidal eyes with drilled pupils, and semicircular massive eyebrows. The clothing that covers the uplifted arms is represented in parallel fissures. (The clothing of Christ and of the angels on the first slab as well as the tunic and the himation of Christ and Virgin on the second one were carved in the same manner.)

The whale is shown as a hybrid creature. It resembles a fish with its scaly body and tail (scales are shown in big diagonal step-like lines, forming an acute angle on the imaginary middle line, marking the whole length of the whale’s body). It has toothy jaws with canine teeth, pointed ears, big round eyes, stylized wings, clawed lion’s paws. Such hybrid creatures are widespread on the façades of medieval churches in Transcaucasia. For example, a similar whale is represented in the scene of the devouring of Jonas

the prophet on the southern façade of the church of the Holy Cross on Akhtamar island³⁰. The relief from the church Kvansa–Dzvari (10th century)³¹ is among the closest iconographic analogies as well. A two-headed toothy serpent is curled up on the rectangular limestone slab. There is a torso of the prophet Jonas with uplifted hands in the mouth of one of the heads; his legs are in the mouth of the other. Unlike Dranda image, the monster is evidently represented here as a serpent. It has no pointed ears, canine teeth, wings, and clawed paws.

The upper part of the composition in question (the torso of the prophet with the uplifted hands in the mouth of a whale) reappears on the southern façade of Hahuli church (second half of the 10th century)³². The hybrid creature similar to Dranda whale is also shown on the relief from Thaba-Erdi church (10th century)³³ and on the relief from Kasagina³⁴. It also has toothy jaws, clawed paws, pointed ears, and stylized wings. However, in the two latter cases, it seems not to be a whale, but a creature that is closer to a gryphon³⁵. It is of note that the scene with the prophet Jonas devoured by the sea monster appears on the earliest Christian monuments (3rd – 4th centuries). From the very beginning, two different iconographic types of the subject may be distinguished. The first one (cf. the Roman sarcophagus from the end of the 3rd century³⁶) tells a story of the prophet Jonas in two

³⁰ Hakobyan Z., *The Senmurv and Other Mythical Creatures with Sasanian Iconography in the Medieval Art of Armenia and Transcaucasia. Fabulous Creations and Spirits in Ancient Iran*, University of Venice / Z. Hakobyan, L. Mikaelyan (forthcoming).

³¹ Aladashvili N.A., *Monumentalnaya skulptura Gruzii. Figurnye relefy V–XI vekov [Monumental Sculpture of Georgia. Figurative Compositions of the V–XI Centuries]*, Moscow, Iskustvo Publ., 1977. p. 81–86. Fig. 69.

³² *Ibidem*, Fig. 118.

³³ Kazaryan A.Y., Beletskiy D.V., “Thaba-Erdi K voprosu o datirovke tserkvi i eyo meste v srednevekovom zodchestve Kavkaza [Thaba-Erdi: To the Dating of the Church and its Place in the Medieval Architecture of Caucasus]”, *Vestnik arkhelogicheskogo tsentra* [Science Journal of Archaeological Centre]. 2009. III. p. 59.

³⁴ Mepisashvili R. S., Tsintsadze V., *Arhitektura nagornoy chasti istoricheskoy provintsii Gruzii – Shida Kartli*. [Architecture of the Mountain Region of Georgia – Shida Kartli], Tbilisi, Metsnierba, 1975, p. 82.

³⁵ Endoltseva E.Y., “Sinkretizm khristianskikh i dokhristianskikh verovaniy na primere arkhitekturnoy plastiki Severnogo Kavkaza [Syncretism of Christian and pre-Christian Beliefs by the Example of the Architectural Decoration of the Northern Caucasus]”, *Istoriko-kulturnoe nasledie yuga Rossii (Nauchno-prakticheskaya konferentsiya, g. Stavropol, 9 fevralya 2015 g.)* [Historical and Cultural heritage of the South of Russia (Scientific-Practical Conference. Stavropol. 9th February 2015)]. Moscow, Nauch. o-vo kavkazovedov Publ.; Knizhnyy mir Publ., 2015, p. 271–280.

³⁶ Bovini G., Brandenburg H. *Repertorium der Christlich-antiken Sarkophage*. Bd. I. Rom und Ostia, Textband und Tafelband, Wiesbaden, F. Steiner, 1967. # 35.

consequential scenes (the prophet is thrown from the ship and the prophet is inside the womb of the whale). This iconographic type was quite widespread, being found on numerous monuments of not only the Paleo Christian period, but also of the Middle Ages (for example, many Roman sarcophagi of the IV century³⁷, Ravenna diptych of the 6th century, the south façade of the church of the Holy Cross on Akhtamar island and others).

The second iconographical type (the one that is on the fragment of the altar barrier from Dranda church) shows the moment of the devouring of the prophet Jonas by the sea monster and his extortion from its womb. The earliest representation of this type dates back to the 3rd century as well (Asia Minor, 280–290, paired sculpture from the Cleveland Museum of Art)³⁸. Thus, the iconographical origins of the representation of Jonas the prophet on the fragment of the altar barrier from Dranda church go back to the Paleo Christian art of the Hellenistic type.

As for the stylistic analogies, a figurative composition that originates from the district of Abkhazia neighboring to Dranda should be mentioned. It is a slab that was discovered by Uvarova in a church near Oliginskoje village³⁹. During the exploration of the church, the researchers found traces of the altar barrier, four carved columns and three limestone slabs⁴⁰. Unfortunately, the columns unlike the three slabs were not published. One of the slabs with an image of the Liturgy is preserved in the S. Dzanashia National Museum of Georgia⁴¹. On the photo type of Uvarova⁴², three full-size figures in the arcade-like architectural decoration are visible. There is a motif of arches similar to the one on the slab from Dranda church (the base of the pilaster that separates Christ from Virgin) in its lower part. The upper part of the arcade is composed of vegetal ornaments. A figure of angel in the extreme left niche is seen on the photo type of Uvarova (only the lower part of angel is being preserved). The angel blesses the holy hierarch represented frontally in the central niche in orans posture; in the right niche, the deacon with a censer is shown. The treatment of the folds of the holy hierarch's

³⁷ Ibid. # 11, 44, 77, 770.

³⁸ Dudochkin B.N. „Ob izobrazhenii «kita» proroka Ioni v rospisi Andrey Rubleva i Daniila 1408 v Uspenskom sobore Vladimira i v miniaturakh Evangeliiya gruppy Khitrovo [On the Representation of the Prophet Jonas' „Whale“ in the Paintings of Andrey Rublev and Daniel of 1408 from the Cathedral of Dormition in Vladimir and from the Miniatures of the Gospel of Khitrovo group]“, *Neizvestnye proizvedeniya. Novye otkrytiya. Sbornik nauchnykh statey k yubileyu muzeya imeni Andrey Rubleva* [Unknown Works. New Discoveries. Collection of Papers for the Anniversary of the Andrey Rublev Museum], Moscow, Muzey im. A. Rubleva Publ., 2017. p. 123.

³⁹ Uvarova P. S., *Khristianskie pamyatniki... op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

⁴¹ Burchuladze N., ed. *Medieval Georgian Ecclesiastical Art in Georgian National Museum*, Tbilisi, Cezanne, 2012. p. 38.

⁴² Uvarova P. S., *Khristianskie pamyatniki... op. cit.*, p. 21. Fig. 10.

clothing is similar to those of Christ and angels on the first slab from the altar barrier in Dranda church. The face of the holy hierarch, his uplifted hands are very close stylistically spaking to the representation of the torso of the prophet Jonas devoured by the whale on the fragment from the Ecclesiastical Museum of the Holy Metropole of Abkhazia. Like Jonas, the holy hierarch has a high forehead with bald patches, a big tapering face, a pointed beard, big amygdaloid eyes with drilled pupils, semicircular massive eyebrows. The folds of the clothing on the uplifted hands of the holy hierarch and of the prophet Jonas are identical as well. Uvarova dated three slabs from Oliginskoje village by the 12th-13th centuries⁴³. G. Alibegashvili dated the slab with the holy hierarch as belonging to the middle of the 10th century⁴⁴. Georgian scholars were mistaken as for the origin of this slab, thinking it is from the neighborhood of Sukhum or from Bedia⁴⁵. R. Shmerling dated this slab as being part of the 10th century⁴⁶; Khrushkova accepted this date⁴⁷.

To conclude, the relief with a scene of the devouring of prophet Jonas by the sea monster from the funds of the Ecclesiastical Archaeological Museum of the Holy Metropole of Abkhazia (New Athos) can be evidently dated back to the 10th century. Accepting the hypothesis of Vinogradov concerning the simultaneity of production of the two limestone slabs published by Uvarova, it is possible to suppose that all the known fragments of the altar barrier from Dranda church had been carved within the same historical period. Taking into consideration the analysis of the scene with the prophet Jonas and the sea monster, the whole altar barrier may be dated back to the 10th century. The presence of a marble detail does not contradict this proposal since the scholars, who had seen the temple in a better state of preservation, noted both limestone and marble details in the construction of this altar barrier.

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⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

⁴⁴ Alibegashvili G.V., "Relefnaya plita iz okrestnostey Sukhumi [Carved Slab from the Surroundings of Sukhum]", *Soobshcheniya Akademii nauk Gruzii* [Reports of the Academy of Sciences of Georgia], 1951, XII. #8, p. 511–515.

⁴⁵ Aladashvili N.A., *Monumentalnaya skulptura Gruzii. Figurnye relefy V–XI vekov* [Monumental Sculpture of Georgia. Figurative Compositions from the V–XI Centuries], Moscow, Iskusstvo Publ., 1977. p. 88.

⁴⁶ Shmerling R.O. *Malye formy v arkhitekture srednevekovoy Gruzii* [Minor Forms in the Architecture of Medieval Georgia], Tbilisi, Izd-vo AN Gruzii Publ., 1962, p. 76.

⁴⁷ Khrushkova L. G. *Skulptura... op. cit.*, p. 86-96. Khrushkova L. *Les monuments chrétiens... op. cit.*, p. 108.

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Art et formation: L'enluminure de manuscrits dans l'abbaye normande de Saint-Évroult après 1066

Jesús Rodríguez Viejo*

Art and Education: Manuscript illumination in the Norman abbey of St Evroult after 1066

Abstract

The decoration of manuscripts in the scriptorium of the Abbey of St Evroult, in Normandy, reached its zenith around the year 1100. Initials of a remarkable quality and detail, displaying very diverse and innovative iconographies, illustrated a wave of contemporary manuscripts, for the most part, with exegetical and historical contents. A monastic home to reputed chroniclers in the High Middle Ages such as Orderic Vitalis or Geoffrey Malaterra, St Evroult became a true Norman hub of ecclesiastical training and manuscript culture several decades after the conquest of England. This corpus of illuminated manuscripts, being liturgical materials but also learning tools for the monks, represents an overlooked indication of this cultural effervescence in post-1066 Normandy.

Keywords: St Evroult, Normandy, manuscript illumination, iconographies.

“Eat empestate Guillelmus Geroii filius dominatum Escalfouposse dit, et in silua fontem sancti Ebrulfi et superiuulum Carentonæu eter emæcclesiam sancti Petri apostoli esse audiuit. Qui curiositate ductus omni aper lustrauit, locum Dei cultori busidoneumui dit [...]. [...] A prefato Guillelmo et fratri busacne poti buseius Vticense cenobium restauratum est, et labore studioque Gemmeti censium regulariter institutum est”.

Orderic Vital, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Livre VI

Les vestiges de l'abbaye de Saint-Évroult-d'Ouche se trouvent dans le département de l'Orne, dans l'ancienne division régionale de la Basse-Normandie. Les restes de cette ancienne fondation mérovingienne, fortement rénovée au début du XIII^e siècle, sont une ombre de ce que fut jadis l'une des références religieuses et culturelles les plus importantes du duché normand

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médiéval.¹ Le tragique destin de l'institution, commun à bon nombre de structures du Moyen Âge en France, a sans aucun doute motivé une absence de travaux scientifiques modernes sur la production artistique de l'abbaye et qui sont d'ailleurs, dans une certaine mesure, la norme pour d'autres institutions, tel que le Mont Saint-Michel. Les ruines de Saint-Évroult furent classées "Monument historique" en 1967 par le Ministère de la Culture, qui reconnaissait ainsi leur importance pour l'histoire régionale.² Les développements historiques de l'abbaye, surtout depuis sa refondation en 1050, sont relativement bien connus. Cependant, l'enluminure de manuscrits a été, encore de nos jours, notamment oubliée par les spécialistes qui ont abordé le sujet de l'art de la Normandie.

L'objectif de cette recherche est donc d'étudier, pour la toute première fois, la production d'enluminure ébrultienne au sommet de la création de manuscrits et de la splendeur culturelle de l'abbaye normande, soit aux environs de l'an 1100. Comme nous le verrons par la suite, Saint-Évroult devint, dans les décennies qui suivirent la conquête normande de l'Angleterre, un centre d'apprentissage et de culture ecclésiastique très renommé dans le duché. La présence de figures telles que les chroniqueurs Orderic Vital ou Geoffroi Malaterran montre l'importance du côté formatif et intellectuel de la communauté, dont l'enluminure de manuscrits semble s'en être fait écho. À la différence de la plupart des cas en Europe à cette époque-là, il y eut à Saint-Évroult une dominance presque absolue de la décoration de textes historiques et exégétiques, sauf pour l'enluminure d'un sacramentaire.

Après un rappel historique, nous nous attarderons sur la présentation des décorations de manuscrits les plus somptueuses, leurs origines iconographiques et la relation avec les contenus des textes. Nous étudierons également l'usage de ces textes à l'intérieur de la vie de la communauté et le rôle du moyen manuscrit afin de souligner le profil littéraire et éducatif de l'abbaye. Un bref bilan final sera offert, avec l'objectif

2. Lamouroux, "L'abbaye de Saint-Évroult.", 249–51; Foucher, *Saint-Évroult en Ouche: fragments d'histoire*. Pourtant, aucune des contributions de ces journées ne fut consacrée à l'histoire de l'art de la communauté. Dans le corpus de Avril, *Manuscrits normands*, les manuscrits étudiés dans cette recherche furent mentionnés, mais souvent il ne s'agit que des titres des textes, quelques images, ou des descriptions d'une seule ligne. Des études telles que Alexander, *Norman illumination at Mont-Saint-Michel*, n'existent pas pour le cas ébrultien. L'absence d'un département d'Histoire de l'Art dans les universités de la région peut être la cause de cet état de la question flou. En anglais, le meilleur résumé de l'histoire ébrultienne est celui de Hingst, *The Written Word: Past and Place*, 1–18.

3. 1967/01/17: classé MH. Restes et sol de l'ancienne abbaye (cad. C 195 à 199, 202): classement par arrêté du 17 janvier 1967. Réf.: PA00110920. Données: Base Mérimée © Monuments historiques, Ministère français de la Culture, 1992.

d'établir des caractéristiques communes ainsi que des divergences parmi les enluminures ébrulthiennes aux environs de l'an 1100. Pour des raisons d'extension, il nous sera impossible d'aborder la difficile question de l'influence de l'enluminure normande en Angleterre à partir de l'an 1066, particulièrement dans des centres tels que Cantérbory ou Durham.³

Quoi qu'il en soit, cette recherche sur l'enluminure est en grande partie possible grâce à la récente numérisation massive des collections publiques de manuscrits enluminés en France.⁴ Ce processus de numérisation rend d'ailleurs possible une mise en valeur de ces fonds médiévaux, jadis méconnus et hors de la portée du grand public. La numérisation représente un grand investissement pour le patrimoine médiéval français et cette recherche veut également mettre en valeur cette campagne de numérisation de plus de 8000 manuscrits menée par l'Institut d'Histoire et Recherche des Textes du CNRS et le Ministère de la Culture.

Saint-Évroult: Origines, refondation, et éclosion culturelle après 1050

Le premier témoin de l'établissement d'une communauté religieuse dans le paysage du soi-disant Pays d'Ouche est la *Vita d'Ebrulf*, officier mérovingien du VI^e siècle.⁵ Ce personnage quitta ses propriétés vers la fin de sa vie et s'installa dans la région en tant qu'ermite. Comme le voulait la coutume, quelque temps après la mort d'Ebrulf, une communauté sera fondée au lieu de sa mort, et deviendra la future abbaye.

Nous connaissons très peu de détails sur l'histoire de Saint-Évroult avant 1050. La communauté fut saccagée dans la première moitié du IX^e siècle, au milieu des attaques vikings. Après le Traité de

4. Boase, *English Art*, 25–30. Gameson, "Manuscrits normands à Exeter.", 107–22. Le même auteur signale également des échanges de manuscrits entre Saint-Évroult et Cantérbory, par l'intermédiaire de Notre-Dame du Bec. Voir: Gameson, *The earliest books of Canterbury Cathedral*, 26; Matthew, *The Norman monasteries*. Une conférence s'est tenue à ce sujet-ci, mais sans aucune contribution dans le domaine de l'enluminure normande et l'Angleterre. Voir: Bouet et Dosdat, *La Normandie et l'Angleterre*.

5. Lalou, "Une base de données sur les manuscrits.", 38–42; Denoël, "La numérisation des manuscrits médiévaux.", 333–42.

6. Thirion, "Saint-Évroult.", 37–59. Snoek, *Medieval piety from relics*, 121.

Saint-Clair-sur-Epte (911), et de la progressive conversion des groupes normands au Christianisme, la monarchie franque favorisa l'autonomie des futurs ducs normands et l'accélération du processus de fondation ou refondation de structures monastiques dans la région.⁶ Cet événement constitua un bouleversement complet dont Orderic Vital se fit l'écho quelques années plus tard. Écrivant autour de l'an 1100, Orderic fait une mince référence à l'histoire du pays d'Ouche dans les siècles précédents, où il reconnaît que l'abbaye avait été saccagée par "les Danois" et que très peu de gens avaient habité dans la zone jusqu'alors.⁷

Saint-Évrout fut refondé en 1050, suivant l'initiative de deux familles de la zone, ainsi que des abbés de Jumièges et de Notre-Dame-du-Bec.⁸ Cette date est, en effet, tardive. La plupart des refondations, telle que Fécamp, furent menées du temps des ducs Richard Ier (942-996) et de son fils, Richard II (996-1026). La refondation de Saint-Évrout marquera le sommet du pouvoir normand, sous le pouvoir du duc Guillaume, puis du Conquérant (1035-1087), grand fils de Richard II. Le développement du duché et son expansion avaient permis à plusieurs anciennes familles normandes de devenir une puissante noblesse locale.⁹ Le pouvoir de certaines d'entre elles permettra la fondation et le développement postérieur de nombreuses institutions ecclésiastiques. Cela fut le cas, à Saint-Évrout, des familles de Giroie et de Grandmesnil. La première notice concernant la famille de Giroie est celle de la donation qui rendit possible la refondation ébrulienne¹⁰. L'absence préalable de nouvelles témoignages du niveau rapide de développement économique et social de la noblesse normande, ainsi que de sa volonté de satisfaire ses aspirations sociales et religieuses par voie de donation.

Le cas des Grandmesnil est mieux documenté, puisqu'il s'agit d'une des familles qui accompagnèrent le duc Guillaume lors de la

7. Lund, "L'an 845 et les relations franco-danoises.", 25–36.

8. Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 308–09.

9. Potts, *Monastic revival*, 105–34; Musset, "Monachisme d'époque.", 72–84; Laporte, "Les origines du Monachisme.", 1–13, 25–41, 49–68. Voir aussi: Nora, *La Normandie bénédictine*.

10. Musset, "L'aristocratie normande.", 71–96; Le Patourel, "Norman barons.", 3–31; Chibnall, "Feudal society.", 35–48; Chibnall, "Ecclesiastical patronage.", 103–18.

11. Maillefer, "Une famille aristocratique.", 181–86.

bataille de Hastings¹¹. Après la première mention du membre fondateur, Robert, ses fils Robert et Hugues seront évoqués comme responsables de la refondation de Saint-Évroult en 1050. Hugues optera en fait pour la carrière ecclésiastique, en devenant l'un des premiers moines de la communauté ébrultienne. Il est également intéressant de noter qu'Orderic Vital rapporte aussi des donations, très ponctuelles, de personnages tels que le futur archevêque de Cantorbéry, Lanfranc (alors abbé à Notre-Dame-du-Bec), ou Mathilde, épouse du duc Guillaume le Conquérant¹².

En tout cas, la réorganisation d'une communauté monastique devait certainement être mise en place par ceux qui avaient l'expérience de la vie monastique dans la région. Deux abbayes y joueront un rôle clé. L'abbaye de Saint-Pierre de Jumièges figurait parmi les fondations les plus anciennes du duché. Datant également de la période mérovingienne, les activités religieuses y reprirent très peu de temps après l'arrivée des Normands, au début du X^e siècle¹³. Le cas de Notre-Dame-du-Bec est nettement différent puisqu'il s'agit intégralement d'une fondation du début du XI^e siècle, sans aucun précédent mérovingien ou carolingien¹⁴.

Dans ce contexte de renouvellement monastique, Saint-Évroult devint l'une des références culturelles les plus importantes du duché normand durant la deuxième moitié du siècle. La vitesse avec laquelle ce processus eut lieu fut en fait extraordinaire. Ce fut l'abbé Mainier (1066-1089) qui, ayant complété la reconstruction de l'abbaye après la refondation de 1050, en organisa la vie monastique, en rétablissant également les activités du scriptorium¹⁵.

Sans aucun doute, la plupart de l'attention académique que Saint-Évroult a attirée depuis des décennies est due à la présence du moine d'origine anglaise Orderic Vital, chroniqueur et principal témoin de l'histoire de la Normandie et de l'Église dans la France de la fin du XI^e

12. Musset, "L'aristocratie normande.", 81–2. Walker-McDonald, *The Grandsmesnils*.

13. Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 232–33, 240–41.

14. Lemaignier, "Jumièges et le monachisme.", 759–63; Le Maho, "La production éditoriale.", 11–32; Vernier, *Chartes de l'abbaye*.

15. Porée, *Histoire de l'abbaye*, 30–45. Pour les origines de sa bibliothèque, voir: Nortier, *Les bibliothèques médiévales*, 34–60.

16. Gazeau, *Normannia Monastica*, 101–03. Voir aussi: Guillot, "A reform of Investiture.", 95–6.

et du début du XII^e siècle¹⁶. Après son arrivée, Orderic sera bientôt chargé de rédiger les annales de la communauté, sur l'ordre de l'abbé de cette période, Roger du Sap (1091-1122). Il sera par la suite nommé responsable pour continuer le travail de rédaction de la *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* de Guillaume de Jumièges, mort vers 1070, et qui voulait servir de justification historique à Guillaume le Conquérant afin de consolider ses liens avec le trône d'Angleterre.¹⁷ C'est au début des années 1110 qu'Orderic commencera la rédaction de son œuvre la plus célèbre, l'*Historia Ecclesiastica*.¹⁸ L'*Historia* est une combinaison monumentale d'histoire politique normande et d'histoire de l'Église, qui constitue la principale source contemporaine pour la connaissance de cette région au Moyen Âge, ainsi que pour l'étude des structures religieuses de cette période-là.

Un autre témoin de cet essor culturel ébrultien aux environs de l'an 1100, bien que relativement moins connu, fut un autre chroniqueur, Geoffroi Malaterra¹⁹. Geoffroi aurait été l'un des premiers moines arrivés à l'abbaye et, après sa formation à Saint-Évroult, il s'installa dans le sud de la péninsule italienne au début des années 1070. Ce territoire était partiellement sous le contrôle de contingents normands depuis les années 1050, et qui luttaient contre les Byzantins et les Lombards. Tout d'abord moine en Calabre, puis en Sicile, Geoffroi fut alors chargé de rédiger la vie du comte normand de l'île, Roger de Hauteville, personnage à l'origine de ce qui par la suite deviendra le Royaume normand de Sicile.²⁰ Cette biographie sera à la base d'une œuvre beaucoup plus ambitieuse, une chronique du pouvoir normand dans le Sud italien, rédigée entre 1081 et 1099 et qui fait également référence aux campagnes du frère de Roger, Robert Guiscard²¹. Le rôle de Geoffroi dans la cour de Roger de Sicile, ainsi que le long travail d'Orderic tout au long de sa vie, furent le résultat direct de leur formation à Saint-Évroult.

17. Roach and Rozier, "Interpreting Orderic.", 1–7; Gobillot et Thirion, "Orderic Vital.", 109–14. Voir aussi: Jaegerschmid, "Mönch und Geschichtsschreiber.", 304–18.

18. Van Houts, *The Gesta Normannorum*; Van Houts, "The Gesta Normannorum.", 106–18.

19. Roach and Crozier, "Interpreting Orderic.", 7–13.

20. Theotokis, "Geoffrey Malaterra as a military.", 105–15.

21. Pontieri, *Gaufredo Malaterra. De Rebus*.

22. Johnson, "Normandy and Norman.", 85–100; Baxter-Wolf, *Making History*, 143–47; Thompson, "Family and Influence.", 215–26.

Afin de parachever cette contextualisation historique de l'abbaye de Saint-Évroult, il faut ajouter quelques lignes sur le complexe monastique lui-même. Nous connaissons très peu de détails sur l'architecture de Saint-Évroult durant la période à laquelle Orderic y habita.²² Nous savons que Saint-Évroult comportait le chapitre, un cloître, un dortoir, un réfectoire, ainsi que plusieurs “espaces de stockage”²³. Il n'y a aucune mention d'un scriptorium ou d'une bibliothèque établis avant l'arrivée d'Orderic. Immédiatement après la refondation de 1050, la priorité des abbés n'était certainement pas de transformer Saint-Évroult en un lieu de copie massive de manuscrits et siège d'une remarquable bibliothèque, mais plutôt de satisfaire les besoins communautaires et religieux les plus immédiats. Mais avec l'arrivée de nouveaux moines, et donc, l'agrandissement de la communauté et de ses ressources, la copie de manuscrits serait devenue une activité clé de Saint-Évroult, à laquelle Orderic, comme nous verrons tout de suite, participa personnellement.

Initiales et manuscrits: Analyse iconographique et typologie des textes

Dans cette partie centrale, nous aborderons l'étude des exemples les plus riches de l'enluminure de manuscrits dans l'abbaye de Saint-Évroult aux environs de l'an 1100. Le point sera fait également sur la typologie du texte que les images, presque entièrement des initiales décorées, accompagnent. La plupart des collections de manuscrits enluminés de l'abbaye de Saint-Évroult est conservée de nos jours, et depuis la Révolution, dans les bibliothèques municipales d'Alençon et de Rouen.

Le Ms. 006 de la Bibliothèque d'Alençon est un recueil ébruitien de Vies de Saints, et dont l'un des textes hagiographiques commence par une initiale “N”, richement décorée, au folio 150v du manuscrit (fig. 1). En premier lieu, nous devons reconnaître que l'enluminure de Saint-Évroult est surtout une peinture d'initiales²⁴. Cela s'inscrit à l'intérieur d'un savoir-faire très répandu dans le reste de l'Europe contemporaine, mais particulièrement dans les principautés qui

23. Merlette, “La bibliothèque de l'abbaye.”, 39–60. Cette contribution fait plutôt référence au Bas Moyen Âge, période naturellement beaucoup mieux documentée.

24. Escudier, “Orderic Vital.”, 17; Beck, “Les salles capitulaires.”, 204–15.

25. Kendrick, *Animating the Letter*, 189–93.

conformaient la France médiévale, où l'enluminure se concentre surtout dans les marges des pages. Cette initiale du Ms. Alençon 006 combine des éléments textuels avec des motifs végétaux et la présence éparse de figures animales, tout en montrant une richesse de palette très caractéristique de l'enluminure ébrultienne. Le corps de l'initiale semble se situer sur un fond composé de plusieurs niveaux de franges de couleurs très vives (jaune, rouge, vert et rose) sur lesquelles se dispose une trame de motifs végétaux – une intrication qui semble se développer à partir de l'initiale elle-même. Cette sorte de dessin et la dichotomie d'encres furent très communes dans certains des manuscrits ébrultiens.

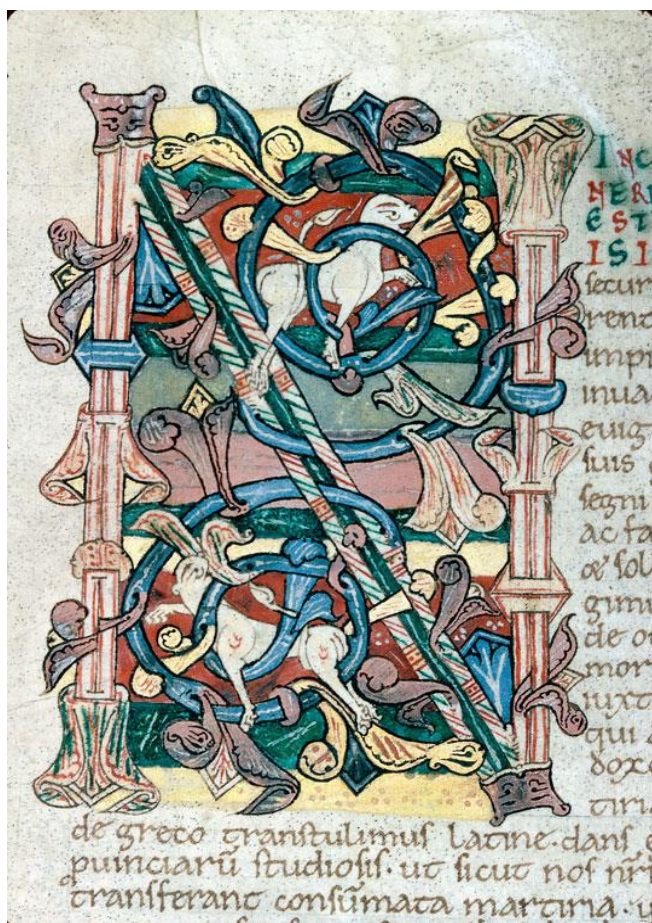


Figure 1. Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 006 (fol. 150v).

Les recueils hagiographiques comme celui-ci étaient à la base de l'éducation religieuse des communautés monastiques médiévales, puisqu'ils proposaient de forts modèles d'*imitatio* aux jeunes moines, ainsi que des contextes historiques, parfois vivement idéalisés ou même légendaires, qui interrogeaient le lecteur sur la nature du Christianisme ancien²⁵.



Figure 2. Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 007 (fol. 128v).

26. De Gaiffier, "L'hagiographie.", 135–66; Wormald, "Some Illustrated manuscripts.", 248–66. Pour la Normandie en particulier, voir: Kahn Herrick, *Imagining the sacred past*, 112–31. Dans la formation des moines, voir: Camille, "Seeing and reading.", 26–49.

Le manuscrit 007 de la Bibliothèque municipale d'Alençon est une copie ébrultienne de l'un des recueils appelés *Opuscula*, des traités de natures très diverses écrits par Saint Ambroise de Milan (ca. 340-397), et qui présente plusieurs initiales d'intérêt pour notre étude.²⁶ Le folio 128v présente une initiale "P" sur le côté droit qui marque le début de la lecture du texte en question (fig. 2). Le tronc de la lettre est constitué par des éléments de décoration végétale similaires à ceux du Ms. 006, avec une dominance du dessin à base de traits rouges et verts. L'espace supérieur de la lettre fut utilisé par le peintre afin de dessiner une scène qui veut se rapprocher du contenu du texte – la donation de l'ouvrage²⁷.

La petite composition représente deux personnages dont l'un, debout à gauche, remet un manuscrit au deuxième, assis à droite et portant une auréole. Il est très probable que ce personnage à droite soit une représentation de Saint Ambroise lui-même, tandis que l'autre figure en face serait une image du copiste du manuscrit en question, un moine ébrultien qui remet d'une façon symbolique le produit de son travail à l'auteur de l'original. Le rôle du copiste était à l'époque beaucoup mieux considéré que celui de l'enlumineur, qui était en charge plutôt d'un simple appareil de décoration du texte.²⁸ À partir du X^e siècle, des scènes de donation comme celle-ci deviendront l'une des caractéristiques les plus communes de l'enluminure des manuscrits, surtout dans un contexte monastique tel que celui de Saint-Évroult.

Une deuxième initiale du même manuscrit, la "S" du folio 42v, marque le début d'un texte sur la Vierge (*Sanctissime Marie*), soit, l'un des sermons ambrosiens sur la virginité de Marie (fig. 3).²⁹ Dans ce cas, la composition et le décor de l'initiale ne semblent pas être en relation directe avec la thématique du texte. La lettre est en effet formée à partir du corps d'un dragon à plusieurs têtes, avec des motifs végétaux qui semblent croître à partir de sa peau. Même s'il nous semble évident qu'il existe une continuité stylistique dans ces premiers manuscrits de Saint-Évroult, la décoration des initiales n'était pas toujours ouvertement en relation avec la thématique purement religieuse du récit.

27. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 1–52; Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*.

28. Prochno, *Das Schreiber- und Dedikationsbild*.

29. Alexander, *Medieval illuminators*, 4–6.

30. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 61–8; Lane Fox, *Pagans*, 368–73; Ramos-Lissón, "Le binôme liberté-virginité.", 467–74.



Figure 3. Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 007 (fol. 42v).

Dans le “Commentaire sur Tobie” de Bède le Vénérable, qui fait partie du Ms. 026 de la Bibliothèque municipale d’Alençon, nous remarquons la même sorte de style pictural que dans les Mss. 006 et 007. Une première initiale apparaît très développée, en l’occurrence un “L” du mot *Liber* au folio 78r (fig. 4). Il ne s’agit pas exactement du début de l’écriture mais du commentaire en soi, puisque en haut nous trouvons le titre donné par le copiste au texte, rédigé aux encres verte et rouge (*Incipit allegoricae expositio Venerabilis Bede Presbyteri in Librum Tobiae*). Cette initiale combine de façon magistrale des motifs géométriques, végétaux et animaux. La partie la plus importante du décor semble être le portrait d’un personnage au travail, qui se situe en bas de la lettre. A priori identifié comme un portrait de Bède en train de rédiger son ouvrage, nous avons remarqué en analysant les *Opuscula* qu’il y existait également une assimilation symbolique entre le rôle de l’auteur du passé et celui du moine-copiste au travail.³⁰ La représentation pouvait bien être celle d’un moine avec sa tonsure, qui travaille avec la plume à l’écriture d’un texte. Après plusieurs mois de

31. Avrin, *Scribes, script and books*, 117. Corsano, “The First Quire,” 15–22.

travail, il existait un certain degré de conscience, voire de fierté, dans la tâche achevée de la part du moine. Cette initiale est en tout cas à nouveau constituée de traits verts et roux qui conforment des corps géométriques et qui semblent se situer sur des surfaces en bleu, rouge et dans un jaune très pâle.



Figure 4. Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 026 (fol. 78r).

La copie et l'étude des textes de l'Ancien Testament, y compris des interprétations médiévales sur leur symbolisme, étaient au cœur du raisonnement chrétien du Moyen-Âge³¹. De nos jours apocryphe, le soi-disant "Livre de Tobit" fut utilisé par Bède et ses contemporains d'une façon prophétique³². Pour le moine ébrultien travaillant aux environs de l'an 1100, à savoir presque trois cents ans après la mort de l'auteur mystique anglais, le "Commentaire sur le Livre de Tobiah" devint un essai de référence pour comprendre l'histoire de l'humanité après la mort du Christ en relation à la promesse des Évangiles d'un "Jour de Rétribution" finale. Cela devint alors le centre de la pensée et de la façon de vie, soit d'une communauté monastique, soit de l'individu médiéval.

Le Ms. Rouen, BM, 031 est un recueil de différents textes à caractère liturgique et historique, dont un sacramentaire du IX^e siècle (qui ne fut pas fait à Saint-Évroult), une copie des Évangiles, et un exemplaire du *Liber Pontificalis* romain, auquel s'attache un texte épistolaire.³³ Une nouvelle initiale, le "B" du mot *Beato* (fol. 9r), constitue le début d'une lettre écrite par Saint Jérôme au pape Damase I^{er} (ca. 305 –384), appelée justement "Lettre à Damase" (fig. 5)³⁴. Damase avait demandé à Jérôme de rédiger une nouvelle version latine de la Bible, unifiée, plus fidèle aux sources originales – la Vulgate. Cette initiale "B", et avec laquelle commence le texte épistolaire, est d'une qualité mineure par rapport à celle des initiales que nous avons étudiées antérieurement. Mais il existe certainement un point en commun très évident avec le Ms. Alençon, BM, 007 et l'*Opuscula* de Saint Ambroise: le décor de l'initiale est composé de deux scènes de donation de manuscrits à l'intérieur des deux espaces de la lettre.

Grâce aux inscriptions qui accompagnent les images, nous pouvons identifier cette fois-ci les personnages principaux des scènes comme saint Jérôme et le pape Damase. Il s'agit donc du processus de création de la Vulgate, depuis la compilation des sources hébraïques et grecques à Bethléem par Saint Jérôme, jusqu'à la remise finale de l'ouvrage à Rome. Historiquement, il est très peu probable que le pape Damase ait vécu jusqu'à ce que l'œuvre fût finie, puisqu'il mourut en

32. Nelson and Kempf, "Introduction.", 1–6; McNally, *The Bible*, 11–7. Lindars, "The Bible and the Call.", 228–45.

33. Foley and Holder, *Bede: A Biblical Miscellany*, 53–8.

34. Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, xi–xvi, xxv–xvii.

35. Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, 1–2. Blanchard, "La correspondance apocryphe.", 376–88.

384.³⁵ Il s'agit donc d'une deuxième donation symbolique de l'ouvrage, un fait historique qui n'est pas concrétisé, mais qui a certainement eu lieu aux yeux de l'enlumineur.

Il faut également ajouter que ce texte aurait été copié par un jeune Orderic Vitalisen train de travailler dans le scriptorium ébrultien, comme la comparaison des calligraphies dessources del'*Historia Ecclesiastica* pu lemettre en avant³⁶.



Figure 5. Ms. Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, 031 (fol. 9r).

36. Turner, *The oldest manuscript*, xiv–xxi.

37. Escudier, "Orderic Vital.", 27.



Figure 6. Ms. Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, 031 (fol. 88r).

Le Ms. Rouen, BM, 031 contient également un autre texte – une copie partiellement enluminée des Évangiles. La lettre de Saint Jérôme était après tout une exhortation à un nouvel ordre de présentation des quatre Évangiles dont nous trouvons une copie attachée dans le manuscrit de Rouen. La troisième place de l'ordre repris par saint Jérôme était destinée à l'Évangile selon Saint Luc. L'enluminure que nous aborderons maintenant n'est pas une initiale mais un portrait qui accompagne le début de son ouvrage au folio 88r (fig. 6). Il s'agit d'une image zoomorphique de l'apôtre Luc, représenté avec la tête de

l'animal associée à son image dans l'iconographie du Tétramorphe – le taureau³⁷. Dans l'histoire de l'enluminure médiévale, les premières images de ce type apparaissent en Bretagne, et en particulier, dans le scriptorium le plus important de cette région frontalière de la Normandie, à Landévennec (Finistère)³⁸.

Datés au IX^e siècle, plusieurs exemplaires landévenneciens ont été conservés, tel que le Ms. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. D. 216 – une copie des Évangiles qui présente les quatre portraits zoomorphiques des Apôtres à l'intérieur d'un contexte architectural très simple formé par un arc et des colonnes³⁹. Selon Geneviève Nortier, le manuscrit le plus ancien rapporté dans l'inventaire de la bibliothèque de Saint-Évroult est une copie des Évangiles provenant de la Bretagne, le Ms. Alençon, BM, 084, et qui présente trois portraits anthropomorphiques des Apôtres⁴⁰. Nous pouvons penser avec certitude que l'hypothétique rapport culturel entre la Normandie et la Bretagne, illustré par le témoignage de ce manuscrit plus ancien, ainsi que par le portrait zoomorphique de Luc aux environs de l'an 1100, se produit par l'intermédiaire de l'abbaye du Mont Saint-Michel, à la frontière ouest du duché et longtemps oscillant entre les deux entités.⁴¹ Les Évangiles, au cœur de l'enluminure de manuscrits en Europe continentale depuis la période carolingienne, constituaient un matériel basique pour l'apprentissage du moine médiéval, ainsi qu'un instrument de la routine liturgique d'une communauté. La copie d'un *Liber Pontificalis*, source principale pour la connaissance de l'ancienne Papauté romaine, nous montre par contre que la communauté de Saint-Évroult aux environs de l'an 1100 avait également besoin de mieux connaître l'histoire de l'Église Catholique elle-même, ou des traditions liturgiques alors pratiquées, comme nous le rappelle également la "Lettre à Damase".

Le Ms. Rouen, BM, 1174 est une copie de la *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, œuvre, comme nous l'avons évoqué précédemment, de l'auteur Guillaume de Jumièges (ca. 1000-1070). Selon Marjorie Chibnall, ce manuscrit est l'une des sources documentées de l'*Historia Ecclesiastica* d'Orderic Vital, et un texte qu'il connaissait bien, puisque le moine ébrultien fut chargé d'achever

38. Schiller *Iconography*, 160.

39. Lemoine, "Le scriptorium de Landévennec.", 363–80.

40. Pächt and Alexander, *Illuminated Manuscripts*, nos. 427, 433.

41. Nortier, *Les bibliothèques médiévales*, 99–100.

42. Alexander, *Norman illumination*, 49–56; Neveux, *La Normandie*, 72–4.

le travail de Guillaume de Jumièges avant de commencer à rédiger son ambitieux projet personnel.⁴² L'initiale que nous analyserons dans ce manuscrit contient une représentation des deux Guillaumes. Il s'agit du "P" du mot *Pio*, l'un des adjectifs avec lesquels l'auteur de Jumièges décrit le duc Guillaume au début du récit au folio 116r (fig. 7).



Figure 7. *Ms. Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, 1174 (fol. 116r).*

La lettre est formée presque exclusivement de lignes de dessin à l'encre rouge. Nous trouvons ici une scène de rencontre qui certainement eut lieu à un moment donné vers l'an 1060. Il s'agit d'une

43. Escudier, "Orderic Vital.", 28.

autre scène de donation entre une figure du moine-auteur et l'autorité, civile, cette fois-ci. Le dessin est schématique et se rapproche des autres exemples de figuration vus jusqu'à présent, et notamment, du Ms. Rouen, BM, 031, copié effectivement par Orderic dans le scriptorium ébrultien et, par la suite, utilisé aussi pour la rédaction de l'*Historia Ecclesiastica*.



Figure 8. Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 011 (fol. 1r).

Le Ms. Alençon, BM, 011 est un deuxième exemple des variés *Opuscula* de Saint Ambroise de Milan. Cette fois-ci, il s'agit de plusieurs textes, dont la copie enluminée d'une lettre envoyée par le Père de l'Église milanais à l'Empereur d'Occident, Gratien (qui gouverna entre 367 et 383). La relation entre les deux personnages est bien connue⁴³. Le rôle de l'évêque dans la politique religieuse menée par l'État romain occidental fut à cette époque-là primordial. Le paganisme n'avait pas encore été abandonné définitivement dans l'Empire et ce texte est une critique constante d'Ambroise au sujet des derniers cultes officiels ou témoignages païens dans la vie publique romaine. Deux initiales attirent notre attention tout au début du texte.

La première est un "A" du prénom *Ambrosio* au folio 1r (fig. 8), premier mot de la préface aux textes. Il s'agit d'une composition formée notamment par des canins infernaux, avec des bouches enflammées desquelles semblent sortir deux figures avec des auréoles qui se serrent les bras tout en haut. Au centre de la lettre se situe un portrait majestueux de Gratien écrivant sur une tablette. La relation entre la typologie épistolaire du texte et la figuration de l'initiale est claire, mais seulement par rapport à la figure de Gratien assis.

La décoration de la lettre ornée est par contre d'une nature symbolique difficile à interpréter. Étant donné le message du texte, les canins pourraient faire référence au paganisme romain, tandis que les deux caractères au-dessus peuvent être des personnifications d'*Ecclesia* et de *Roma*⁴⁴. L'officialisation de la religion chrétienne eut lieu en fait à ce moment-là, promulguée par l'Édit de Thessalonique en 380 sous l'autorité de Gratien et son coempereur, Théodose I^{er}.⁴⁵ Pourtant, des cultes païens persistaient, et cela pourrait bien sous-tendre l'interprétation de ce décor manuscrit.

Le verso du même folio contient le début de la première lettre. Le titre fut écrit aux encres rouge et verte (*Primus Beatii Ambrosii Epi(scopi) ad Gratianum Imperatorem*), tandis que l'initiale "R" correspond au premier mot de la lettre, *Regina*, suivi des mots *Austrivenit audires sapientiam Salomonis* au folio 1v (fig. 9). Saint Ambroise fait alors une référence explicite à l'histoire du roi Salomon et de la reine de Saba (*Austri*, "du Sud", c'est-à-dire, la localisation

44. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 79–157; Cameron, *The Last Pagans*, 34–6.

45. Rowe, *The Jew, the Cathedral*, 54–61; James, "Who's that girl? Personifications.", 52–4.

46. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 107–10.

géographique du royaume de Saba par rapport à celui d'Israël)⁴⁶. Deux figures assises, face à face, semblent converser à l'intérieur de l'espace supérieur de l'initiale. Bien que l'enluminure reste intimement liée à la thématique du début du texte, il est à notre avis possible qu'il y ait eu une assimilation entre les figures du roi Salomon et celle de l'empereur Gratien.



Figure 9. Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 011 (fol. 1v).

47. Chastel, "La rencontre de Salomon.", 99–114.

Cela nous laisserait donc également penser que la reine de Saba devait être associée à l'Eglise, la populaire personnification d'*Ecclesia* antérieurement proposée. L'intention de Saint Ambroise, reprise visuellement par le moine-peintre ébrultien, serait celle d'associer la sagesse biblique de Salomon à celle que l'évêque milanais attendait du gouvernant de l'Empire romain de l'Antiquité tardive et, notamment, concernant sa législation dans le domaine des affaires religieuses. La richesse des iconographies et le symbolisme si profond des portraits nous montrent ici le sommet du travail de l'enluminure ébrultienne aux environs de l'an 1100. D'un autre côté, la copie de cet exemple de genre épistolaire nous laisse aussi entrevoir l'importance que l'étude de l'histoire de la Chrétienté occidentale eut à Saint-Évroult à ce moment-là, et qui met donc ce manuscrit en relation avec le texte contemporain *Liber Pontificalis* du Ms. Rouen, BM, 031.

Le Ms. Alençon, BM, 014 est une copie ébrultienne du *Liber Officialis*, écrit par l'auteur carolingien Amalaire de Metz (ca. 775-850), et également connu comme *De ecclesiasticis officiis*⁴⁷. Après avoir été formé à Tours sous Alcuin, Amalaire devint l'un des moines assistants du théologien anglais à la cour carolingienne d'Aix-la-Chapelle, et, par la suite, il sera nommé archevêque de Trêves et de Lyon, en occupant également des charges diplomatiques à plusieurs reprises à Rome et à Constantinople. Le *Liber* est une œuvre divisée en plusieurs volumes et rédigée vers 820, où Amalaire décrit les offices contemporains auxquels il put assister dans l'Empire et où il donne des indications concernant les fêtes les plus importantes, la hiérarchie ecclésiastique à suivre lors de la messe, l'habillement approprié de chacun des participants, etc.⁴

De ecclesiasticis officiis devint un ouvrage nécessaire pour mener à bien les offices liturgiques des communautés, notamment dans le cas de Saint-Évroult, si nous prenons en compte la nature de la refondation de 1050, avec ses moyens très limités. L'initiale que nous analyserons ici est un "P" du mot *Postu(m)a*, avec laquelle débute le texte du *Liber* au folio 51r (fig. 10). La lettre est précédée du titre de l'œuvre, à l'encre rouge, où nous pouvons lire: *Incipit liber Amalariipresbiterii de Misteriisecl(es)asticarumconsuetudinum*. La caractéristique principale de cette initiale est la richesse des couleurs employées, dont un rouge très vif et dominant qui s'observe dans les entrelacements,

48. Palazzo, "Amalarius of Metz.", 49.

ainsi que le bleu et le vert qui conforment le corps de la lettre à sa décoration végétale.

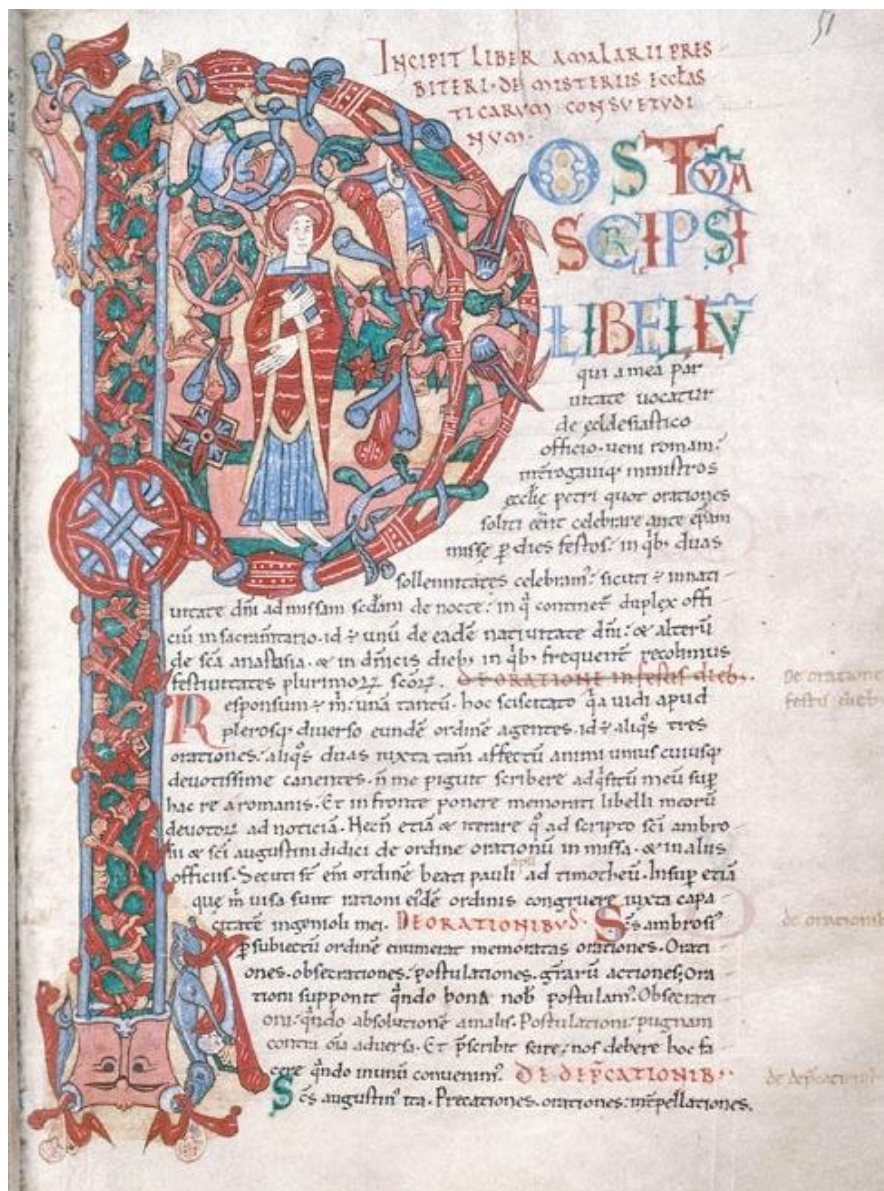


Figure 10. Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 014 (fol. 51r).

La figure d'Amalaire se trouve au centre de l'espace circulaire en haut de l'initiale. L'initiale de cette copie du *Liber Officialis* semble être en rapport avec les premiers manuscrits analysés (Mss. Alençon, BM, 006 et 011), là où la couleur domine l'enluminure, ce qui nous apparaît en claire opposition avec le travail ébrultien basé sur le dessin figuratif. Il y eut donc à Saint-Evroult deux langages différents, deux savoir-faire nettement distingués aux environs de l'an 1100. D'un côté, l'un repose sur la couleur, un travail d'ombres et de lumière plus développé qui offre une plasticité majeure. De l'autre, une production beaucoup plus nombreuse et dans la pratique, plus facile à réaliser, basée sur le dessin et sur une coloration plus restreinte.

Le dernier manuscrit analysé dans le cadre de cette recherche est le Ms. Rouen, BM, 273. Ce manuscrit ébrultien est le seul à avoir eu un usage purement liturgique, contrairement à tous ceux que nous avons analysés jusqu'à présent, soit, des travaux de littérature historique ou de nature exégétique. Un sacramentaire était utilisé dans la vie communautaire comme recueil des textes à réciter par le prêtre lors de la messe régulière, le Canon, avec des extraits plus courts pour des fêtes tout au long de l'année liturgique, ou pendant l'administration des sacrements tels que le baptême⁴⁸.

Aux petites dimensions, afin d'être tenu lors des offices, ce manuscrit fut donc primordial pour les pratiques religieuses régulières de Saint-Évroult. L'image de la Crucifixion du folio 36v est la seule figuration que le manuscrit présente (fig. 11). Avec une "E" tout en bas, la croix devient la lettre "T" de la connue expression latine *Te igitur*, avec laquelle commence le Canon romain de la Messe.⁴⁹ D'origine carolingienne, cette mise en page symbolique, combinant des éléments textuels et figuratifs, devint caractéristique du XI^e siècle européen, particulièrement dans l'art du royaume ottonien outre-Rhin.⁵⁰ L'image du Ms. Rouen, BM, 273, aux couleurs très vives, représentait donc un marqueur textuel qui indiquait au lecteur le début du Canon eucharistique, la partie la plus importante de la Messe.

49. Palazzo, *A history of Liturgical*, 21–3; Deshusses, "Les sacramentaires.", 19–46. Voir aussi: Deshusses, *Le Sacramentaire grégorien*.

50. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman*, 49–54.

51. Suntrup, "Te igitur-Initialen und Kanonbilder", 278–83.

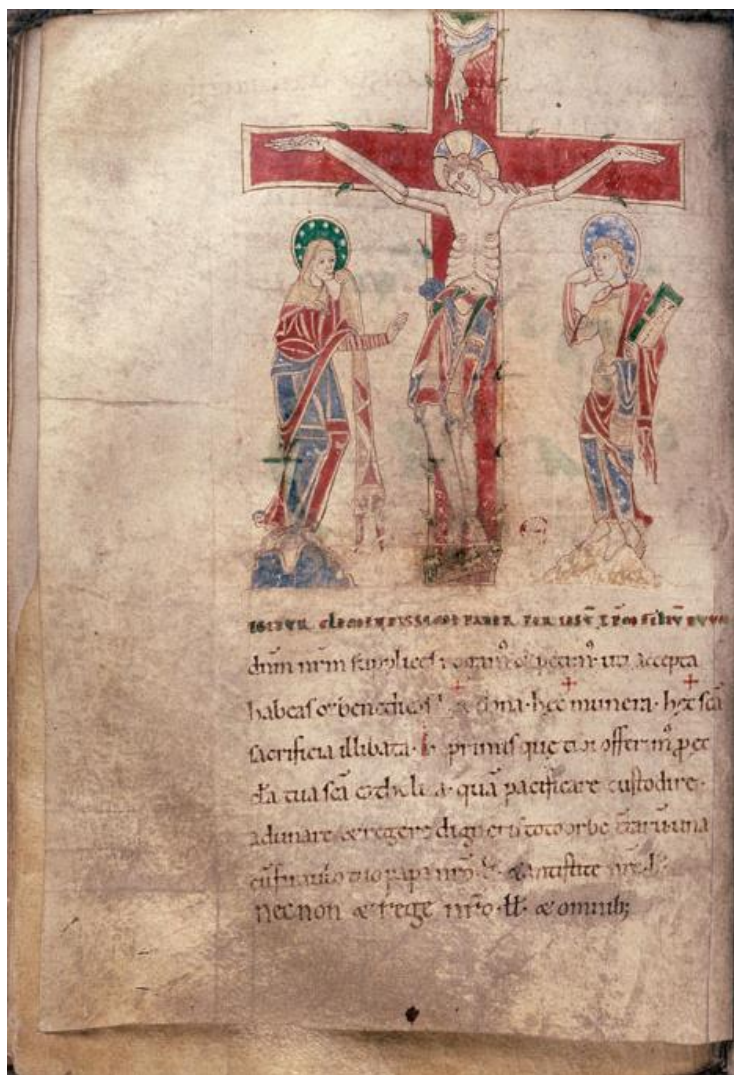


Figure 11. Ms. Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, 273 (fol. 36v).

Art, histoire et formation. Une lecture des enluminures ébrulthiennes.

Dans l'absence d'études modernes, l'enluminure de l'abbaye de Saint-Évroult-d'Ouche s'est révélée être unvide historiographique remarquable dans l'histoire de l'art du duché de Normandie. En premier lieu, un simple aperçu des images analysées tout au cours de ce travail nous montre une dichotomie technique très marquée dans la production d'enluminure de l'abbaye de Saint-Évroult aux environs de l'an 1100. D'un côté, nous trouvons le "Groupe A", dominant en nombre et dominé par le dessin. D'un autre côté, nous avons aussi remarqué le plus minoritaire "Groupe B", fruit d'un travail plus développé et dont la conception même de l'enluminure, de très haute qualité, est parfois privilégiée par rapport à la copie du texte associé. Cependant, il y a aussi des éléments artistiques en commun entre les deux groupes. Dans ces initiales monumentales, les couleurs rouge, bleue et verte, en tonalités très vives, furent constamment utilisées.

Il nous semble également évident que les meilleurs exemples d'enluminure de manuscrits à Saint-Évroult furent conçus entant que décoration de textes à caractère historique ou exégétique. Cela nous montre qu'il y eut une forte orientation vers la formation ecclésiastique, c'est-à-dire la carrière des moines qui formaient alors cette communauté normande et qui, par la suite, au moins dans les cas d'Orderic Vital et Geoffroi Malaterra, deviendront des auteurs exceptionnels et des témoins de leur période. Nous pouvons croire que ces deux circonstances sont le résultat d'une politique de réforme bénédictine, et le pari du travail manuel, de la prière et de l'étude, qui arriva à son sommet avec l'abbé Mainier (1066-1089) et qui continua sous Roger duSap (1091-1122), période pendant laquelle la plupart de ces manuscrits furent réalisés. L'abbaye de Saint-Evroult devint à ce moment-là une vraie "Faculté ès Lettres" du duché normand médiéval, dont l'art du manuscrit enluminé nous offre une belle illustration.

Liste des illustratinos:

Figure 1. *Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque municipale, 006* (fol. 150v). Photo: Bibliothèque municipale d'Alençon; Cliché IRHT.

Figure 2. *Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 007* (fol. 128v). Photo: Bibliothèque municipale d'Alençon; Cliché IRHT.

Figure 3. *Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 007* (fol. 42v). Photo: Bibliothèque municipale d'Alençon; Cliché IRHT.

Figure 4. *Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 026* (fol. 78r). Photo: Bibliothèque municipale d'Alençon; Cliché IRHT.

Figure 5. *Ms. Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, 031* (fol. 9r). Photo: Bibliothèque municipale de Rouen; Cliché IRHT.

Figure 6. *Ms. Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, 031* (fol. 88r). Photo: Bibliothèque municipale de Rouen; Cliché IRHT.

Figure 7. *Ms. Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, 1174* (fol. 116r). Photo: Bibliothèque municipale de Rouen; Cliché IRHT.

Figure 8. *Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 011* (fol. 1r). Photo: Bibliothèque municipale d'Alençon; Cliché IRHT.

Figure 9. *Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 011* (fol. 1v). Photo: Bibliothèque municipale d'Alençon; Cliché IRHT.

Figure 10. *Ms. Alençon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 014* (fol. 51r). Photo: Bibliothèque municipale d'Alençon; Cliché IRHT.

Figure 11. *Ms. Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, 273* (fol. 36v). Photo: Bibliothèque municipale de Rouen; Cliché IRHT.

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Features of *The Final Judgment* Representation in the 16th Century Moldavian Painting

Irina-Andreea Stoleriu*

Abstract: The present research has in view an interdisciplinary approach, from a theological and artistic point of view, of the topic of *The Final Judgment* in some of the most well-known medieval monuments, churches and monasteries from Moldavia. Their walls were magnificently decorated in the 16th century, the scene of *The Final Judgment*, inspired by different Old and New Testamentar sources, occupies large areas, as a proof of the eschatological topic's importance since ancient times, represented on the monuments from Arbore, Bălinești, Probota, Humor, Moldovița, Voroneț etc.

Moreover, this topic has been of great importance during medieval times, the Renaissance and afterwards, both for the Eastern and Western areas, where various artists made themselves remarked through the usage of different techniques. The focus of the present research paper is represented by the medieval monuments during the reign of Petru Rareș (1527-1538; 1541-1546). This period marked the beginning of a change of vision – including the representation of *The Final Judgment*, the works of art being decorated with mural painting both indoors and outdoors. Thus conceived, the present study underlines the outlining of some representative aspects in traditional post-Byzantine iconography in Moldavia, the accent falling on the unique way of understanding and approaching this topic by the artists of that period.

Keywords: The Final Judgment; Painting; Iconography; Theology; Post-Byzantine Art.

Introduction

From the vast iconographic legacy of Eastern and Western ecclesiastical paintings in Europe, the theme chosen to be further researched is the *Doomsday*. This subject arose in Antiquity and has often been encountered in Christian art. *Doomsday* has been depicted through a wide variety of techniques, from mosaic, painting or sculpture to more unconventional approaches that are specific to modern and contemporary art¹.

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¹ In the year 2016, a group exhibition was organized at PG Gallery 192 (New Zealand), whose main theme was *The Last Judgment*, reuniting several contemporary artists, from different regions which brought forward original interpretations of this religious theme;

To be able to fully understand the meaning of this important theme of Christian iconography, we must first discover its possible correspondences in other ancient cultures, in which the religious part played a relevant role. The Egyptian culture is a rather pertinent example. Moreover, the theme of a possible *Last Judgment* was mentioned in the Egyptian Antiquity in *The Book of Dead*, a collection of spells, incantations and prayers, which was similar to a guide for the Afterlife and which also served as a model for the Christian images².

Within the belief system of ancient Egypt, the idea of a final judgment of the defunct had a rather particular significance that can be observed by looking at the different artistic representations of the previously mentioned theme, highlighting the important aspects of religious thinking and living, which are specific to this culture. A relevant example is the artistic portrayal: *The last Judgment of Hunefer* (1300-1290 B.C.), in which the scribe of the Seti I pharaoh makes his appearance. The composition presents some representative episodes from the Judgment of the scribe and he is depicted in the lower left-hand side of the image, led by Anubis, the god of embalming, to the trial. Immediately after this sequence, the heart of Hunefer is weighed by Anubis and it is lighter than the Feather of Truth which was taken from the goddess Maat's hair, who is known as the guardian of truth. Under the Balance of the Judgment appears Ammit, a hybrid creature that devoured the heart of the dead only if after the trial, the heart was heavier than the Feather of Truth, while god Thoth was the one who kept track of the result of Hunefer's judgment³. After the judgment's result was in favor of Hunefer, Horus took him to Osiris, who was in a canopy with Isis (Osiris' wife and the goddess of magic and marriage) and Nephthys (Osiris' and Isis' sister, the guardian of the dead) and Hunefer was given eternal life. In the top part of the image, Hunefer is depicted kneeling in front of many gods, his judgment's result being positive. This image highlights the possible similarities between the Egyptian and the Christian Judgment⁴. These

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/art-and-stage/visual-art/82893119/Exhibition-Review-Last-Judgement>

² Hugh Honour, John Fleming, *A World History of Art*, Laurence King Publishing, 2005, online version;

<https://books.google.ro/books?id=qGb4pyoseH4C&pg=PT107&dq=book+of+dead+egypt+last+judgement&hl=ro&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjHyufPuPzeAhUHJ1AKHYfJBoIQ6AEIMzAB#v=onepage&q=book%20of%20dead%20egypt%20last%20judgement&f=false>

³ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Global History*, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2013, p.80.

⁴ Hugh Honour, John Fleming, *A World History of Art*, Laurence King Publishing, 2005, online version;

similarities and differences are separated into two different levels of interpretation: the one of religious, theological or spiritual (in general) interpretation and the one of artistic representations. Taking this into account, the presence of the balance that tilts one way or the other, depending on the deeds, the presence of the throne of the judgment, the presence of the judge and of the gods that were at the trial – correlated to and comparable with the Christian saints and apostles, represent just as many elements with meaning worth thoroughly analyzing but which, undoubtedly, is not the subject or purpose of this study.



Fig. 1. *Last Judgment of Hunefer, Page from the Book of the Dead of Ani*, c. 1275 B.C.E., 19th Dynasty, 44.5 x 30.7 cm, British Museum.

Another example taken from Antiquity, referring to a well-known worldly judgment is the one of King Solomon (the son of King David and Bathsheba); although it does not have direct correlations to the meaning of *Doomsday*, it highlights the tension of such a moment and the judge's righteousness as a sign of divine justice. The Biblical text describes how Solomon asked God in a dream to give him the necessary skills to judge his people right. The righteousness of the King's judgment ability was tested when two lewd women who had just given birth and demanded justice, came to him. Both women claimed that they gave birth around the same time, but one of them killed her newborn, falling asleep on him and then replacing her dead child with the other woman's baby who was alive. Being in a difficult position, in order to find out the truth, Solomon decided to cut the living child in half, giving one half to each woman. After finding out the verdict, on the

<https://books.google.ro/books?id=qGb4pyoseH4C&pg=PT107&dq=book+of+dead+egypt+last+judgement&hl=ro&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjHyufPuPzeAhUHJ1AKHYfJBolQ6AEIMzAB#v=onepage&q=book%20of%20dead%20egypt%20last%20judgement&f=false>

one hand, the real mother was shocked and could not accept it and decided to give up her part so that her baby would not be killed. On the other hand, the other woman had nothing against Solomon's decision, showing her inauthentic feelings and malicious intentions. "And when all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice." (III Kings 3, 16-28).

The Last Judgment in Medieval Art

In Christian tradition, *Doomsday* is of major importance, this being the theme often found depicted as a stand-alone scene of décor on the inside or on the outside of churches.



Fig. 2. Giotto - *The Last Judgment* (1306), Scrovegni Chapel.



Fig. 3. Michelangelo - *The Last Judgment* (1536-41), Sistine Chapel.

Moving forward from the Antiquity to the Middle Ages, the then *Doomsday* was rather common and frequently encountered in both the Eastern and Western Middle Ages. In Byzantine art, *Doomsday* was represented in mosaic – Santa Maria Assunta (Torcello), mural painting – Chora Museum (Istanbul), in religious paintings, icons – *The Last Judgment* (The Sinai Icon Collection). This theme also made its appearance in Western art in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance, both in sculpture and in painting, such as the works of art created by well-known artists in some of the most representative monuments. That would be the case of the French sculptor Gislebertus (the work of art – *The Last Judgment* of Cathedral Saint Lazare at Autun), of the Italian painters Giotto (*The Last Judgment* of Scrovegni Chapel) and Michelangelo (*The Last Judgment* of the Sistine

Chapel) or of the Flemish artists Jan van Eyck (with *Crucifixion and Last Judgment diptych*) and Hand Memling (the triptych *The Last Judgment*). The Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch must also be mentioned for his thematic triptych *The Last Judgment*. The oldest images of *Doomsday* on the territory of the Romanian Countries date back to the 14th-15th centuries and are kept in the Roman-Catholic Church in Ghelnița, the reformed church in Mugeni, the chapel of the rustic citadel in Hărman, the church “on the hill” –Sighișoara.

This scene is often found represented in the 16th century in the Moldavian churches and from *Țara Românească*, in Hurez, some of the most interesting creations inspired from this theme⁵.

Referring to the theological aspects of this study, we can mention the fact that between the representation methods of *Doomsday* in the Byzantine art or the Byzantine tradition and the Western art, there are some differences, such as the presence of the *Hetimasia's Throne* for the Orthodox and the existence of the *Purgatory* for the Catholics.

According to the words of the Savior, The Parousia of the Lord will be preceded by certain signs presented in The Pauline Epistles and the Revelation, such as the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, the rise of false prophets, and the fall of many from faith, the multiplication of transgressions among men, the coming of Antichrist, the coming of Enoch and Elijah on earth, many great catastrophes in nature and people, converting the Jewish people to Christianity and the appearance of the sign of God's son⁶. Christ will come to earth, with the angels, gathering people and dividing them, as the shepherd divides the goats from the sheep, putting the sheep to his right, and the goats to his left (Matthew 25: 32-33). The images of the *Last Judgment* had numerous sources of inspiration, starting from the eschatological writings extracted from the Old Testament (Isaiah, Ezekiel) and the Apocalypse of Saint John, in Eastern art these two major themes, that of Parusia and the Last Judgment being combined⁷.

Features of The Final Judgment Representation in the 16th century Moldavian Painting

The theme of *Doomsday* has a lot to offer as far as its discussion is concerned, so this is the reason why we will point out the analyze of the most

⁵ Vasile Drăguț, *Dicționar enciclopedic de artă medieval românească* [Encyclopedic Dictionary of Medieval Romanian Art], 2nd edition supervised by Tereza Sinigalia, “Vremea” Publishing House, Bucharest, 2000, pp. 263-264.

⁶ Isidor Todoran, Ioan Zăgrean, *Teologia dogmatică. Manual pentru seminariile teologice [Dogmatic Theology. A textbook for Theological Seminaries]*, “Arhidiecezana Cluj” Publishing House, 1997, pp. 346-348.

⁷ Codrina-Laura Ioniță, *Les quatre vivants de l'Apocalypse dans l'imaginaire des cathedrales medievales*, în *L'imaginaire des catastrophes*, supervisor Jean-Jacques Wunenburger, Ionel Bușe, Symbolon 6/2010, p.110.

representative iconographic and artistic examples of mural pictures from the 16th century, on the territory of our country's Moldavian side. These creations had been made during the time of Petru Rareș, the illegitimate son of voivode Stephan the Great in a period of very tumultuous internal politics – being a bastard prince who “stirred up the enthusiasm of the masses and the hatred of the boyar” – and especially due to the context of the external politics, due in particular to the military glory of the Ottoman Empire, which had reached the point of maximum flourishing⁸. In this political conjuncture, somewhat disadvantageous to the development of the people's culture, the prince Petru Rareș made considerable efforts to consolidate his position at the head of Moldavia, by continuing the approaches taken by his forerunners, painting the already existing churches or building new ones, during his time as well.

The exterior iconography caused numerous issues because of the undeniable originality, this is why a great number of researchers⁹, both from the autochthonous and the foreign territory tried to find the inspiration sources that represented the basis of this extremely unique work of art. Several hypotheses from Iranian origins to Romanic influences, that came from Transylvania, to the ones from Bulgaria, Serbia or even the occidental ones, coming from the North of Italy, likewise the autochthonous ones, linked to the polychrome look of the façade¹⁰. Sorin Ulea said that the model used for exterior painting during the time of Rareș was, according to the Byzantine iconographic tradition, the Athos prototype¹¹.

A distinctively particular aspect and with a certain importance is the complexity of the iconography of the exterior painting which outlines a great program of ideas. The iconographic program of Moldavian exterior painting, especially the unique, coherent and harmonious one was created by Petru Rareș and his cousin – Metropolitan Grigorie Roșca¹², as highlighted by Sorin Dumitrescu. The churches had been decorated with exterior painting

⁸ Sorin Ulea, *Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești (I)* [The Origin and Ideological Significance of Exterior Moldavian Painting], in SCIA, X, 1, The Publishing House of the Academy of the Popular Republic of Romania, 1963, pp. 64-66.

⁹ Researchers such as J. Strzygowski, I.D. Ștefănescu, P. Henry, A. Grabar, V. Grecu, Sorin Ulea, Sorin Dumitrescu etc.

¹⁰ Sorin Ulea, *Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești (I)* [The Origin and Ideological Significance of Exterior Moldavian Painting], in SCIA, X, 1, The Publishing House of the Academy of the Popular Republic of Romania, 1963, pp. 57-61.

¹¹ Sorin Ulea, *Pictura exterioară* [Exterior Painting], in *Istoria artelor plastice în România* [The History of Arts in Romania], vol. I, editor Academy Professor George Oprescu, "Meridiane", Bucharest, 1968, p. 370.

¹² Sorin Dumitrescu, *Chivotele lui Petru Rareș și modelul lor ceresc. O investigație artistică a bisericilor – chivotdin nordul Moldovei* [The Shrines of Petru Rareș and their Heavenly Model. An Artistic Investigation of the Churches – Shrines from the North of Moldavia], Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 12.

before the 16th century as well, but what differentiates the décor of these monuments from the rest and what makes it truly unique is the fact that starting from the reign of Petru Rareș, there had been entirely painted both on the inside and on the outside. Other researchers state that there is a rather important issue regarding the initiators of this vast iconographic program (referring more to the painting of *Probota*), seeing the presence of the image of Metropolitan Grigorie Roșca in this program just as a possible hypothesis or as a paternal signature, but, as art historian Tereza Sinigalia underlined, without having authentic pieces of information or some certain documented proof, “we are still in the land of ingeniously made up hypotheses, but with a limited credibility”¹³.

From the fundamental themes of the exterior iconographic program, we can mention: *Doomsday*, *The Ladder of John the Climax*, *The Mother of God's Akathist Hymn*, *The Siege of Constantinople*, *The Tree of Jesse* and *The Prayer of All Saints*. The scene of *The Judgment* is remarkably one of the most important works of art, this being highlighted by the positioning and the impressive dimensions the image has. More often than not, *The Judgment* is on the entire surface of the western façade, the *The Tree of Jesse* being on the southern wall of the church.

The meaning of the presence of *Doomsday* on the exterior walls of the churches during the time of Rareș was firstly a theological, religious education of the masses through images and secondly, it was an important political message that had to mobilize the masses for the anti-Ottoman war¹⁴. *Doomsday*, along with *The Mother of God's Akathist Hymn* and, *The Siege of Constantinople* became an invocation: “Just as Virgin Mary once saved Constantinople from being persecuted by the Persians, so she helps the Moldavians today to achieve a military victory against the Turkish invaders; and for their transgressions may God not forgive their enemies and evil-doers of Moldavia even in death, but may He throw them all into the never-dying fire of Gehenna”¹⁵.

In the scene of *Doomsday*, there are clear references to the punishing of enemies of Christian belief, namely the Jews, the Turkish, the Tartars, the Armenians and Latins, so that the enemies of Moldavia are put on the same level as the enemies of Christ. Taking into consideration the political context which was rather hostile during the time of Petru Rareș, this artistic

¹³ Tereza Sinigalia, *Mănăstirea Probota [Probota Monastery]*, “Academia Română” Publishing House, Bucharest, 2007, p. 23.

¹⁴ Sorin Ulea, *Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești (I) [The Origin and Meaning of Exterior Moldavian Painting]*, in SCIA, X, 1, The Publishing House of the Academy of the Popular Republic of Romania, 1963, p. 90.

¹⁵ Sorin Ulea, *Pictura exterioară [Exterior Painting]*, in *Istoria artelor plastice în România [The History of Visual Arts in Romania]*, vol. I, editor Acad. Prof. George Oprescu, “Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1968, p. 371.

intervention might be considered a real act of courage and a kind of revenge for the enemies, them being put in the place of the doomed ones.

The iconography of *Doomsday* is modeled after the same pattern which reoccurs in all images from the territory of Moldavia, the most representative image being the one kept in Voroneț Monastery. In the top part, The Old God is depicted among angels that wrap a roll of Zodiac signs, a sign of the end of the worldly or conventional time and then the entering in eternity. Then the scene *Deisis* is described, Christ on the throne between Saint Mary and Saint John the Baptist, having six seated apostles on each side. On the left-hand side of Christ, from his feet flows a fire river which descends to the inferior part of the image. The third register is dedicated to the throne of Hetimasa (*hè étoimasia tou thronou*), a symbol originating from pagan antiquity – the throne of Jupiter – which in the religious Christian art which gained the meaning of the throne of the Judgment. The throne of Preparation, this Byzantine and post-Byzantine motif inspired from a pre-Christian motif of the sovereign throne was named "divus", representing the king, during his absence, to be venerated by his faithful people¹⁶. The empty throne depicted in *The Judgment* represents a symbol of sovereignty and of Christ's transcendence, making a reference to the promise of the Second Coming of Christ¹⁷. On this throne of Judgment, made similar to an altar, different objects with a major importance in *Doomsday* iconography appear, such as the lamb, the Gospel, the symbols, the instruments of sin, on top of which appears the image of the Holy Spirit in the form of a pigeon¹⁸. The Throne of Hetimasia is placed between Adam and Eve, the first kneeling people and to their right and to their left, two groups are placed, which are made of various characters waiting for their judgment, the righteous ones (prophets, martyrs, bishops) led by Saint Paul, and the sinful ones led by the prophet Moses (Jews, Turks, Tatars, Armenians and Latins). Under the Judgment throne is depicted the Judgment of God: the hand that holds a balance to weigh the deeds of all people – naked and of small proportions, symbolizing the souls -, the archangels and angels fighting the demons to save the souls.

The next registers to the right-hand side of Christ, intuitively, present Heaven, as a medieval citadel, Saint Paul holding the key and leading the righteous inside. In the Heaven put on a white background, appear numerous characters, including Saint Mary guarded by two angels, the crucified thief, the three patriarchs of the Old Testament (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) who hold the souls of the righteous in their arms and Emmanuel Christ.

¹⁶ Ștefan Mera, *Hetimasia's Throne*, in *Anastasis. Research in Medieval Culture and Art*, vol.I, nr.1/November, 2014, p. 136.

¹⁷ François Bœspflug, *Dieu et ses images. Une histoire de l'Éternel dans l'art*, Bayard Éditions, 2008, p. 90.

¹⁸ Ene Braniște, *Liturgica generală [General liturgy]*, The Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church Publishing House, Bucharest, 1993, p. 502.

In the center of the inferior part of the *Doomsday* picture, Kind David can be seen, who wears a crown and a halo, playing the harp to ease the soul out of the body. In the inferior part of the fire river, a frightening beast of Apocalypse can be observed. On the left-hand side of Hetimasia's throne appears Archangel Michael, who announces the moment of Judgement, as well as some of the allegorical characters that represent earth and water, restoring the bodies of the buried, the drowned or the devoured by the animals.

The exterior painting is harmoniously thought, so that near *The Judgment*, other related images are represented, respectively *The Ladder of John Climax* and *The Customs of the Sky*.

Churches have begun to be decorated with exterior paintings during the time of Petru Rareș, starting from 1530. Regarding the chronology of painting, we can mention the opinions of two leading art historians: on the one hand, Tereza Sinigalia who prefers a more prudent approach (Arbore, Bălinești, Probota, Humor, Moldovița and Voroneț), on the other hand, Sorin Ulea has a different opinion on the topic (*St. Gheorghe* – Hârlău, Probota, *St. Gheorghe* – Suceava, Humor, Baia, Moldovița, Bălinești, *St. Dumitru-Suceava*, Coșula, Arbore and Voroneț). Out of all these representative for the Moldavian medieval art monuments, we will only choose a few examples in which the scene of *The Judgment* holds a special place in the exterior iconography of the building.

One of the most interesting churches, both architectural and pictorial speaking, is the Arbore church, which, unlike most externally decorated churches, it presents an unusual iconographic program. Referring especially to the scene of *The Judgment*, we can highlight the fact that this does not appear on the Western façade, but on the Southern one, near the apse of the altar, which is decorated with *The Great Prayer of All Saints*. Another unique trait of this particular *Doomsday* representation is the lower register, where we encounter a complex *Deisis*– "The Queen stand to Your right", in which, besides Christ, The Mother of God and Saint John the Baptist, appear Angels, Martyrs and *Saint John the New* from Suceava¹⁹. This register of saints provides the observer with a certain continuity from the apse of the altar, with the *The Great Prayer of All Saints*, then passing under *The Last Judgment* and stopping near the church's entrance portal.

¹⁹ Tereza Sinigalia, Oliviu Boldura, *Monumente medievale din Bucovina [Medieval Monuments from Bukowina]*, ACS Publishing House, 2010, p. 106.



Fig. 4. *The last Judgment*, southern wall, Arbore Church. Detail.

Around the entrance portal, on the western façade of the church from Pătrăuți (Suceava), we can find the monumental scene of *Doomsday*, discovered between 1988 and 1989, when the plaster was pickled and the exterior painting was recovered²⁰. Unlike the scene of *The Judgement* from Voroneț, which is very well preserved to this day, in Pătrăuți, a particularly important fragment is missing from the external mural. This was due to the fact that the church existed for approximately 150 years without having a roof, the infiltrations affecting the upper part of the painting²¹.

²⁰ Gabriel Herea, *Mesajul eshatologic al spațiului liturgic creștin [The Eschatological Message of the Christian Liturgical Space]*, Karl A. Romstorfer Publishing House, Suceava, 2013, p. 209.

²¹ Gabriel Herea, *Pelerinaj în spațiul sacru bucovinean [A Pilgrimage in the Sacred Space of Bukowina]*, Patmos Publishing House, Cluj Napoca, 2010, p. 142.



Fig.5. *The last Judgment*, western wall, Church *Holy Cross*, Pătrăuți.

In the upper part of the entrance portal, the throne of Hetimasia above the sculpted inscription, framed by Adam and Eve, has been well-preserved. Under the inscription, on the left side of the throne, the souls that will be judged, the fight held among angels and demons, the fire river, the allegoric characters and the animals which restore the bodies of the dead, appear. On the right side of the throne, Heaven is depicted, highlighted on a white background and the group of the righteous. This fragment of the scene of *Doomsday* is more deteriorated than the one on the left side of the throne of Hetimasia.

In Probota Monastery, *Doomsday* takes up a particularly extensive area of the iconography of the porch, namely the whole vault, the upper side of the northern and southern walls and the entire eastern wall. On the vault, the Sky with The Old God of Days are depicted and the angels who close the scroll of time, on which the zodiac signs are represented.

On the consoles of the vault appear cherubs and seraphs, followed by the Eastern, Southern and Northern lunettes of the Heavenly Army. The second level is marked by *Deisis*, the figure of Christ framed by The Mother of God, St. John the Baptist and the twelve Apostles. Then the throne of Hetimasia is depicted with the pigeon – symbol of the Holy Spirit –, the book and the tools of sin (the cross, the crown of thorns, the spear, the reed, the sponge and the nails used for the crucifixion of Christ). The Throne of Preparation is flanked by the first two people: Adam and Eve. On Christ's right side appear the

Righteous who are led by St. Peter to Heaven and on Christ's left side are represented the fire river and the Leviathan, which is for the sinful (the Jews, the Turkish, the Tatars, the Armenians, the Sarasins and the Moors) and *The Resurrection of the Dead*²². The motivation behind this image, in which different exponents of various nations that were considered pagan or heretic back then, appear, refers to the tumultuous history of Moldavia, a rather small country, under the threat of the great powers that existed around its territory. Under these conditions, the picture had a significant antipagan political propaganda goal as well as the defense of the Christian belief one, these scenes referring to other exceptional artistic representations during the time of Stephan the Great, similar to the situation of the *Cavalcade of the military saints*.

Out of all monuments decorated with paintings, we find in the 16th century, in Probota, the most impressive and complex scene of *Doomsday*, which is depicted as a reminder for the faithful that they have to acknowledge their sins and be prepared for the divine judgment, just as the Righteous are²³.



Fig. 6. *The last Judgment*, Exonartex vault, Probota Monastery.

Similar to Probota Monastery, in Humor Monastery, *Doomsday* can be found painted on the porch, the Eastern wall being entirely covered in this

²² Tereza Sinigalia, in *The Restauration of Probota Monastery 1996-2001*, publishing coordinators: Alfeo Tonellotto and Ignazio Valente, United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, 2001, p. 374.

²³ *Ibidem*.

scene²⁴. In the upper part of the scene, Christ is represented flanked by Saint Mary, Saint John the Baptist and the twelve Apostles. The register under Christ is marked by the Throne of Hetimasia, by Adam and Eve and by the Righteous and the sinners. In the lower register, on Christ's right side are the Righteous led to Heaven, this part being slightly erased. From the Savior's feet flows the river of fire and on His left side are the sinners led to the Judgment by Moses. The tension of this scene is also accentuated by the angel that announces the moment of Judgment and the Resurrection of the Dead.



Fig. 7. *The last Judgment*, Exonartex of Humor Monastery.

In Voroneț Monastery, the scene of *Doomsday* takes up the whole western façade's surface, being one of the most representative, complex and well preserved image from the mural ensemble. This work of art captures the unique iconographic features mentioned before, presenting the Byzantine influences, correlated especially to the complexity of the image, to the succession of the registers and to the presence of the Hetimasia's Throne. In addition to these aspects, the portraits and vestiges of the characters representing the people called to the Judgment, in particular the Turkish, The Tatars, The Armenians and the Latins are of a great realism, reminding us about the attention payed to the details in the Western art. Besides some influences coming from other regions, we can also mention a few local particularities, such as "the tools and skills, in *Genesis*; the specific

²⁴ Vasile Drăguț, *Humor*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1973, p. 24.

Moldavian dance and the dancers' costumes, from the parable, the insertion of some beliefs and local burial customs, in *The Customs of the Sky*²⁵, the image of King David, who instead of a harp, he plays a kobza, as well as the three patriarchs' traditional wipes, in which the souls of the saved ones are held in the scene of *The Last Judgement*.



Fig.8. *The last Judgement*, western wall, Voroneț Monastery.

Conclusions

Concluding, we can mention the fact that this study's subject is extremely vast and it cannot be exhausted in one article, so we intend to continue this approach. Choosing from a multitude of well-known works of art, which had as their starting point the theme of *Judgment*, the ones chosen from the time of Petru Rareș were motivated by the outstanding artistic value of the works, as well as their truly original and unique character, which exemplarily contribute to the extensive imagistical patrimony of the autochthonous and universal medieval period. The exterior iconographic program, existent on the Moldavian territory during the time of Petru Rareș and Metropolitan Grigorie Roșca, impresses through coherence, complexity and courage. They had dedicated their entire exterior mural décor to the defense of the nation, having a punitive role for the enemies of Moldavia and

²⁵ Ion I. Solcanu, *Autorii ansamblului pictural de la Voroneț*, Ed Academiei Rep. Socialiste România, Iași, 1984, p. 378.

a motivational role for the Moldavian people, who struggled with the anti-Ottoman fights.

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- Fig. 2. Giotto - *The Last Judgment* (1306), Scrovegni Chapel https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Giotto_di_Bondone_-_Last_Judgment_-_WGA09228.jpg
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Irish Miniature in the Context of Culture Ornaments of Celtic Origin

Răzvan Ionescu*

***Motto:** " 'Illuminated manuscripts' means, for the Irish people, a starting point of the imagination, which embellishes, which forgets about itself up to the absurd. Looking at the miniatures, it is hard to imagine something more refined and closer to perfection" (Edward Quaille¹)*

Abstract: The article comprises brief appreciations about the importance and contribution of the Miniature Art to the development of the culture, art and civilization of the Middle Ages. The small Celtic island – Ireland has influenced in a great manner the European creations and the miniature manuscripts from the 6th – 9th century. As surprisingly as it may seem, the majority of the manuscripts are essentially dominated by the abstract approach, which is close to the non-figurative creations. The testimony of this approach is represented by the Irish ornaments of Celtic origin, that are unique, complicated, non-repeatable, and full of unforeseen, which prove an unending fantasy and a great technical virtuosity.

Keywords: Celtic, Kells, Knots, spirals, Irish

Journey into the culture of the miniature

The Irish style has, at its roots, the development of the medieval miniature on the entire European continent, beginning with the Carolingian Renaissance. Powerful and original, the miniature art appears first of all in

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¹ Edward Quaille, *Illuminated Manuscripts: Their Origin, History and Characteristics, A Sketch*, by Edward Quaille, WITH TWENTY – SIX EXAMPLE FROM BOOKS OF HOURS IN HIS POSSESSION, LIVERPOOL, HENRY YOUNG AND SONS, SOUTH CASTLE STREET, 1897; Digitized Archive in 2011 with funding from Brigham Young University, ISBN – 3 – 1197 – 00140 – 0636, Chap. Styles of Illumination subsequent to A.D. 1000, Anglo-Saxon-Irish, p. 66.

Ireland, then in England and later on in the Flemish and French workshops. It is the art of one age, the Medieval Age, where it knows its beginning, its top and its decline and it appears at the beginning of two ages, Antiquity and Middle Ages. **The origin** of the Miniature is in the Antiquity, in the Egyptian and Greek papyrus, in the Oriental art². The main inspiration **sources** of the Miniature are:

- Byzantine Art, as depository and continuer of the Ancient art, under its Hellenistic form.
- Christian Egypt, from which it loans its hieratic and conventional character. Egypt being one of the most complex and fascinating cultures of the humankind, with the most religious people, with art inspired from religion, with its first cosmogonist conceptions about universe, mystics and sacred symbols.
- From Syria and Armenia comes the vividly coloured art.
- The art of the Orient represents another influence that powerfully manifests itself after Spain was conquered by the Arabs in 711, by luxuriant and refined ornaments.³

The European Middle Ages aspires towards renewal and assimilation, imprinting a unique character to the miniature. The artist from the Occident addresses to a greater extent to the heart and aspires towards the emotional, while the Byzantine artist, through his harsh creations with a dramatic face, addresses to the spirit and aspires towards the divine essence.⁴

In Ireland, being the only Celtic country that was not conquered by the Romans, the miniature created here was encouraged by the entering of the Christianity in the 3rd century, influencing the miniature in Europe, contributing in an essential manner to the development of art in the Middle Ages.⁵

An important role in the spreading of Christianity and in the promotion of miniature art on the Continent belonged to the Irish Missionarism (5th – 7th century) accomplished by the wondering monks known under the name of 'scotti peregrinii' or 'Iro-Schotten'. These, going all over Europe, contributed to:

- The spreading of Christianity in Ireland in the 3rd century, in Northumbria in the 5th century (England nowadays), in the Franc Kingdom in the 5th – 7th century (Germany nowadays) – where it begins with the moment of the Christianity of King Clovis in

² V. Cartianu, *Miniatura irlandeză*, Ed. Meridiane, 1976, p. 5.

³ V. Cartianu, V. Dene, *Miniatura Medievală în Anglia*, Ed. Meridiane, București, 1980, p. 5-7.

⁴ V. Dene, *Miniatura franceză*, Ed. Meridiane, București, 1983, p. 5.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

496, then in Switzerland, France, Austria and the Czech Republic of nowadays.⁶

In 432, Patricius was sent from Rome to Ireland, Patricius who later on will become Saint Patrick, the founder of the monasteries Durrow, Derry and Arnagh – which becomes the ecclesiastic capital of Ireland.

- The promotion of culture and art by creating scriptoriums, workshops and monastic establishments: Kells, Durrow, Deer, Lindisfarne, Ierna, St. Galen, Luxeuil, Fulda, Tours, Corbie, etc. These will become the schools and universities of the future, searchers of scholar and disciples from other countries.⁷
- Introduction to the Irish writing and language. Through the Irish missions, Europe knew a 'peaceful Celtic invasion', from the west to the east. A curiosity of the Latin palaeography is the Irish writing adopted in England, dominated for centuries by the Romans (44 – 410). Thus, the language that will become the official language of England has at its basis the Irish language, not the Roman one. In Germany, the Irish writing is kept until the 8th century.⁸

The Irish pilgrimages mark the cultural currents of the 7th and 8th centuries and prove how active the circulation of people and ideas was. Certain names of Irish pilgrims deserve to be recalled: * Colum – Chile, who became St. Columba in 550, the founder of Kells Monastery – in old Irish Kennans, Latinised Cenadae, Cenannus and then Kenlis. 'The Book of Kells' was written here, which is a masterpiece and a jewellery of the Irish miniature.⁹

- The Irish Bishop Killian, who founded the Monastery St. Gall from Switzerland, one of the manuscripts kept here is the 'Scottice Scriptu', written with Irish characters.¹⁰
- Wendelin – son of an Irish king, who became St. Wendelin of Trier, worshiped by the Eastern and Catholic Orthodox churches.

An important part was also played by the exodus of culture people who were searching for tranquillity, which they did not have anymore on the Continent, seeking refuge in Ireland, where a non-Romanised Celtic was spoken. The historian Bede (672 – 753), in his work 'Ecclesiastic History' presents us these active scholars, preoccupied by 'Studia major' – the art of illustration and ligature of books.¹¹ Scholar Dunstan (Canterbury), Aethelwold (Winchester), Oswald (York) organised cultural collaborations

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

⁸ V. Cartianu, *Miniatura Germană*, Ed. Meridiane, 1982, p. 8.

⁹ www.galeriadearta.com/dictionar/artamerovingianal59.html

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

¹¹ Bede, 'Historia Ecclesiastica', III, 27, citat de Martin Mc. Namara în = 'Psalter Text and Psalter Study in the Early Irish Church', Proc. R.I.A, Dublin, 1973, *op. cit.*: 1980, p. 18.

with France, they found the Anglo-Normand School and supported the miniature art.

Summary of the ages that have marked miniature art: The Byzantine Age – which keeps the preference for allegory, the Merovingian Age (5th – 6th centuries), which keeps the powerful Celtic – Irish influence. The Carolingian peak, 9th – 12th centuries, and the Paleologic Renaissance, 13th – 15th centuries, equivalent with the historic Byzantine end, influencing painting: Cimabue, Giotto, Duccio. To these, we add the ages of the schools from the continent, especially the French, Italian, Spanish, Flemish ones, the ages of the insular schools, Hiberno-Saxon and then Anglo-Norman, the schools from Bohemia and Werden. These schools have kept, permanently and reciprocally, the connection with Ireland. The Carolingian age comprises the most important and durable accomplishments linked to the name of Charles the Great (771 – 814), claimed both by the French 'Charlemagne', as well as by the Germans 'Carl des Grose'. In the opinion of the historian Will Durant: 'the most just and illuminated reign that Europe had ever since Theodoric the Great 'is the one of Charles the Great.'¹² The essence of the Carolingian Renaissance, under the reign of Charles, consists in:

- The conciliation of Christianity with the ancient wisdom, being the link between
 - The classic culture
 - The Occidental humanity (12th – 13th centuries)
 - The Renaissance humanity.¹³
- The merit to have united for the first time all Teutonic nations.
- The merit to imprint an administrative and religious unity in Europe.
- He supported and encouraged art, education and culture.

After 30 years from the death of Charles the Great, by the Treaty of Verdun – 843, France, Italy and Germany are established. In England, the Irish influence is very powerful for two centuries (6th – 7th), being the first country that benefited from the Irish mission. Later on, it defines the Hiberno-Saxon style, balanced, temperate.¹⁴ In France, the Irish influence is kept only in the Merovingian miniature, then it gets a full autonomy, ending abruptly with Jean Fouquet. The French miniature is receptive to the influence of Flemish and Italian Renaissance. The Flemish influence replaces the religious idealism with the optimistic realism and new aesthetic concepts appear. The gothic style, with its touch of realism, will put its seal also on the creation of miniature books.¹⁵ The German miniature knows its peak in the

¹² Will Durant, 'L'Histoire de la civilisation, L'âge de la foi, Paris, Payot, 1952, *op. cit.* 1982, p. 11-12.

¹³ Jacek Debicki, *Istoria artei, pictură, sculptură, arhitectură*, tradus de Corina Stancu, Ed. Enciclopedia, RAO, București, 1992, p. 70, 80.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

¹⁵ V. Dene, *Miniatura franceză*, p. 23.

Ottonian age. It keeps the Celtic, German, Oriental, English and Italian elements, which arrive from Sweden up to Sicily. The Irish writing is kept until the 9th century, although the 'Carolingian Majuscule' had appeared.¹⁶

Miniature knew ages of great mastery and originality. The great scholar scientist N. Iorga considers the miniature as 'a synthesis between the most interesting and fertile of the Hellenistic heritages, passing through the Roman simplification and being inspired by a very special style of Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt.'¹⁷ The miniature manuscripts are spread in all countries, influencing each other with elements: Celtic – Irish, Roman, Byzantine, Oriental, Anglo – Saxon, Carolingian, Ottonien, Anglo – Norman, Flemish, Italian, Spanish and Mozarabic.

Miniature gets enriched in time with laic, philosophical, scientific, literary themes, also enriching the repertoire of other artistic genres: stained glass, engraving, easel painting. The religious subject is simplified and humanized. It comes to a perfect balance between: imagination, tradition, realism, to which one associates: virtuosity, spontaneity and the free sketching of the drawing.

In the 15th century, around the Renaissance age that will follow and will replace the medieval ascetics and severity, having as its essence the ennoblement of the human being, during this time an individual note is manifested in the miniature, it passes from anonymous artists to artists who have a name and a reputation. The taste of the public does not change that fast, which explains the persistency of the miniature until the 17th century.¹⁸ The great number of books in the Irish style was not only created on the island, but also on the Continent.

The Palaeographer E.H. Lowe, studying the medieval manuscripts from several countries from Europe, notices an enormous production of Irish Books, emphasizing the huge role of the Irish scribes and painters. All the advanced studies of Lowe are gathered in his work 'Codices Latini Antiquiores', which is a palaeographic guide for the manuscripts created before the 9th century, drawn up by the author from 1926 until the end of his life, in 1969. (The work has 12 volumes). Only in Germany, he studied 400 manuscripts in 67 libraries from 49 cities and found out that half of the manuscripts were Irish and Anglo-Saxon, brought by 'Iro-Schotten', those 'scotti peregrini', or the Hibernics.¹⁹

¹⁶ V. Cartianu, *Miniatura Germană*, p. 46.

¹⁷ N. Iorga, *Ancien art et vieilles modes*, Paris, Ed. Gamber, 1926, *op. cit.*, 1983.

¹⁸ Hanns Swarowski, *Manuscripts à peintures, romans, et gotiques*, Collection UNESCO de l'art mondial, Paris, New York, 1959, *op. cit.*, 1980, p. 19.

¹⁹ Elias Avery Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, Part II, Great Britain and Ireland, Oxford at the Calderon Press, 1926 – 1969, *op. cit.*, 1976, p. 21.

The Celtic essence

Ireland, named Ivernia in the Antiquity, was inhabited by the Pretans and afterwards populated by the Celts, Welsh, Fir-erem, people of Ireland, who bring a superior culture. The Proto-Celts used bronze. During the second Iron Age, known under the name of 'La Tène', the artistic creativity of the Celtic genius reaches its peak. The objects brought to light by the archaeologists were qualified as 'a glory of the barbarian world and a huge contribution of the Celts to the European culture'.²⁰

The Celtic archaism reflects an Indo-European inheritance written in the Irish and Hindu legal treaties. In Ireland are also found numerous customs attested in Ancient India. The Indo-European beliefs have survived in the Welsh world until the 18th century also in India even up to our times. The archaism of the Celtic culture shows the continuity of certain religious ideas from the proto – history until the Middle Ages, proving an amazing cultural continuity.⁽²⁰⁾²¹

There is no autochthonous written text about the religion of the continental Celts, because of the ritual prohibition of the writing, the only written sources are the Greek – Latin ones from the Welsh – Roman age. The insular Celts produced an abundant epic literature after their conversion to Christianity, prolonging the tradition of the pre-Christian mythological tradition. Archaeological discoveries prove the archaism of the Celtic culture and the continuity of the religious idea from proto-history to the Middle Ages. A part of these ideas belonged to the religious thesaurus from the Neolithic. These ideas were taken in an early age by the Celts and were partially integrated in the Indo – European theological system.

The Celts gave a huge importance to the sacred space and to the symbolism, 'the Centre of the World'. We mention some examples of Indo – Celtic parallelism:

- Fasting – as a mean of enforcing a legal request and
- The magic – religious value of the truth

²⁰ M. Eliade, *Istoria credințelor și ideilor religioase*, vol. 2, cap. XXI, *Celți, germane, traci și geți*, Ed. Universitos, Chișinău, 1992, p. 136 – 138, Despre preistoria celtilor a se vedea: E. Sprackhoff 'CENTRAL EUROPEAN URAFIELD CULTURE AND CELTIC LA TENE', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 1955, p. 257 – 281; G. Devoto 'ORIGINI INDEUROPEENE' Firenze, 1962, p. 389; Stuart Piggott, 'ANCIENT EUROPE', Edinburgh, 1963, p. 215 and THE DRUIDS, London, 1968, p. 9 – 24, 62

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 139 – 141, see: G. Drumezil 'SERVIUS ET LA FORTUNE', 1942, P. 221 ; Myles Dillon 'THE ARCHAISM OF IRISH TRADITION', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 33, 1947, p. 245 – 264; C. WATKINS 'INDO-EUROPEAN METRICS AND ARCHAIC IRISH VERSE', *Celtica* 6, 1963, p. 194.

The Indo-Celtic elements, to which they are added the Indo-European, the Indo-Iranian and the Italic – Celtic ones have survived thanks to some powerful priest colleges, depositories of sacred traditions.²²

The Celtic social three-folding – we find it in Ireland after the conversion to Christianity and it is written by classic authors and in Irish documents. Thus, under the 'rig' authority (Sanskrit – Ray, Latin – Reg), the society was made of: 1. The druid class (dru-uit), meaning 'the High Scholars', priests, jurists, keepers of tradition, dominated everything. 2. The military aristocracy, owner of the land (in Irish 'flaith', in Welsh 'vlato', in German 'gewalt'), meaning power.

An important source is the work 'DeBello Gallico VI, 13' in which Cesar presents the Celtic Pantheon in a Roman interpretation, having a good knowledge of the Celtic creeds and traditions. In what concerns the value of the testimonies of Cesar, Eliade recommends the hypercritical work of Michael Rambaud.²³

To conclude, the measurement of the Celtic genius results from the perseverance of the maintenance of archaic elements and their continuous revalorisation from Antiquity until the Pre-modern Age. The Celts are the heirs of a proto-history especially rich in creations, they are also the holders of some pure and original artistic traditions.

Insular art – Irish ornaments of Celtic origin

The Irish show us what miniature art exactly means, art of whose blossom is overlapping with the impulse offered by Christianity. In comparison to the realist style of the Antiquity and in comparison to the Byzantine style which shows us how the art of the ancient Greeks was, the Irish miniature style has its own features.²⁴ The true inheritance of the insular art is not given by the stylistic characteristics, but by the fundamental rupture from the classical approach. By renouncing to rigid conventions, the artists treated composition in a free manner, spontaneously, thus the multitude of expression possibilities and the appreciation towards the nonfigurative creation. The Irish miniature shocks through its specific Irish **abstractionism**, being a surprising and early anticipation of the abstractionism. The amalgam of symbols generates a certain eremitism, but at

²² *Ibidem*, p. 139, 140, *Despre religia celților*; Jan de Vries 'La religion des Celtes', 1960, p. 157 ; Mario Duval 'Les Dieux de la gaule', 1976, the new revised edition of the work published in 1957; Fracoise Le Roux 'La religion des Celtes' în : *Histoire des Religion, Encyclopedie de la Pleiade*, I, 1970, p. 780 – 840.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 141, 440, see: G. Drumezil 'L'ideologie tripartite des Indo – Europeenes', Bruxelles, 1958, p. 11; Regarding the value of Caesar's statements, see: Michel Rambaud, 'L'art de la deformation historique dans les commentaires de Cezar', (2nd press run, revised and enriched) Paris, 1968, p 328 – 333 ; G. Drumezil 'Mythe et Epopée', I, 1968, p. 602 – 612 (for the epic tradition); G. Devoto 'Origini indeuropee', Firenze, 1962, p. 389

²⁴ Quaille Edward, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

the same time it generates astonishment and admiration. The Celtic ornaments – the cross with 8 circles, the entrelac (entrelacs = elements linked and crossed), triskelion (the triskele = ornament with 3 lines that leaves from the same point), pointille = dot lines, simple spiral, broken, dual (the dual centred spiral), double (a double spiral); the nods (knots = named curls without end or 'the work of angels'), all these have set the grounds of large abstractization.²⁵

This tendency appears from intellectual reasons, or spiritual ones, or magic ones. In the aesthetics of pre-history, it is hard to establish if abstract art followed figurative art or preceded it. The art is either purely abstract, or figuratively – abstract, as it is the case of Irish miniature. Misses Françoise Henry, Celtic researcher of the early Irish art, critic and historian of art, member of the Royal Irish Academy (R.I.A), has brilliantly emphasized the old Irish art 'Even in the objects of the Christian cult, the Irish ease through the symbols of the old cults abolished through the evangelisation of the island. The author finds the survival of this purely abstract ornamental art, who defeated Europe even since the end of the Palaeolithic. 'For thousands of years, this art has never ceased to imitate nature, being preoccupied only by the infinite combinations of decorative motifs.'²⁶

Quaile thinks that the authors of the miniatures must have had instruments of an exceptional finesse in order to reach this rare perfection, which is difficult to follow even with our own eyes. He also says that 'by examining a miniature from 'The Book of Kells' counted on a piece of 1 cm and 158 interlacements.'²⁷ The Irish art was also labelled as '**impressionist**' by the critic Masai F. – 1947, given the originality of the aesthetic revolution. It is also considered '**expressionist**' because it just presents the vision of the artist, which gives the accomplishments a reduced degree of communicability.'²⁸

Art historians usually group insular art as part of the Migration Period art movement as well as Early Medieval Western art, and it is the combination of these two traditions that gives the style its special character. Most insular art originates from the Irish monasticism of Celtic Christianity and the period begins around 600 AD with the combining of 'Celtic' styles and Anglo-Saxon (English) styles. The influence of Insular art affected subsequent European medieval art, especially in the decorative elements of Romanesque and Gothic manuscripts. Surviving examples of Insular art are mainly illuminated manuscripts, metalwork and carvings in stone, especially

²⁵ V. Cartianu, *op. cit.*, p. 27, 31.

²⁶ M. Brion, *Arta Abstractă*, Biblioteca de Artă, Biografii, Memorii, Eseuri, Ed. Meridiane, București, 1972, p. 92 – 103.

²⁷ Edward Quaile, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

²⁸ F. Masai, 'Essai sur les origines de la miniature dite irlandaise', Ed. Erasme S.A., Bruxelles, 1976.

stone crosses. The best examples include the Book of Kells, Lindisfarne Gospels, and the Book of Durrow.

The Insular style is most famous for its highly dense, intricate and imaginative decoration, which takes elements from several earlier styles. From late Celtic art come the love of spirals, triskeles, circles and other geometric motifs. These were combined with animal forms probably mainly deriving from the Germanic version of the general Eurasian animal style, and also from Celtic art, where heads terminating scrolls were common. There is no attempt of representing depth in manuscript painting, with all the emphasis on a brilliantly patterned surface. In early works, the human figure was shown in the same geometric fashion as animal figures, but reflections of a classical figure style spread as the period went on.²⁹

Background

The true legacy of insular art lies not so much in the specific stylistic features mentioned in the last section, but in the fundamental departure from the classical approach to decoration, whether of books or other works of art. The barely controllable energy of Insular decoration, spiralling across formal partitions, becomes a feature of later medieval art, especially Gothic art, in areas where specific Insular motifs are hardly used, such as architecture. The mixing of the figurative with the ornamental also remained a characteristic of later medieval illumination; indeed, as far as the complexity and density of the mixture, insular manuscripts are only rivalled by some 15th century works from the final flowering of the Flemish illumination. It is also noticeable that these characteristics are always rather more pronounced in the North of Europe than in the South; Italian art, even in the Gothic period, has always retained a certain classical clarity in forms.³⁰

It can be said that the Insular style arises from the meeting of their two styles, Celtic and Germanic Animal style, in a Christian context, being aware of Late Antique style, especially in their application to the book, which was a new type of object for both traditions, as well as to metalwork. Although many more examples have survived than of large pieces of metalwork, the development of this style is usually described in terms of the same outstanding examples.

Geometric motifs

● "Eight-Circled Cross"

Following the genealogy text is the "Book of Kells", the only full portrait of Christ facing the book's only "Carpet" page. This is also referred

²⁹ *** Illuminated Manuscripts, Ed. Romanesque Art, 1999, cap. Insular Art, p. 24.

³⁰ Charles Gidley, „The Book of Kells“, Del Mar, CA92014, U.S.A., Ed. By ARIANA BOOKS ISBN 978-1-60863-720-1, 2011, p. 10.

to as the "Eight-Circled Cross" page. Carpet pages are fully ornamented representations of precisely balanced geometric patterns, densely, embellished with discs, spirals and interlacing. These somewhat mysterious artistic forms may have had their origins in Coptic and Oriental art.³¹

This is considered to be an iconic symbol for Christ. Note the profession of "triskelia" and triple spirals, ancient Celtic symbols for the cycle of birth, life, and death, as well as the page's presentation of the cruciform motif. As a composite image of Christian iconography, this page symbolizes human salvation through Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection.(Fig.1)



Fig. 1 The Carpet Page, "Eight-Circle Cross", "Book of Kells"

³¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 18-19.

● **Spirals.** Spirals show the accomplishment of an individual to balance his inner and outer self and reflect one's personal spirit. The pattern also symbolizes the Cosmos, Heavens and Water (waves). An example is the Triskel, the pattern is believed to stand for the Holy Trinity or the Triple Gods/Goddesses of the ancient Celts which is similar to the Trinity Knot.

Celtic artworks have always been famous for their geometric motifs. Some of these outstanding works date back to 3000 BC and can still be found today on stone carvings.³²(Fig.2)



Fig. 2

The picture shows a single clockwise spiral. This design has the oldest history and is the most recorded of the motifs. In some culture, the single spiral may symbolize growth, expansion and even cosmic energy. For instance, the ancient inhabitants of Ireland used the spiral to represent the sun and a tightly wound, clockwise spiral to signify their shrinking winter sun.(Fig.3)

This loosely wound anti-clockwise spiral is a symbol of the large summers sun.(Fig.4)



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

³² *Ibidem*, p. 54.

The dual centred spiral is also frequently used in stone carvings. It has associations with motifs from other cultures such as the Yin Yang symbol. It signifies the duality of nature and balance.(Fig.5)

A double spiral is used to represent the equinoxes, the period of the year when the length of the day and night are the same and they occupy twelve hours of the entire day.(Fig.6)



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

The Christian monks in earlier times used this Triple centred spiral in their illuminated manuscripts. The design originated as a symbol of the Triple Goddess, pre-dating Christianity.³³(Fig.7)



Fig. 7

A curiosity of Prehistoric art, during the Neolithic period is represented by the female statuettes from Cucuteni-Tripolie, with spiral ornaments, with abstract styles, with no intention of figurative contamination. Only specialists can explain this similarity with the Celtic spiral in such an early period.³⁴(Fig.8) Brion, signals the art of Celts and Germans, but during

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 55,56.

³⁴ romaniaistorica.ro and artaandcraft.ro

the 2nd Iron Age. The author states that because of their abstraction, their art conflicts with the Seythian art and with hieratic arts.³⁵



Fig. 8. Female Statuettes-Prehistoric Art, Neolithic period, Cucuteni-Tripolie

Knots

Celtic knots are complete loops without any beginning or end, this neverending style is called pure knots. The knots vary from simple to complicated ones. The use of only one thread highlights the Celts' belief in the interconnectedness of life and eternity. They strongly believe in the symbolism reflected in Celtic knot works from the old Celtic myths and legends.

In earlier times, elaborate designs were mainly used for decorative purposes. However, overtime, people began to come up with their own interpretations, and began to understand the designs at a deeper level. They saw the constant interlacing as the physical and the spiritual crossing of paths, expressing permanence, and the endurance of life, love and faith.

The Celtic knots were the creation of Celts in the early Celtic Church who resided mainly in Ireland. Around AD 450, Christian Celtic artwork was influenced by pagan Celtic sources which incorporated an additional knotwork category of life form motifs. The Celtic knots then spread to the Scottish Highlands and Europe via missionary expeditions. This traditional culture of knotworks in manuscript painting was passed down orally with

³⁵ M. Brion, *op. cit.*, p. 94, 102.

non-existent written records.³⁶ Many groups of people began to embrace Celtic art form. These groups included the Irish, Picts, the Scots of Dal Riada and the Northumbrians. Celtic knotwork then underwent some form of adaptation and assimilation with other cultures. An example of this would be the Anglo-Saxons, Welsh and other religious communities who created the "Hibemo-Saxon" tradition, which incorporated Saxon and Pictish abstract beast forms into early Celtic knotwork. The early Irish works were consistent in the concept of unending loops, while Germanic and Roman adaptations had loose ends in some occasions. Celtic knotworks became the style of that time.

This Celtic golden age of the 7th to 10th centuries began its decline after the Normans' invasion. In the more Gaelic areas, the Celtic tradition continued, as these Gaelic aristocrats continued to patronize Celtic decorated ornaments. The Celtic culture was looked back as the glory of the ancestors of these people, with knotwork becoming an extent the symbol of political and cultural identity.³⁷ Celtic knotworks were created for secular and religious purposes. It was meant for decorative aims to ornate Bible manuscripts and monuments like Celtic crosses and jewelry. The early Celts began this legacy of knotworks that consisted of animals and spirals, drawn with such detail that they became known as the "work of angels".

Each knot meant a virtue like strength or love. Celtic books like the *Book of Durrow* illustrates the early Irish style where ribbons are coloured in a certain way. The *Book of Kells* is renowned as an indispensable source of classic Celtic knots and ornaments, decorating the four Gospels. These books show many variations of Celtic knot works such as interlacing, spiral patterns, key patterns, rope work and plaiting, which are geometric patterns. Researchers have been trying to discover the secret of knotwork patterns, to find out if there is any particular significance behind each intricate design. In fact, the Celts did not assign special ideas or concepts to the patterns, but used them mainly as decorations on sculptures and jewelry or to fill up empty spaces in illuminated manuscripts. However, the interlaced patterns reflected the belief of the Celts in the interconnectedness and continuity of life. Over time, modern meanings have been attached to certain designs, but these are based mainly on personal interpretation and may vary between countries and between individuals.³⁸ The same pre-Christian designs found their way into early Christian manuscripts and art work with the addition of depictions from life, such as animals, plants and even humans.

³⁶ Richard Gameson, *The design and decoration of insular gospel-books and other liturgical manuscripts*, The Cambridge University Press, ISBN 9780511978029, Press-ed by Richard Gameson, 2016, cap. 8, p. 225, 226.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 231-235.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 1, 2.

J. Romilly Allen has identified "eight elementary knots which form the basis of nearly all interlaced patterns in Celtic decorative art". There is no evidence to indicate that a knot had any specific philosophical or religious significance beyond perhaps the most obvious, that being the intricacy capable in the work of humans, itself reflective of the intricacy of natural forms. The Celts themselves left very little in the way of records, and most symbols are interpreted by archaeologists and other scholars who study the symbols in context. Some ancient Celtic symbols have changed in meaning over time, having been influenced by the introduction of Christianity and the influence of their cultures.³⁹

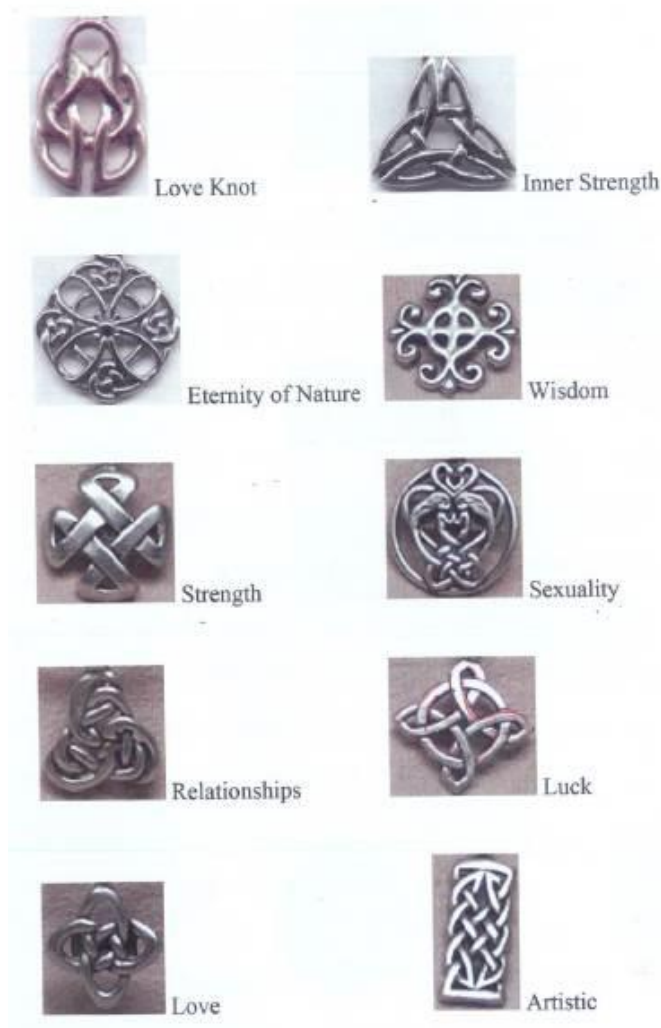


Fig. 9. More knots

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

This Shield Celtic knot has a protective significance. Found on the shields of warriors, children's clothes, the ancient Celts also believed that the knotwork can protect the sick.(Fig.10)

The Triquetra Knot is also known as the Trinity Knot. It is used by the Christians to stand for the Father, Son & Holy Spirit. However, this information may not be entirely accurate because the Catholics of Ireland were the first to use the design as a reference symbol of the Trinity⁴⁰. It is believed that Celts use this Celtic Cross as a symbol of faith.(Fig.11)

This knotwork shows 8 hearts bounded by a Celtic circle. If one closely looks at it, one will find the rune of love "X" hidden within the design. The Celtic Love Knot is believed to be able to enliven relationships, heighten passions and attract true love.(Fig 12)



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

A sacred symbol of the Celts, The Triskele represents the eternal rhythm of life that mankind is part of. This ancient symbol represents the trinity of life and was adorned as their most sacred symbol.⁴¹ The main significance of it was that it symbolizes the Goddess in all her forms ~ Maiden, Mother and Crone.(Fig 13)

This amulet design symbolizes peace, Ancient Celts used to wear it, hoping to attain peace in themselves and in relationship to the others.(Fig 14)

The Irish Shamrock is the traditional symbol of the Trinity.(Fig 15)



Fig.13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 59.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 60, 62.

Mathematical observations

There are many types of knotwork in various religions or groups. However, below are the observations that distinguish Celtic knots from others:

- 1.The strong diagonals in Celtic knots are based on the 3:4:5 triangle, otherwise known as the right-angle triangle.
- 2.At almost every corner of any Celtic knot, we can see pointed spades. This is done so as to connect the cord element to fit a corner.
- 3.The interlacing of the cords is consistent; they alternate between "overs" and "unders" which ultimately contributes to an overall spiraling look.
- 4.The basic pattern repeats itself.
- 5.The path of Celtic knots is continuous. This means that if we cut a single cord, pull the two ends, and the panel tightens, then it is a Celtic knot. If it unravels then it is interlaced.⁴²

Celtic animal symbolism

Among the most familiar sights in Irish art are Celtic animal symbols:

- The people of ancient Ireland used Celtic animal symbolism to attempt to understand the otherwise incomprehensible natural cycles of the Earth.
- Celts revered Nature itself, be it in the form of plants, animals, or elements.
- They believed the animals were there to teach them how to live in harmony with Nature.
- Elite Irish families used animal symbolism on their Coats of Arms.
- The early Celts believed animals arose from the fantastic Otherworld where elves and fairies came from.

Celtic animal symbolism arises from an abundant body of lore, tale, and song and draw upon mythology as old as that of Greece or Rome.

- Celtic animal symbols are not insignificant slices of distant history, but a living link extending from ancient Celts to nowadays Irish people.
- *When one admires Celtic animal symbols, one must remember that they are exactly what they say they are: symbols. They are not inserted for mere adornment; they are there to represent those aspects of each animal that the Celts honored.*
- *To understand Celtic animal symbolism is to understand the art and what the artist attempted to bring across in his work.*

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 64.

In the greatest example of medieval illuminated manuscripts, the *Book of Kells*, the four Evangelists were frequently depicted as Celtic animal symbols: Matthew the man, Mark the lion, Luke the calf, and John as the eagle.⁴³

Final considerations

Irish miniature had a huge role in the formation of European culture, making possible the conciliation of Christianity with ancient sapience, being a link towards the essence of the Renaissance, which created the connection between classical culture, the Occidental humanity of the 7th – 13th century and the Renaissance humanity. The contribution brought to the world by the small Celtic island saved the Mediterranean during barbaric centuries. All Irish manuscripts remain a creation of the Celtic genius manifested through fantasy, through giving up on rigid conventions, by an inexhaustible imagination; all these things personalize and make the Irish miniature unmistakable. If the 'Book of Durrow' marks the beginning of miniature, the 'Book of Kells' represents the peak, being the jewelry of Irish miniature, which incites even nowadays the interest of specialists. If we were to compare the total of Churches and of manuscripts, the manuscripts represent a much higher number, they impress us through harmony, grace, elegance, as the imagination aims towards perfection, and the ornaments have a sculptural precision.⁴⁴ Like an arch over time, as the Celts capitalized the magic and religious value of the truth, Franz Marc appreciates the art of the future: 'it is our religion and truth and it is pretty profound and solid in order to produce the greatest style, the greatest re-evaluation of the form that the world has ever seen.'⁴⁵ The interest of the academic world for the study of manuscripts was and currently is, as it is proven by the researches from the past 50 years, accomplished by specialists such as: Rosen, Ruge, Werner Blau, Susan, Biolletti, Bernard Meehan, T.D. Kendrick, etc. who have studied and examined the manuscripts: Kells, Lindisfarne, Kildare etc.⁴⁶

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⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

⁴⁵ M. Brion, *op. cit.*, p. 109 (Franz Marc-Aforism 1920).

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God loves everyone ”with the same love He has for the entire world“. *Incursio patristica*

Liviu Petcu*

Abstract: In this article, we intend to highlight, as much as possible in a limited number of words and using the texts of the Holy Fathers of the Church, the multifaceted revelation of God’s love for us, specifically: through the entire Creation, through His Son’s unfathomable Incarnation through which He makes evident the true value of man, through His Cross which is the key to the mystery of Christ’s love, through His Resurrection and Ascension, by indwelling us with the Holy Spirit, by giving Himself for and to us as only He Himself could in the Holy Eucharist, through the fact that God always intends the best for man in all His actions and loves each of us to the fullest, etc. Moreover, we have emphasized the fact that the multitude of man’s sins does not exceed God’s love for us. This, of course, should not be understood as an exhortation to continue in sin, because God is merciful and forgives man, but it should be regarded as an exhortation to repent sincerely. God always awaits for the sinner to return to Him, through repentance, to bestow upon him forgiveness and, simultaneously, peace, joy, serenity and eternal blessing.

Each page of this article is intended as an invitation to love, and to grow in that love of God and our neighbours.

Keywords: God, love, world, patristic, thinking, human, benefit

God is love

Saint John the Evangelist, the theologian of divine love, formulates the fullness of God’s existence and presence through the word ‘love:’ ”God is love and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him“ (1 Jn. 4:16). The same Saint Evangelist writes, in the same chapter, vs. 8: ”God is love.“ Never before has there been a more precious and beautiful assertion than this. ”God is love“ writes John the Evangelist; this was the first time when the earth heard a statement like this. Afterward, we, humankind, the inhabitants of the Earth, forgot it more or less. This assertion is very profound. Not only that God loves; He is love. When the Holy Scriptures say that ”God is love“ this does not mean that God represents a sentiment of vague, ephemeral and ambiguous love. It is God that defines love and He is

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above anything that we might consider as being love. When saying that it is God that defines love, we understand that God is the definition of love itself that He transcends all. There is no real love other than God. Even by trying by all our means, we cannot define real love without knowing God. Love is more than a feeling, love is a person: Jesus Christ. The teaching of Christ, Christ's life, reveals to the world God-Love. Christ is Love. The divine nature and essence is love. God loves us and He loves His entire creation as His nature is love. For how could it be otherwise, if God **is** love? The reason or the cause of God's love lies within God Himself; this reason does not lie within the one who is loved. God's love springs from God and it is not attracted by a particular object. Goodness, virtue, spiritual beauty or the sum of the reasons that make someone worthy of love are not relevant as God loves both the saint and the sinner. God loves us not only because we are virtuous, loving or because we deserve His love; He has loved us since the beginning, unconditionally. He loves us not because we are in His image; we are His most accomplished creatures and the crown of His creation, but, as a matter of fact, we are distinct from Him. He loves us not because He identifies with us as entities that are capable of feelings. The Incarnation of the Son is a consequence; it is not the cause of His love. He loves us because He Himself is love. From eternity, God has been love. Before the creation of the universe, before the world was brought into being, at the moment men separated from God and made various representations or idols that they worshiped or when they considered Him just an abstract concept, then, during the centuries when, decimated by wars and famine, despairing humankind believed exclusively in fate, God has always been love.

Love permeates His very being and surrounds, accompanies and fills thoroughly all His other characteristics, even His wrath. As He is love, He shows His love through the fact that He loves even those who rebel against Him. God's love is not something purely sentimental, romantic or professed. It is rather ἀγάπη [*agápē*], the love that sacrifices for another. He shows us this sacrificial love in sending His Son to sacrifice Himself on the Cross to be the propitiation for our sins (1 Jn. 4:10). He did this although we did not deserve it. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8). God knows everyone of us very well and He loves us all equally. He is a fervent love that is infinite as it has neither beginning nor end. This is what differentiates Christianity from all other religions. Why does God love us? It is because: "God is love."

Although this aspect is manifest, an analogy that might suggest further questions is made with light. Light provides illumination; its very nature is to give illumination. Its brightness does not depend in any way on the nature of the objects it illuminates and, consequently, it provides with light all objects equally. We can analyze this process. We are able to

distinguish brilliant light, its brightness and the emitted light.¹ We might further speculate on sharing endowed love in the age before creation, when there was not an external object to receive it. But, as long as there is an object, radiant light provides it with light and so our Loving God loves that object.

Yet, as natural objects differ in their capacity to receive light, some reflect it, some radiate it, some absorb it, souls differ in their capacity to receive love. Only the object that absorbs light is changed internally, it becomes fervent and it radiates light itself. If it glows, it becomes a light source and it radiates light, even in darkness. Correspondingly, the soul that absorbs God's love is transfigured internally by this love and thus becomes an inexhaustible source of love.

We do not know the reason why there are differences of this kind. „What causes the differences in the way objects receive light is a problem of physics; the reason why souls differ in the way they receive love is a mystery.“²

God is love Himself not only in relation to man and the entire world; He is love through His outpouring to the world, but He had been love before the world was created. Love has need of two people who love one another. God is a Trinity of Persons, Who love one another, communicate with one another and share at the same time the same qualities. Through Christ we understood that God is love, that God is our loving Father and we are His sons. God is love, "love is the very life of the divine nature"³, "love is the defining characteristic of God"⁴ and, according to the theologian Pavel Florensky, it is "God's essence, His substantial act."⁵ If love includes any act of God, any relation with the Son and the creatures that exist, because it is a part of God's nature, this quality (love) is one and the same with His nature. God, in His very Essence, is love (*agápē*) which is not an abstract quality, but He is vitality, strength and shared kindness that is completely conveyed to the Son.⁶ In other words, *agápē* establishes a natural and existential association between the Only Begotten Son and His Father. By experiencing *agápē*-love, the faithful realize what God is and knowing God in His relationship with Jesus Christ means understanding that He is love.

¹ George Bosworth Burch, "The Christian Philosophy of Love", in *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1950, p. 416.

² *Ibidem*, p. 416.

³ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De anima et resurrectione*, in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca* (P.G.) XLVI, ed. Abbot J.P. Migne, Paris, 1863, col. 196C.

⁴ Rev. Fr. Professor Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. I, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1978, p. 297.

⁵ P. Florensky *apud* Rev. Fr. Professor Dumitru Stăniloae, „Sfânta Treime, structura supremei iubiri“, in *Studii Teologice*, XXII (1970), No. 5-6, p. 337.

⁶ C. Spicq, O. P., *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament – analyse des textes*, III, J. Gabalda, Paris, 1959, p. 276-277.

God loves everyone unconditionally

God's love extends over all of humanity and the entire creation: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). God has never created a being that He does not love.

He loves each of us with an *unconditional love*. From the perspective of many people, love is an intense affection for another person, based on family or personal relationships. This lively affection frequently originates in a sexual attraction to a person. Men and women, in general, love another person when they are attracted by that person and when the latter contributes to their well-being. These words 'based on' connote the fact that men and women find pleasure in another person conditionally; in other words, they love another person if that person fulfils a prerequisite condition, before taking a liking to that person. We have often heard the words or we have said "I love you because you are beautiful" or "I love you because you care about me" (put differently, I love you for myself and because I need you) or "we love you because your presence is enjoyable or because we experience enjoyment being around you."

Not only is our love conditional, but also unstable, whereas God's love is unalterable. Many people have loved us, but, later, their love for us waned and they even forgot us. Their love for us might have become hatred. God's love will not alter in such a manner. Saint John the Evangelist says that the Saviour, who loved His own, loved them until the end. "Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (Jn. 13:1). Our love is based on sentiments, moods and emotions that may alter or disappear at a given moment. The divorce rate is particularly high in today's society because either the husband or the wife did not want to keep the flame of love burning.

Who can become aware of the significance and nature of 'unconditional' love? God is love and His love is distinct from human love. God's love is unconditional and it is not based on feelings or emotions. It appears that parents' love for their children is the closest in nature to the unconditional love of God for man that manifests in our lives. We continue to love our children both in difficult and good periods. We will not stop loving them even if they do not meet our expectations concerning them. We love our children no matter how hard it might sometimes be; not even then does our love extinguish. This pales in comparison to the love God has for us. Yet, as we shall see, God's love transcends any human definition of love, a definition that is limited, as all definitions are. Still, God cannot be defined in words or

in a series of sentences and phrases that attempt to characterize Him or make a cataphatic statement about Him.⁷

Another wonderful verse describing God's unconditional love is in Romans 5:8: "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Neither this verse, nor Jn. 3:16 ("For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.") conditions God's love for us. God will not establish conditions we have to meet. He will not tell us, for example: "Once you have improved your life and you have become holy, I shall love you." What He did not tell us is "My Son will die for you only if you promise Me you shall love Me." In fact, in Ro. 5:8 is written the opposite of that. God wants us to know that His love is unconditional as He sent His Son to die for us, while we were yet sinners, unworthy of His love. We did not cleanse ourselves from sins and any evil, we did not promise anything to God before we felt His love. His love for us has always been ardent and incomprehensible to the mind and unutterable through words, unconditional and without boundaries and, for this reason, He has given everything and His Son sacrificed for us before we even could realize we needed His love.

Every person is overwhelmingly important from God's perspective; in fact, the entire Gospel highlights the fact that Christ the Lord loves even those who show no gratitude to Him and those who consider themselves unworthy to be loved. This is the very secret of man's self-esteem: if we want to become self-confident, let us understand to what a great extent God cares about us. God loves us, no matter what others may think about us. And, because God loves us, we do not have to prove anything so that others might have a good opinion of us. We do not have to put on certain clothes to feel comfortable or to drive a certain car to boost our *ego*. Displaying external marks of success has become worthless.

Concerning the breadth, length, depth and height of God's love (Eph. 3:18)

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul the Apostle speaks about the breadth, length, depth and height of God's love (Eph. 3:18f): "That ye may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge". We all think we know something or we have experienced and perceived this love; yet, however, we are nowhere close to understanding or to completely perceiving and experiencing this unbounded love. Many of us have discovered certain aspects of God's love; but the height, length and breadth

⁷ Available online at <https://www.allaboutgod.com/french/dieu-est-amour.htm>, accessed on the 18th of September 2017.

of this love are still unknown to us. This love resembles an immense ocean; one could never comprehend its full extent, I mean to know it in detail and to cross its full length, breadth, depth, etc.

In the prayers and the services of the Orthodox Church, one of the most important divine names used to worship God is 'Lover of mankind'. "O, Love That deifies us, You are God"⁸ calls out St. Symone the New Theologian. The ritual of the divine Liturgy and of the Holy Mysteries, of Lauds and Hierurgies, in fact the entire Orthodox public worship includes numerous texts that invoke God's love, the Lover of mankind. We mention some examples. In the Divine Liturgy, the priest, among others, intones in a loud voice the following ecphoneses: "For You are a merciful God Who loves mankind and to You we offer up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages." During the service of the Mystery of Holy Unction, in the second prayer, the priest reads: "O God, Great and Supreme, worshiped by all creation, fountainhead of wisdom, abyss of unfathomable goodness and boundless gulf of loving-kindness; Master Who loves mankind, the God of things eternal and wonders ... O Lord, Who are easy to be entreated; You alone are merciful and You love mankind; You are sorrowful for our evil deeds... ." Then, in the 4th prayer, the Church, through its saints, entered at the beginning these words: "O Gracious, Loving Compassionate and Ever-Merciful Lord, Plentiful in mercy and rich in beneficence, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort..."; in the 5th prayer the priest entreats God using the words 'Merciful' and 'All-Merciful': 'All-Merciful King'. At the end of the service, the priest, as he opens the Gospels above the heads of the sick attending the service, reads a prayer that mentions the boundless mercy of our Lord: "... for as it is Your majesty, so is Your mercy."⁹ Otherwise stated, if His glory is boundless, then His mercy is unlimited.

God, in His essence and nature, remains in a transcendence that is inaccessible to man, as no man has ever seen God (Jn. 1:18; 4:12). Yet, He reveals Himself, He manifests Himself in relation to the world that He created and supports in its existence, through His energy. The grace of love for men has been working in the entire history of the fall and salvation as in the following fragment:

"Is there anything that God has not done so that we love Him? Is there any means that he has not used? Is there something that He has overlooked? We mocked Him without Him doing something wrong before us, on the contrary, He did good before us and He bestowed thousands of gifts upon us. (...) We should consider the

⁸ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Imne*, hymn 6, translated by Rev. Fr. professor Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, in *Studii de Teologie Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, Mitropolia Olteniei Publishing House, Craiova, 1990, p. 349.

⁹ *Aghiasmatar cuprinzând slujbe, rânduieli și rugăciuni săvârșite de preot la diferite trebuințe din viața creștinilor*, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002, p. 147, 153 și 167.

occasions when we mock and dishonor Him even if we receive innumerable gifts and the way He comforts us on every occasion in which we ask for His help and He will not overlook us, but He will draw us to Himself. If we are convinced of these things, we shall then be capable to ignite within ourselves that love for Him.”¹⁰

For this reason, the same Father of the Church exhorts us: “God provided us with a multitude of paths to salvation; let us not disregard them.”¹¹

God’s love poured out upon creation

Reviewing the writings of the Patristic literature, we unequivocally discover an consensus among the Fathers of the Church who, with affable and gentle words, aim at persuading us to follow them in their resolute belief regarding the knowledge of the irresistible love of our Lord for us, love that He has revealed on many occasions and under many forms to humankind. In the beginning, through the Word, God made heaven and earth. He made the firmament as a dividing wall between the water above and the water below. He commanded the water below to be collected into one place and He called them seas, and the dry land which appeared he called earth; and commanded the earth to bring forth grass bearing seed and other plants. He made two great lights on the firmament of heaven to shine upon the earth; then He commanded the waters to bring forth animals having life and winged creatures flying above the earth under the firmament. And because it was necessary to create the animals, God brought them into being; some of them were to be used by man as sources of food and others to serve him. Wild beasts and reptiles were also created. At the end of the sixth day, God made man in His image. He made him partaker of His knowledge and endowed him, above all creatures, with reason, will, feelings, freedom, consciousness etc. He gave man authority over all the animals, giving them names and He allowed man to take delight in the unspeakable splendours of paradise, letting him have dominion over all the creation of the Earth. All these were for man, so that man, being so richly endowed with these benefits, could enjoy everything eyes could see. Thus:

“After arranging everything in good order, after establishing all visible things in proper order and patterns, after laying an unstinting table filled with various foods, rich and plentiful, after adorning the heaven and the earth with equal beauties and splendours and, if I may say, after preparing a kinglike palace, gleaming in all its details, then, He created the creature who was meant to enjoy and benefit from all

¹⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *Comentariile sau explicarea Epistolei către Romani*, translated from Greek, Oxonia Edition, 1849, by Archimandrite Theodosie Athanasiu, Bucharest, 1906, p. 70, 72.

¹¹ Idem, *In Acta Apostolorum*, XXI, 4, in *P.G.* LX, ed. Abbot J.P. Migne, Paris, 1862, col. 169.

these splendours. This creature was given authority over everything that eyes could see and He demonstrated that this creature that was to be created was superior to the rest of the creation which was to be under this creature's authority and direction."¹²

Making a short digression in our composition, we emphasize the fact that these divine gifts were not bestowed exclusively on our protoparents, Adam and Eve, but they were intended for all their descendants until the end of the world. In this regard, St. John Chrysostom adds:

"... now see that God made the firmament, placed the sun in the firmament, collected the seas into one place, expanded the air, set the course of the moon, set immutable laws for the seasons of the year and at His sign all the other elements of creation shall follow their intended route. For both men and animals, those that creep, that walk, that fly and swim, animals in ponds, in springs, in rivers, in mountains, in plains, in houses, in the air, in fields, plants, seeds and trees, wild and planted by man, both fruitful and unfruitful, in one word all things that are moved by the weariless hand of God, they all serve to provide for our life, and God not only provides and gives us what we need, but He will bestow on us more than we need."¹³

Returning from this short digression and continuing our reflection, we mention that Adam, immediately after being created, needed help and support from a being of the same nature as his. God did not overlook this aspect either and created woman in the image he wanted and He committed her to him and bestowed on him the gift of prophecy.

"And I think then – writes St. John Chrysostom – that after all these unspeakable and ineffable benefits He bestowed on man the unsurpassed gift of them of all was to liberate man from all concerns related to the body, precluding man from wearing clothes and any other needs. Quite the contrary, God intended man, as I said above, to live on the earth like an earthly angel; thus, when I consider all these, I can only marvel at our Lord's love for humankind and at man's laziness and the envy of the devil that could not stand to see man living as an angel in a human body."¹⁴

When man, being deceived by the serpent, fell into sin and through sin into death and all the consequences related to it, God did not leave him without watching over him, but He gave man, at the beginning, a law to help him, He (then) appointed angels to guard him and care for him, He sent prophets to rebuke man for his foolishness and teach him virtues, He set a guard over man's tendency to wickedness through threats; through promises He awaked man's aspiration for virtue. He revealed, in advance, on different

¹² Idem, *Omilii la Facere*, homily VII, VI, translation, introduction, indices and notes by Rev. Fr. D. Fecioru, in coll. *Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești (PBS)*, vol. 21, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1987, p. 94-95.

¹³ *Ibidem*, homily XIII, V, p. 164.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, homily XV, IV, p. 173.

occasions, the end of foolishness and the beginning of virtue through exemplary people, so that man could learn from his neighbour; and, despite all these and even more, He did not turn His face away from us when we would persist in disobedience to Him. All these are because the goodness of God has never abandoned us and we could not obstruct His love for us; on the contrary, even if we have offended our Benevolent Father through our unresponsiveness to His gifts, we have been brought back from death and we have been brought back to life through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The multi-faceted revelation of Christ's love for us

The manner in which God calls humankind to salvation remains inscrutable and mysterious. We can illustrate this by examples from N.T. texts. We shall choose only some of them. Zacchaeus, the tax collector who ardently wanted to see the face of the Lord Jesus and who, to be able to do this, as he was little of stature, climbed up into a sycamore tree. Not only was he accepted and received by Jesus, but He even honoured him with the blessing of going to his house, displaying a love that the publican did not deserve. He called Paul, who sought not and even resisted the call, and He turned him, the great persecutor, into the greatest apostle, thus directing his zeal and fervour to love for Christ and the preaching of His Gospel. Thus, Paul became one of the most paradigmatic Christian missionaries of all times and Petre Țuțea, the Romanian essayist and philosopher, in an answer to Nae Ionescu's question about his opinion concerning St. Paul, said: "He is not a mere man, sir, he is the entire Mediterranean."¹⁵ He caused another one to follow Him and He did not allow that man to bury his father (Mt. 8:21). To Cornelius, who was continuously praying to God and persevering in charity and alms, "as a reward, He showed the path to salvation and He urged him, through an angel, to receive Peter who would tell him what he ought to do achieve salvation together with his household. Thus, in numerous ways, with infinite love, He bestows on men the wisdom of God that is necessary to achieve salvation. God bestows on every man the Grace of His generosity."¹⁶ Since the beginning of creation, if one wanted to look with good mind and right judgment upon everything that is achieved every day by the Creator of the universe for the well-being of every part of creation, he or she would discover in every aspect and action in creation the infinite love of God for men and he or she could say, together with Origen: "As the body is

¹⁵ Petre Țuțea, *322 de vorbe memorabile*, the 4th edition, Humanitas Publishing House, 2009, p. 109.

¹⁶ St. John Cassian, *Convorbiri duhovnicești*, Part 2, The third talk with Fr. Cheremon, Chapter XV, 1-2, translated by Professor David Popescu, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 57, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1990, p. 545-547.

accompanied by its shadow on its way, so does the benevolence of God the Almighty support those who love Him: angels, souls, spirits."¹⁷

Christ the Saviour calls His death a sacrifice and He says that He came to give His life as a sacrifice (Mt. 20:28). He did not refuse to give His life as a sacrifice and ransom even for one single man only as He loves each of us infinitely. "Christ loves each of us with the same love He has for the whole world"¹⁸ as each of us is unique¹⁹ before God and more precious than all the galaxies because it is man who was made in the image of God and was given the possibility to unite with Him and possess through grace what He has by nature. Man is the connection between the world and God as "human nature contains an element akin to God."²⁰ The ultimate purpose of the redeeming work of Christ is the joy of man, accomplished and achieved through the Resurrection of the Saviour from the dead.

Through His Resurrection from the dead, human nature received the grace of Christ and we were given the possibility to partake of eternal life, through God's grace. The Fathers of the Church do not talk about the death of Christ without mentioning the Lord's Resurrection. Saint John Damascene underlines the fact that, even though they are distinct and distant moments, the death and resurrection of the Saviour are, in fact, a unity. Although His human body is dead, He is a life giver and the source of incorruptibility, as He overcomes the laws of the corruptible nature.²¹ Through His resurrection, the Saviour "renewed and deified the human nature that was strengthened and restored through the sacrifice on the cross. The death on the cross is closely connected to the Resurrection and to the Incarnation and they are both accomplished in and through Resurrection."²²

Christ made His love manifest to us not only by creating us and the world out of nothing, through His Incarnation, passion and death on the Cross, but also through the Resurrection, the Ascension and by sending the Holy Spirit and through His grace that is apparent in everything we see around us. "And I remember – says St. John Chrysostom – that man had so deeply sunk into the depths of wickedness that he could not go any deeper

¹⁷ Origen, *Contra Iulium Celsus*, Book VIII, Chapter LXIV, translated by Rev. Fr. Professor T. Bodogae, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 9, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1984, p. 558.

¹⁸ St. John Chrysostom, *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Galatas*, II, 8, in *P.G.* LXI, ed. Abbot J.P. Migne, Paris, 1862, col. 647.

¹⁹ We are unique, each and every one of us, created by the hand of God for one reason: because this was His will and He has loved us. We are not the result or the effect of chance or of an accident – *author's note*.

²⁰ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica magna*, VI, in *P.G.* XLV, ed. Abbot J.P. Migne, Paris, 1863, col. 25D.

²¹ St. John Damascene, *Ode* VII, 1, in *P.G.* XCVI, ed. Abbot J.P. Migne, Paris, 1864, col. 841C.

²² Ph.D. Sava Gheorghe, „Moartea și Învierea lui Hristos, temeiuri ale dreptei credințe“, in *Ortodoxia*, XV (1988), No. 2, p. 110.

and that he was saved by Jesus Christ and taken to a place that would not allow him to go any higher."²³

Mentioning the Ascension of the Lord Jesus into heaven, St. Cyril of Alexandria proposes a series of very profound theological interpretations. Thus, first²⁴, he highlights the fact that Christ, after destroying the domination of death, conquering the power of sin, giving us the strength to trample down serpents and vipers and all the power of evil. He did not consider it to be instrumental and beneficial to stay here, on earth, in the form of humility and of self-denial – a form that He took fruitfully in His love for us – but He had to return to His glory, as all the divine economy intended for us was accomplished, and to ascend into heaven and return to the equality of His relationship with God the Father in the body He had taken for us. He did not consider the Incarnation as a separation from His divine nature, which He had as an inseparable characteristic, and He descended to our lack of glory. He revealed Himself as God over the Powers of heaven, of those who were standing at the gates of heaven and who were commanded to receive Him as Lord of hosts, even if He ascended with His body.²⁵ Ascending into heaven, He did not enter the Holy of Holies made by hands, but heaven itself, beyond the dwellings of angels, to stand in front of God on our behalf, "as the face of man, loved to the highest degree, in Him."²⁶ Christ did not ascend into heaven to stand Himself in front of God the Father, as He has always been and will be within the Father and in the eyes of the Father Who begat Him and the Father will always be with Him. But, "the Word who has not been previously incarnated" ascended into heaven to appear, Himself, in front of the Father in an exceptional and wonderful form, having a human face and appearance. He did this for us and to our benefit, the Son being there as well as a man who could hear with His ears: "Sit thou on My right hand" (Ps. 109:1) and who could share with humankind the glory of His filiation. The Son, standing in front of the Father with a human appearance, "makes manifest His filial relation with the Father through His human body as well. Thus, He ascends with His human nature to the height of His filial love for the Father. This adds worthiness to the human nature! The Father is delighted at and enjoys seeing the face of man as He takes pleasure in seeing the face of His Son."²⁷ He came as a man in front of the Father so that He could "bring us back in front of the Father after we fell for our disobedience. He

²³ St. John Chrysostom, *Homiliae XXXIV in Epistulam ad Hebraeos*, 5, 1, in *P.G.* LXIII, ed. Abbot J.P. Migne, Paris, 1862, col. 46-47.

²⁴ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Comentariu la Evanghelia Sfântului Ioan*, Book IX, Introduction, translation and notes by Rev. Fr. Professor Dumitru Stăniloae, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 41, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 2000, p. 835.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, Book X, chapter I, p. 910-911.

²⁶ Rev. Fr. Professor Dumitru Stăniloae, explanatory note, no. 1583, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 41, ed. cit., p. 835.

²⁷ Idem, explanatory note, no. 1585, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 41, ed. cit., p. 835.

wanted, as the Son, for us to be called and considered sons and children of God for Him."²⁸

Blessed Augustine's commentary on our Lord's Ascension highlights points of view that are worthy to be considered.

And He vanished from our sight so that we could return to our heart and look for Him and find Him as He departed and 'here is Christ' (Mt. 24:23). He did not want to stay any more with us and yet He did not abandon us. He returned to the place from which He had not departed, as the world was made through Him and He was in this world and He came to this world to deliver sinners (Jn. 6:33).²⁹

From the same perspective, the church writer (†524), known in history as the last Greek philosopher, although he wrote in Latin, concludes: "(Christ) ascended into heaven from where, as He is the Son of God, He had never departed and He took man, who was not allowed by the devil to ascend, with Him into heaven."³⁰ In his turn, Nicolaus Cusanus (†1464) aims at convincing us that Christ's Ascension places Him in the same proximity with all creatures in all places and times and makes Him the First-fruits of any resurrection and ascension in the world.³¹ According to the Orthodox doctrine of God's love for man, the preparation of man for God's grace, the deification of man and of all of humankind through grace, born with the sin of our protoparents, "would not have become apparent in all their splendour unless man had been raised and ascended together with Jesus Christ, the human and divine hypostasis, on His right hand, a human being among us, the Mother of God and our Mother. 'For you did not go to the threshold of heaven as Elijah, but you went to the throne of our Lord.'"³²

Even though He ascended into heaven, the work of Christ in the world continues uninterrupted. Thus, we can realize without difficulty that the earth, water, fire, whose nature does not have any rational explanation, could not exist of themselves. Those who have a different opinion might be asked this question: how could they have been organized and existed under the form they exist? Or, as Eusebius of Caesarea so admirably states:

²⁸ St. Cyril of Alexandrie, *op. cit.*, p. 835.

²⁹ Blessed Augustine, *Confessiones - Mărturisiri*, Book IV, XII, (19), translation and indices by Professor Nicolae Barbu, D. Sc., in coll. *PSB*, vol. 64, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1985, p. 110.

³⁰ Boethius, *Articole teologice*, I, 4, translation, notes and commentaries by Professor David Popescu, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 72, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1992, p. 32.

³¹ *Docta ignorantia*, Petzolt I, 1949, p. 107 *apud* Olivier Clément, *Introducere*, in Marko Ivan Rupnik, *Cuvinte despre om. Persoana – ființă a Paștelui*, translation by Maria-Cornelia Oros, Deisis Publishing House, Sibiu, 1997, p. 19.

³² St. John Damascene *apud* Professor D. Stăniloae, „Maica Domnului ca mijlocitoare“, in *Ortodoxia*, 1952, no. 4, p. 127.

“What could have differentiated the elements or, on the contrary, the attraction and the union of opposites? Who made and commanded the heaviest of the elements to be carried by water? Who reversed the characteristics of water (that, as we know, flows downward) and carried it upward, in the clouds? Who forced the flame of fire to spread through the fibers of the wood and to mix with elements that are so contrary to its nature? Who added to the coolness of fresh air a certain thermal characteristic that brings to an end the conflict between opposite properties under the form of leniency? Who endowed the human race with the possibility to multiply thus prolonging their existence until eternity of the life without death? Who made man and woman and made them complement each other in an absolute harmony and who allowed all living beings to pass on life from one generation to another? Who turns the fluidity of man’s semen – which is just an ephemeral and insensitive secretion – into something that can give life? Who will ceaselessly work every day all these and many other wonders of wonders beyond our capacity to marvel? Who is That makes possible, every day and every second, through His unseen and intangible power, all these births and deaths?

Well, the source of all these things can be found in the Word of God, Who works in such an incomprehensible manner.³³

When contemplating the entire creation or meditating on the stupendous works of God in it, we can only marvel at them. The one who will not marvel at God and His works, he or she does not know God. This is the essence of theology: a continuous marvelling at God and His gifts embedded in His creation. Our words cannot convey nor our feelings and thoughts perceive the wonderful work of God in the world. Saint John Cassian, speaking about the complete change, in and through Christ, of sinful men, says that the insatiability of their stomachs and the appetite of their mouths for costly things and their burning desires, which before that moment they used to consider natural and inextinguishable, were repressed and vanished to such an extent that they no longer felt compelled by any bodily unquietness:

“Is there anyone who will not tremble when realising the power of God, when seeing that men who were once mischievous and wicked, who would be beside themselves with rage even when their subjects would address themselves to them with flattering words, have improved to such an extent that they will not be filled with anger when being injured, but, on the contrary, they will become filled with joy and contently receive any office, or is there anyone who will not become filled with wonder when seeing God’s works and who will not exclaim from the depth of their souls: ‘I know that the Lord is great’ when he or she finds out that he or she has changed from a greedy person into a generous one, from a big spender into a thrifty person, from a haughty person into a humble one, from a fastidious man and luxury lover into a simple and modest person, willingly enjoying poverty and being in need?

³³ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Viața lui Constantin cel Mare*, Lecture on the Holy Sepulchre, 11.13.-11.14., translation and notes by Radu Alexandrescu, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 14, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1991, p. 221.

(...) What other wonder may be greater than the situation when, in a very short time, the greedy publicans became apostles, the blood-thirsty persecutors became very diligent preachers of the Gospel who made known and shed their blood for the faith they had persecuted? These are the works of God and the Son acknowledges that He fulfils them together with the Father when He says: 'My Father worketh hitherto and I work' (Jn. 5:17).³⁴

As far as men are concerned, we received both life on earth and eternal life from Christ the Saviour, *the Word of life*. Jesus Christ is the life of the world (Jn. 1:14). This truth is strengthened by the Saviour Himself when He says: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn. 14:6). "For life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us" (1 Jn. 1:1f). Saint Gregory of Nyssa says: "Not living in You is not living at all."³⁵ Although we cease to exist physically, Christ will never leave from us as He says: "I am Resurrection and life; he that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (Jn. 11:25). Christ is for us "the way, the gate, the key and the kingdom. He is the way because He guides us; the key because He opens and opens Himself to those who are worthy of divine things; the gate because He leads us in; the kingdom because He is inherited and He is shared and partaken in by the entirety of humankind."³⁶

When he speaks about our Saviour as of our Physician and Healer, St. Cyril of Jerusalem gives us this advice: "Let everyone hear Jesus (...) Let us flee to the Lord who forgives our trespasses! If we are ill, He will deliver us from illness; if our souls suffer, let us follow the Physician of souls; if we are hungry, let us receive the Bread; if we have died, let us receive the Resurrection; if we have grown old in ignorance, let us beg wisdom from the Wisdom."³⁷ Not only that Christ receives and answers our prayers and brings to us from God the answer of goodness, but He will also pray for us and within us. As Blessed Augustine says: „He (Christ) will intercede for us as

³⁴ St. John Cassian, *Convorbiri duhovnicești...*, part II, The second talk with father Chaeremon, chapter XII, 2-7, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 57, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, p. 525-526.

³⁵ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *La titlurile Psalmilor*, part I, chapter VII, translation and notes by Rev. Fr. professor Teodor Bodogae, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 30, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998, p. 151.

³⁶ St. Maximus the Confessor, *Capete gnostice*, the 2nd hundred, chapter 69, translation, introduction and notes by Rev. Fr. Professor Dumitru Stăniloae, Ph. D, in coll. *Filocalia sau culegere din scrierile Sfinților Părinți care arată cum se poate omul curăți, lumina și desăvârși*, vol. II, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999, p. 190.

³⁷ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Omilie la slăbănogul de la scăldătoarea Vitezda*, 19, in *Cateheze*, translation from Greek and notes by Rev. Fr. Professor Dumitru Fecioru, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, p. 378.

our Priest; He will pray for us as He is our Head; we pray to Him as He is our Lord.³⁸

After His Ascension into Heaven, the Lord Christ does not abandon us, but He gives Himself entirely to each of us during the Divine Liturgy. In our turn, we bring to the Holy Altar what we have that is most precious – our own life, represented and symbolised through the gifts of bread and wine. Christ will help us from within. The love of the Son of God for mankind is made manifest not only through His Sacrifice on the Cross, but also through the Sacrifice that is mysteriously continued in the Holy Eucharist through which we are in union with God. Thus, as only He knows, He enters man through the most intimate and complete union, for a reciprocal habitation, of Christ in man and of man in Christ. Saint John Chrysostom launches under this aspect a rhetorical question:

“Is there any other shepherd who feed his sheep with his own limbs? But, why do I say a shepherd? There are frequently mothers who, after giving birth, send out their newly born children to nurses. But Christ could not do this, rather He Himself feeds us with His blood and in every possible way He brings us in communion with Him. He will mingle and unite with each of the faithful through the Holy Mysteries. He nourishes by Himself those whom He begot without trusting this to another.”³⁹

The Saviour wants to abide and stay in us, to be inside us. He wants to enter and participate within our being, in the Holy Spirit, through the Holy Eucharist. In this regard, we read in the Holy Scripture that after His Resurrection from the dead, on the road to Emmaus, He appears to two disciples – Luke and Cleopas (Lk. 24:13ff). They did not know Him, despite the fact that the Good Saviour expounded unto them the things in the Scripture about which they were talking concerning Him. When He ‘made as though’ He was to continue on the road to Emmaus, the two disciples besought Him earnestly to abide with them. When they sat at the table He blessed the bread, broke it (only the master of a Jewish house would do that) and He gave to them. Then “their eyes were opened” and they knew Him, but, at that very moment He vanished from their sight. He had mysteriously entered the bread He had blessed that was in front of them. Christ did not want to remain a reality situated outside man, but He wanted to enter man, to enter his mind and heart and all his being, through the Holy Spirit, in a mysterious and unseen way, yet, a very real one, thus becoming the Life of his life.

³⁸ Blessed Augustine, *Ennaratio in Psalmum 81*, in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina (P.L.) XXXVII*, ed. Abbot J.P. Migne, Paris, col. 1081.

³⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *Commentarium in S. Matthaeum Evangelistam*, LXXXII, 5, in *P.G. LVIII*, ed. Abbot J.P. Migne, Paris, 1862, col. 744.

"Your Lord is more affectionate than a father and more caring than a mother"

The love based relationship between man and God is compared in the Holy Scripture with more types of relationships that we encounter in our everyday life. When Christ the Saviour teaches His disciples how to pray, He shows them that God should be considered 'our Father': "After this manner therefore pray ye..." (Mt. 6:9; Lk. 11:9ff). Likewise, God compares His love with a mother's love: "Will a woman forget her child, so as not to have compassion upon the offspring of her womb? But if a woman should ever forget these, yet I will not forget thee" (Is. 49:15). Saint John Chrysostom says:

"Your Lord is more affectionate than a father and more caring than a mother, Who loves more than a groom loves his bride, Who considers that His rest is your salvation and Who rejoices more than you over deliverance from perils and death... and Who will make manifest every kind of love: parents' love for their offspring, a mother's love for the offspring of her womb, a farmer's love for his vineyard, a builder's love for his trade, a groom's love for his bride, a young man's love for a young woman, that love that will take away from you all the afflictions as far as the sunrise is from the sunset, as high as the sky is from the earth – as I have showed – or, better said, not only all these, but even more than these, as I have showed by approaching this topic and by advising you not to focus exclusively on images, but to go beyond them through rational thought. As God's providence is beyond understanding, His care for us is infinite, His goodness is unspeakable and His love for people is beyond our senses and understanding."⁴⁰

Only our God can love us with a loyal and unalterable love, no matter the circumstances. The relationship based on love and sacrifice between Christ and His Church is the model when it comes to the way husbands should love their wives: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it." (Eph. 5:25). How impressive it is to see that the Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and of the earth, loves His creatures so much!

One of the most profound and self-sacrificial loves in the world is, certainly, maternal love. There are many things that might intervene between a husband and his wife thus separating them; a father might turn his back on his child; brothers and sisters might alienate from one another and might even become hostile to one another; but a mother's love will last forever. Regardless of the circumstances or situation, good or bad, a mother will love her child, she always hopes that he or she will repent and will return to the right path. She will not believe and does not want to believe that her beloved

⁴⁰ Idem, *Scrisori din exil*, VIII, 6-9, translation by Ioan I Ică jr., Deisis Publishing House, Sibiu, 2003, p. 288-289.

child is lost. There is nothing that could touch a mother's love, which is stronger than death. When the little baby is ill, she would voluntarily take the illness on herself – if only she could – from her beloved child! Nevertheless, maternal love in itself pales in comparison with the height and the profoundness of God's love.

Making an effort to understand this divine thirst for love, we cannot come close to the limits of comprehension. Of all the metaphors we use when talking about God, the most frequently used word is *Father* and we believe and experience that our relationship with God is similar with that between a child and his or her father.⁴¹ Yet, if this is the case, if we might dare to say this without speaking blasphemy, those of us who are fathers could share the same perspective on the paternal relationship from the father's point of view. My relationship with my children is, from certain perspectives, similar to the relationship between God and His creatures. Before anything else, children owe their life and everything they possess to God and to us, their parents. Furthermore, I love my children from an ontological impulse that is innate to my human nature and this does not depend on their excellence. Furthermore, is there anything that they can offer me in return? They cannot give me material goods. And, yet, they can give me something – in fact, the only thing I want from them – their affection or their love that is expressed through good deeds, actions and words. My children, being very young, cannot offer me gifts at Christmas, but I would be extremely disappointed if they did not offer me a gift, their love, the only thing I could not buy, no matter how much money I have. And this present from them is, in fact, the expression of their love. Even the youngest child will intuitively admit that, although he or she depends on his or her parents for everything he or she has, his or her parents are *dependent on* him or her for the only thing without which, regardless of how *omnipotent* they might seem, their life would be empty and deserted, yet, as they are surrounded by their child's love, no matter what disaster might occur, their life is fulfilled. A parent does not need this love as a *sine qua non* condition for his or her love, but he or she will strive toward it with a spiritual thirst.

Perhaps, to a certain extent, our relationship with God is similar. The nature of love is characterized by its unconditional and spontaneous dissemination, without expecting anything in return; without asking for something in return and yet, it needs something in return. After all (is it not like this?), this is the very nature of love, to expect love from the one we love. To be loved, not to be appreciated. The nature of love does not consist in being recognized and admitted or wanted as a source of love, in a superior sense of the word. It consists in being loved in an identical way, with the same type of love and, as a consequence, as an equal. As between me and my

⁴¹ This analogy is encountered at George Bosworth Burch, in his study *The Christian Philosophy of Love*, published in 'The Review of Metaphysics', Vol. 3, No. 4, 1950, p. 426.

child there is a relationship based on love, even if he was born to me and he takes the source of his love from my love for him, and we mutually support one another, doing together what we could not do separately, I fulfil my nature through love – its most inspiring activity – and, in a certain ineffable way, I fulfill his nature. This does not mean that, in case love is not reciprocated, it will be prevented from manifesting itself. It will not cease to exist because this is its nature, as I have already mentioned, to exist as an attitude of affection, to share and to sacrifice unselfishly.

Thus, in various and numerous manners:

“Through inscrutable means and paths, God brings about salvation to humankind. He prompts those who will and thirst for salvation to be more fervent and there are others whom He compels even if they are not willing. He will either help us fulfil our wishes He considers beneficial or He instils in us the beginnings of holy intentions, endowing us with the inspiration for good deeds and perseverance in them. For this reason, when we pray we call the Lord not only our protector and Saviour, but also our strength and help. Through the fact that He will call us first and, without us knowing it, we are brought nearer to salvation, He is our protector and saviour and through the fact that He will support us in our endeavours and He will rise and strengthen us when we ask for His help, He is our refuge and strength. Thinking of this great abundance of God’s mercy and seeing that he was surrounded by God’s love as if he stood in the centre of a sea whose bottom and shore could not be seen, the apostle will exclaim: ‘O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord’ (Rom. 11:33f). Anyone who would dare to believe that he or she could know with a human mind the depth of this unsearchable profundity will attempt to void the admiration of this quest that distressed that great teacher of the Gentiles. For the man who thinks he or she might know with the mind or express through words all the love with which God works the salvation of man will, undoubtedly and rejecting the truth in the words of the apostle, assert, with iniquitous boldness, that the judgments of the Lord could be searched and known and that His ways could be found out. With the intention to convey through a human sentiment the care and the love God has for us with unwearable devoutness and because he does not find in the world such love with which he could compare it appropriately, the apostle compared God’s love with a devout mother’s love. Using this example, because there is nothing more precious (...) he will say: ‘Will a woman forget her child, so as not to have compassion upon the offspring of her womb?’ As this comparison is not satisfactory from his point of view, however, he continues by adding: ‘But if a woman should even forget these, yet, I will not forget thee.’ (Isaiah 49:15)⁴²

God loves us so much that His love surpasses even our parents’ love; and this love is as strong and profound as it is the triumph of good over evil. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how

⁴² St. John Cassian, *Convorbiri duhovnicești...*, Part II, chapter XVII, p. 549.

much more shall your Father Who is in heaven" (Mt. 7:11). The Lord did not utter this "to despise human nature, nor to punish man, but, in comparison to His goodness He calls His wrath parental love. So great is His love for man."⁴³ Although we say we love God, His love for us surpasses our love for Him. Venerable Old Man Panais (Hagiionas) from Greece said about this: "No matter how intensely our children might want to love us, we love them more. Parents will always love more. And God is our Father. He loves us more."⁴⁴

God's ultimate purpose is man's benefit

Because God has loved us first with an unspeakable ardour, love is an essential divine attribute, offered to man as a gift out of mercy and affection, so that man should be in union with God and participate in the triune communication. This feeling, that is beyond human nature, rightly belongs to God; and, as God is eternal, love is eternal in its course; and, as God is infinite, love is unbounded and it extends beyond this life and it becomes perfected in eternity. Although God does not need anything that belongs to us, God will not cease to love us, He descends from the heavenly heights and comes to search for us, on Earth. God does not spare any means to communicate with us in accessible terms borrowed from our human language as He does when He says: "For I am a jealous God" (Ex. 20:5). He will do this to reveal Himself and to make us understand the fervour of His love. Everything that God has done and made is a reason to love Him.⁴⁵ When we say that God has always loved us, we understand why He has loved us even before we were created. For this reason, before the beginning of time, He planned to create the earth with all His riches and splendours over which man would be master and which he would enjoy. When man himself strives to please God:

"His love for us will go beyond any limit. In fact, the special place man holds in the world is not the result of man's worthiness before God, but of the unbounded divine love. God Himself has shown humility not only through the Incarnation of His son, but even since the creation of man when He gave love as a common connection, as a shared characteristic of both Him and man. As God is love and man was made in the image of God, this means that love is a reflection of God's

⁴³ St. John Chrysostom, *Omilii la Matei*, homily XXIII, IV, translation, introduction and indices by Rev. Fr. D. Fecioru, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 23, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1994, p. 299.

⁴⁴ Klitos Ioannidis, *Patericul secolului XX*, translation by Daniela Filioreanu, Cartea Ortodoxă Publishing House, Galați, s. a., p. 341.

⁴⁵ St. John Chrysostom, *Homélies sur l'épître aux Romains*, vol. XVI, p. 209 *apud* Rev. Fr. Teodor Damian, „Virtutea dragostei la Sfântul Ioan Gură de Aur“, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, XCVII (1979), No. 5-6, p. 676.

image in man and this is the beginning of the divine kenosis that will never end in this stage.”⁴⁶

As a matter of fact, there are three expressions of love: bodily beauty, the greatness of benefaction and love that is expressed. Each of these could bring about inside us this wonderful feeling; even if we have not been provided with a benefit from a person, it is enough to know that he or she loves us with an unaltering love which leads to the establishing of a spiritual attachment to that person and to an attitude of love as for a benefactor.

“In God there are these three reasons to such an extent that no words can convey their intensity and the beauty of this most-blessed nature of God, which cannot be surpassed by anything, is beyond speech or thought... . Should we consider and remember the beneficence shed upon us and His love for us, we shall become aware of our duty to be grateful and thankful that represents the source of virtuous practices.”⁴⁷

Even if love is not based on *do ut des*, we will wonder, thankfully, if there is any kind of love that we might offer as a response to the profound love of God for us. Even though we would die repeatedly while fulfilling His commandments and keeping His teachings unaltered, our love would still not rise to the height of God’s love. Although we worship God during religious services, our worship represents a form of gratitude and a necessity, while God’s beneficence is an act of kindness that confirms the greatness of His goodness.⁴⁸

Our Lord, Who is quintessentially love, will always work, through all His actions, toward man’s benefit and He loves him more than man could love himself and His gifts always exceed man’s thoughts and expectations.

Christ the Lord applies all means that could be used to watch over, to call and to bring men to salvation. There is nothing that God values more than the salvation of man’s soul. This is also put forth by Paul the Apostle who says: “Who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). And once more, God Himself states this through the intermediary of one of the great prophets of the Old Testament, Ezekiel: “Shall I at all desire death of the sinner as I desire that he should turn from his evil way and live” (Ez. 18:23). This was the purpose of bringing into existence everything that exists. He made man not to lead him to perdition, nor to send him into hell, but to lead him to salvation, to save him from deceit and to endow him with the joy in the kingdom. He prepared this kingdom for men before the creation of the world as He Himself says: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of

⁴⁶ Rev. Fr. Teodor Damian, *op. cit.*, p. 676-677.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 678.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

the world" (Mt. 25:34). Once more, from this text as well, we can understand how long has God loved men. So that we could become worthy of what He has promised, God the Lord "exerts Himself, strives, applies all His actions to this purpose."⁴⁹

Saint Gregory of Nyssa suggests that, from his perspective, we intend the salvation of our souls as nourishment for Christ. This is what the One Who takes delight in our life says: "My will is to do the will of My Father" (Jn. 4:34) ... and this denotes the purpose of God's will, "Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Thus, this is the nourishment prepared for Him: us to be saved."⁵⁰ Reverend Fr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae who commented on this text writes that our salvation is nourishment for Christ Who takes delight in it, Who is spiritually nurtured and this brings Him delight because He loves us. This is comparable to the spiritual nourishment that a mother gets from her children's well-being and happiness. He continues by adding: "The Word of God Incarnate rejoices in our salvation although He has had all delight in Himself and He was not driven by an inner need to create and to redeem us. However, when He decided to take human flesh, His humanity became even more blessed through the happiness and bliss of His brothers."⁵¹

When St. Maximus the Confessor describes, for example, the purpose of the creation of the world, he does this, of course, aiming at awakening in our souls the trembling that will overcome passions and cultivate a fervent love for God, a love that brings men to a complete union with the Creator even in this life:

"God, Who is superabundant in His perfection, did not bring into existence the things He created because He lacked anything, but to bring delight to them, to allow them to partake in Him in proportion to their qualities and to rejoice in His creation when seeing them rejoicing and taking delight and being satiated without satiety by the One in Whom they cannot partake enough."⁵²

We do not know what is beneficial for us as He knows, we are not as concerned with doing what is appropriate for our own good as He is concerned with our salvation, we do not want to cleanse ourselves of our sins

⁴⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *Omiliile la Facere*, homily LV, IV, translation, introduction, indices and notes by Rev. Fr. D. Fecioru, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 22, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1989, p. 219.

⁵⁰ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Tâlcuire amănunțită la Cântarea Cântărilor*, homily X, translation by Rev. Fr. Professor D. Stăniloae, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 29, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1982, p. 250-251.

⁵¹ Rev. Fr. Professor Dumitru Stăniloae, Ph. D., explanatory note, no. 210, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 29, ed. cit., p. 251.

⁵² St. Maximus the Confessor, *Capete despre dragoste*, the third hundred, chapter 46, translation, introduction and notes by Rev. Fr. Professor Doctor Dumitru Stăniloae, in *Filocalia* ..., vol. II, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999, p. 111.

to the extent "God endeavours to expiate our sins and to bring us to salvation."⁵³ Not only does our Good Saviour directs us to the heavenly goodness, but He also protects us and "leads us in such a way, even without us being aware of this, to salvation."⁵⁴ Christ "will bring to light things that cause harm, He will talk about the causes of passion, He will cut the roots of thriftless desires, He will reveal to us what we should avoid and He offers to the sick the remedies for salvation. This is the greatest and the most majestic of all God's works: the salvation of humankind."⁵⁵ He will do everything to raise man ever higher even for the least significant deeds and He will watch over man, aiming at finding reasons and occasions to deliver him from wickedness.⁵⁶

There is not much that we do for God while He does so much for us. "How He is driven by love and generosity when He gives us everything! Is there anything that He could not do?"⁵⁷ As Rev. Fr. Professor Dumitru Stăniloae⁵⁸ asserted: for us, Christ is present through the Holy Eucharist and the Holy Mysteries, through the priests' blessings, He is present with His uncreated energies through all prayers. As an Haghiorite father underlined, if we knew God's love, we would be in Heaven. "This was true for Father Porphyrius. Once he said these words that are worthy of remembrance: "If God decided that I should be sent to hell, I would go there gladly and willingly, because God knows what is best for me." (this is what Panagiotis Sotiris – a journalist and writer – wrote)."⁵⁹ Of course, God will not allow the afflictions of hell to torment the faithful and the righteous; this witty remark originates in the profound humility that filled the Haghiorite father who uttered is, as we think it is the case too in the situation of the man who said: "If God condemned me to hell, I shall speak there as well about His love." The fathers will emphasize and bring to light the fact that the intrinsic and unspeakable love of God for us will compel each of us to respond with love to the Lord's love. The closer man gets to God and the more profound he internalizes even in this world the Kingdom of God and the multitude of the heavenly goodness, the more obvious to him his smallness and sinfulness that make him unworthy of such gifts becomes.

⁵³ St. John Chrysostom, *Omilii la Facere ...*, homily XXIV, VIII, p. 300.

⁵⁴ St. John Cassian, *Convorbiri duhovnicești ...*, Part I, Chapter VIII, 2, p. 419.

⁵⁵ Clement of Alexandria *Pedagogul*, book I, chapter XII, 100.1., translation, introduction, notes and indices by Rev. Fr. D. Fecioru, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 4, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1982, p. 224.

⁵⁶ St. John Chrysostom, *Omilii la Matei ...*, homily sIII, IV, p. 42.

⁵⁷ Pious Paisius the Aghiorite, *Cuvinte duhovnicești. Viața de familie*, translation from Greek by hieroschemamonk Ștefan Nuțescu, Evanghelismos Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, p. 72.

⁵⁸ Rev. Fr. Stăniloae, in *7 dimineți cu părintele Stăniloae*, interviews taken by Sorin Dumitrescu, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, s.a., p. 80.

⁵⁹ Klitos Ioannidis, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

So that we could live in love, the Creator does not issue despotic commands, but He will advise us and call us to love. "How irresistible is God's love for men! He does not lecture us like a teacher in front of his students, nor does He admonish like a master when talking to his domestics, but He will advise us as a good-hearted father."⁶⁰ Blessed Augustine, a great encyclopedic personality, gifted with a keen intelligence for the most abstract matters and also with a heart filled with goodness, wrote these wise words that are for us today the core of the Christian teaching: „Dilige (ama) et fac quod vis“⁶¹ which means "Love and do what you will", because if someone loves God and his neighbours, he may not make mistakes. God does not prohibit, He will not impel us to choose what is good, but He would rather recommend us life-giving directions. "God, the most abundant in goodness, will not urge us, because being impelled we might disobey and the more severe the punishment is."⁶² Each of the actions carried into effect by the Lord of creation is "a reason and premise for loving men"⁶³ and every kind of chastening is full of goodness as He is quick to help us and slow to anger. Yet, the more the sinner will suffer unless he is remorseful and punished or if his deeds remain overlooked by God, because there are more pains that gather through sinking in sins and departing from God – the Spring of Life, of good and rejoicing. However, He will not intervene brutally in the liberty of persons who may choose between living separated from God or in communion with Him. Thus, His love always maintains its sacrificial status. Love shall not be imposed by force. "Eventually, all love is crucified" said Pavel Evdokimov.⁶⁴ Yet, man's soul cannot rest until he feels Christ's love in him and until he reciprocates His love, because the human soul is thirsty for love and this thirst may be quenched only through ascending to Christ Who will satisfy it by filling it once again with the desire of our heart for His love. For this reason the Holy Spirit was sent into the world, to endow us with the water of the spiritual renewal, so that we "drinking from the Spirit, could receive and love Christ"⁶⁵ and through Christ, the Father. Paraphrasing St. Nicholas Cabasilas, we might say that if the eye was created to look for light and enjoy it, the ear for sounds and all the other things created for their

⁶⁰ Clement of Alexandria, *Cuvânt de îndemn către eleni (Protrepticul)*, chapter IX, 82.2., translation, introductions, notes and indices by Rev. Fr. D. Fecioru, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 4, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1982, p. 136.

⁶¹ Blessed Augustine, *In epistolam Ioannis*, VII, 8, in *P.L.* XXXV, ed. Abbot J.P. Migne, Paris, col. 2033.

⁶² Peter Damascene, *Învățătură duhovnicească*, in coll. *Filocalia* ..., vol. V, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 38.

⁶³ St. John Chrysostom, *Omiliile la Facere* ..., homily XVIII, III, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 21, ed. cit., p. 212.

⁶⁴ Paul Evdokimov *apud* Olivier Clément, *Introducere*, in Marko Ivan Rupnik, *Cuvinte despre om...*, p. 18.

⁶⁵ St. Athanasius the Great, *Epistolae ad Serapionem*, in *P.G.* XXVI, ed. Abbot J.P. Migne, Paris, 1857, col. 576.

purpose, then the desire of the soul will be fulfilled only when it finds God because the soul is *meant* to find its peace only in Christ, because He alone is both the Good and the Truth and everything that could make man rejoice.⁶⁶

The purpose and the meaning of the Christian's life is to ground one's life in Christ and His Gospel, so that there should be no distance between him and Christ, otherwise man departs from the Spring of Life, of the good and of joy. "For, behold, they that remove themselves far from Thee shall perish: Thou hast destroyed every one that goes a-whoring from Thee" (Ps. 72:26). As the grapevine draws its sap from the trunk, the construction is stable because it rests on its foundation and in the event there is a gap, it will shatter and collapse as it does not have enough support to bear its weight. Thus, it is vital that we, the faithful, come and stay close to Him and, when cleaving to Him, keep His commandments as He tells us: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in Me" (Jn 15:10).

"He is the head and we are the body; should there be any separation between the head and the body? He is the foundation and we are the construction; He is the trunk and we are the branches of the grapevine; He is the bridegroom and we are the bride; He is the shepherd and we are the sheep; He is the way and we are those who walk in it; again, we are the church and He dwells in it; He is the First Begotten and we are His brothers; He is the heir and He shares His inheritance with us; He is the life and we live it; He is the resurrection and we are those who have risen; He is the light and we are enlightened. All these above demonstrate unity and there is no empty space between them, no matter how insignificant it might be. For if even the smallest part is taken apart, in time, the biggest will come apart. The body, if it receives a small cut or if a small part is taken apart from it, it will perish; likewise, the building will collapse if even a narrow crack appears in its walls, the grapevine will become useless if its root is cut off a little. What we consider to be of almost no importance, is not small at all, but it is almost the entirety."⁶⁷

For these reasons, Christ the Lord gave us the commandments to love God 'with all' our heart, 'with all' our soul, 'with all' our mind and 'with all' our conviction, lest a part of our heart or soul be deprived of the love for God, because the evil attacks that very point intending to control the entire heart of man. This is just as enemies sneak into a fortress whose surrounding wall has just a small fissure or breach and they take it over.

God is so exceptionally good that He expects no reward from us, but He would rather be loved by us for what He bestowed on us. However, man,

⁶⁶ St. Nicholas Cabasilas, *Despre viața în Hristos*, an introductory study and translation from Greek by Rev. Fr. Professor Teodor Bodogae, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p. 92.

⁶⁷ St. John Chrysostom, *Comentariile sau Tâlcuirea Epistolei întâi către Corinteni*, homily VIII, translation from Greek of Oxonia edition (1847) by Archimandrite Theodosie Athanasiiu, Bucharest, 1908, Edition revised by Constantin Făgețean, Sofia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2007, p. 85-86.

in general, will succumb to the siren call of this secularized and sinful world, running in the paths of perdition and in the absence of authentic Christian living, unwilling to cleanse his soul from the alluvial moral impurity and to follow Christ's exhortations. Paradoxically and inexplicably, there are people who separate from God although His love for human kind is made more manifest.

"When I consider all these – writes St. Basil the Great – I become enveloped in fear and my soul is elevated, so that I must take heed not to, by ignoring reason or by labouring in vain, fall away from God's love and to bring shame upon Christ. For he who deceives us and exerts himself by all his cunning means to make us forget about our Benefactor through worldly delusions, tormenting us in order to ravish our souls and beset us, (he) will bring our disdain before God as a shameful thing and he will take pride in our disobedience and fall. He, who did not create us, who did not die for us, made us follow him in disobedience and to transgress God's commandments. This offence against God and this pride of the evil one are far worse than the torments in Geena; for (through these) we provide evil with ammunition for vanity and pride and we give him the occasion to raise against the One Who died for us and was resurrected and to Whom we owe the most, as it is written (Rom. 8:12). It is only this I may say about God's love. For the purpose, as I have mentioned above, was not to say everything as this is beyond man's capacity."⁶⁸

A father who is held dear by the Romanians, Venerable Teofil Părăian, from Brâncoveanu Monastery – Sâmbăta de Sus, born blind, in a family of peasants in the village of Topârcea, the county of Sibiu, but having his soul enlightened by the light of love, of beauty and longing for God, during one of the conferences organized by the Romanian Orthodox Students' Association in Iași, in 2000, insisted on instilling into our souls the conviction that Christ will help us from inside. And, as Father Teofil said:

"My God is the God Who washes man's feet. Christ would rather continue His incarnation within us, the faithful. My God will become a part of man to help him wherever he is and, in particular, to help support and help him from within, outwardly. Dwelling within the souls of the faithful, He is more intrinsic and intimate with them than they are with themselves.

God was incarnate from love, to stay closer to man. Let our words be God's words, let our works be accomplished to praise God. My God is God the Father, He is God the Brother, He is God the Friend, He is the Benevolent God; my God is the God Who blesses those whom He makes worthy of His blessing. My God is the God Who brings blessedness. As the sun will inherently shine, God will inherently accomplish and bestow the good."

⁶⁸ St. Basil the Great, *Regulile mari*, chapter II, question 2, answer III-IV, translation, introduction, indices and notes by Professor Iorgu D. Ivan, in coll. *PSB*, vol. 18, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1989, p. 223-224.

I remember, from the same period of my academic studies, that, during a conference on spiritual topics organized by the same Christian students' association in Iași – which I have mentioned above – where the guest speaker was Rev. Fr. Professor Constantin Coman, the speaker put forth, under the form of a question that later proved to be a rhetorical one, an idea. Because the matter and the answer are particularly outstanding, I will quote them:

“What does God mean? He is a Person Who loves you so much. He is in love with you, He bestows everything on you, on one condition: turn to Him so that you can receive; the meaning of existence is to unite with the person whom you love; when you work, you do not want to waste time, you work for the person whom you love and it is the same with sacrificing... . One day, there was a little girl who asked her grandmother, who was teaching her to praise God: How is God? What is He, where is He?, etc. And her grandmother answered: I do not know what He is, I do not know where He is, but, God is like this: she embraced and hugged the little girl. So, He is inexpressible. Yet, God is present here, as I embrace you, God is here.”

Overwhelming!⁶⁹

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⁶⁹ L'expression est utilisée par Françoise Barteau par rapport au monde compensatoire du Morois dans les textes français de la légende tristanienne ; voir *Les Romans de Tristan et Iseut: introduction à une lecture plurielle*, Paris, Larousse, 1972, p. 154 sq. .

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Springs of the Church Music: A “Russian *Axion Estin* (It Is Truly Meet)” from the Psaltic Manuscripts of Neamț Monastery

Alexandrel Barnea*

Abstract: The 19th century brought in the Romanian ecclesiastical environment a new type of music: the harmonies of choral music. Although psaltic music, with roots before the Middle Ages, but subjected to the evolutions and regressions of the Middle Ages, had a solid tradition in the Moldavian monasteries, and especially in Neamț Monastery, the presence of a consistent group of Russian monks determined here several creations with obvious Russian influence. Such is the case of the *Axion estin* from the Romanian manuscript no. 14 from the library of Neamț Monastery. We will briefly analyze this creation and underline its characteristics and the differences it presents from psaltic music. Such creations constitute the germs of choral creation in our country.

Keywords: Middle Ages, choral, melisma, psaltic music, Neamț Monastery, manuscript.

Being real tools for the researchers in the field of Romanian church music of Byzantine tradition, as well as in the field of Byzantine musical paleography, psaltic manuscripts are also a source of information, sometimes undiscovered, that we cannot find in other branches. They can be the key to certain questions, problems, controversies in the field of history, literature, church life and why not, in the field of life in general with all its aspects: social, anthropological, economic and political.

Neamț Monastery, the heart of Romanian spirituality and culture, has books and manuscripts of inestimable value in its library. Among these, there are a number of 42 psaltic manuscripts¹ that are a testimony of the Romanian Orthodox church music from Moldavia in the 19th century.

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¹In this study, we use the term “psaltic” since it is the most common in the Romanian ecclesiastic environment. The correct expression would be “manuscript of ecclesiastic music”. When I analyzed these manuscripts for my PhD thesis (that happened in the middle of 1990s), the number of manuscripts was the one mentioned above. We have no knowledge whether now, for various reasons, the number remained the same. See Rev. Alexandrel **BARNEA**, *Muzica bisericească în Moldova secolului al XIX-lea*, Editura Sf. Mina, p. 138-163.

I have chosen for the present study a “Russian *Axion estin* (It Is Truly Meet)” that can be found in the Romanian Manuscript no. 14, f. 7^v – 8^r. What motivated my choice?

In the 19th century, the Romanian Orthodox Church received the polyphonic-harmonic garment of the monody of Byzantine tradition. We call it choral singing. Up to this moment, the Romanian Church has used the monadic chant. The first manifestations of harmonic chant, timid of course at the beginning, occurred earlier than the 19th century, maybe even in the 18th century. In time, this “new chanting” that penetrated into Romania through Russia, has drawn ahead and gathered more and more supporters. We say this because, as every new thing, the reaction to choral chanting was divided in two sides, especially after the decree issued by the ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza regarding the celebration of the divine cult exclusively in Romanian: on the one hand, the progressive world was enthusiastic with the new sonority and received it gladly, up to theatrical exaggerations in composition, on the other hand, conservatism, especially the monastic one, invoking the old norms and canons, presented a strong opposition, which lead to physical conflicts in Neamț Monastery that required the intervention of law enforcements².

There, in Neamț Monastery, in the 19th century, the choir (the group of singers more precisely) was formed of Moldavian monks, that is of Romanians, and the choir on the left was formed of Russian monks, sometimes called “Ruthenian”, their number at the time being of 200. The Ruthenian monks used the linear notation. The neumatic notation used by the Romanian monks was the one from the period after the Chrysantic reform that is, as we all know, that simplified notation, cleared of useless signs that hindered the melody too much. This overload of the melody with ornamental signs occurred during the Middle Ages, especially after the fall of Constantinople under the Turks, when the rhythmical-melodic formulas came to unfortunately influence the clear Byzantine music.

Since these were a source of disagreement, there were attempts to reconcile the two types of notation – psaltic and linear. Such an attempt is the novel *Creed*, from the Romanian manuscript no 5, f. 84^r-87^v, written for three equal men voices, in neumatic notation (psaltic), “composition of late Hieromonk Visarion the Protopsalt”³. Regarding this *Creed*, the musicologist Vasile Vasile said that “it is the argument to an original solution to join two styles that seemed irreconcilable: the choral harmonic chanting on three voices and the Byzantine notation”⁴.

²See Prof. Mihail Gr. POSLUȘNICU, *Istoria muzicii la români*, Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1928, p. 94-95.

³See Rev. Lect. PhD Alexandrel BARNEA, “The Creed from the Psaltic Manuscripts no. 5 from the Library of the Neamț Monastery”, in *Analele științifice ale Universității “Al. I. Cuza” – Teologie Ortodoxă*, tomul XV/2010, no. 2, Editura Universității “Al. I. Cuza” Iași, p. 99-109.

⁴Vasile VASILE, *Istoria muzicii bizantine și evoluția ei în spiritualitatea românească*, Editura Interprint, București, 1997, p. 174.

We do not know whether the "Russian" *Axion estin* that we refer to⁵ was written prior or after this *Creed*, but it can be inscribed in the musical production of the Russian monks from Neamț Monastery, being a very important document which establishes the manner of manifestation and interpretation of the two systems of ecclesiastic notation and singing. The copyist of the manuscript, Hieromonk Dorothei⁶ ("these were written by Hieromonk Dorothei in 1862 December 3"), presents this chant as follows: "Russian *Axion estin* with Romanian interpretation. And for the Romanians not to forget that there was a time when the chant was like this, we added it here" (f. 7^v-8^r).

A short description of the Manuscript no. 14 before we move to the presentation of the chant is required. The manuscript with the dimensions 25x20 cm has no title. Its covers are made of cardboard, covered in coloured paper on a brown background. On the leather spine, there is the inscription "Tome 3". The paper is of two types: ordinary, thin, yellow, and ordinary thick. The Liturgical language is Romanian with Cyrillic letters, and the number of rows with musical notes varies between 15-16/page. The manuscript is a colligate with two incomplete printings, a Gramolnic for 1869 and a Polyeleos "By the waters of Babylon". The sole authors mentioned by this manuscript are the famous protopsalt Dimitrie Suceveanu (f. 9^r) and Visarion the Confessor (f. 33^r)⁷.

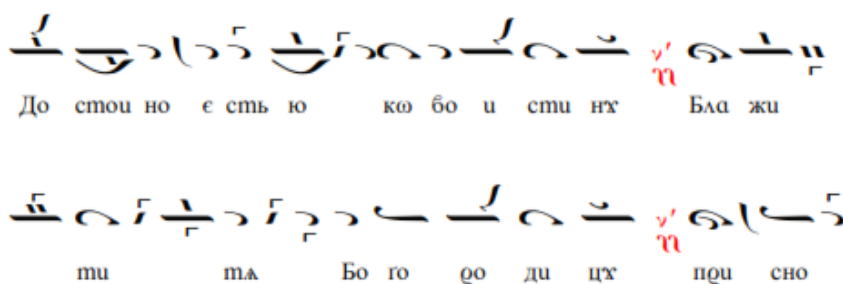
As we have already mentioned, the chant we are interested in can be found at the beginning of the manuscript, page 7^v-8^r. The voice or echos used for this *Axion estin* is the 8th and the language is Slavonic with Cyrillic letters. From the very beginning, we observe a preference for the acute register, and almost all the cadences (7 out of 10) are placed on Ni'.

⁵This *Axion estin* was also mentioned by Prof. Pavel Lungu ten years after my research and transcribed in both notations. See ***, *Axioanele tradiționale de la Mănăstirea Neamț*, Colecția Fundației Culturale "Pavel Lungu", Piatra Neamț, 2003, p. 73-75.

⁶Doroftei/Dorothei Hieromonk (19th century) – psalt, conductor of the psaltic group formed of Romanian monks from Neamț Monastery. See Gheorghe C. IONESCU, *Lexicon al celor care, de-a lungul veacurilor, s-au ocupat cu muzica de tradiție bizantină în România*, Editura Diogene, București, 1994, p. 115.

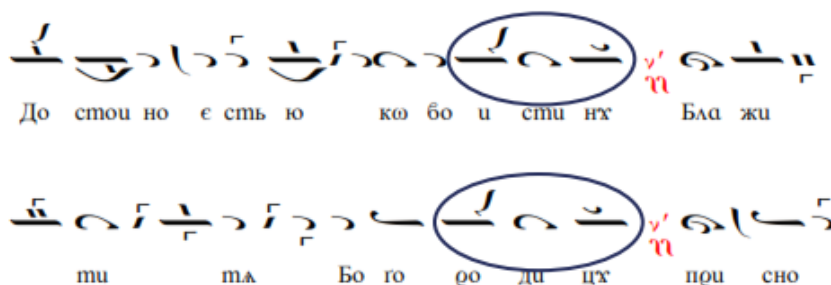
⁷Dimitrie Suceveanu (1816-1898) – protopsalt, teacher of psaltic music, composer. He activated at the Metropolitan Cathedral from Iassy. See IONESCU, *Lexicon*, p. 330-333.

Visarion the Confessor (19th century) – hieromonk, psalt, teacher of psaltic music, calligrapher, composer. He activated at Neamț Monastery. See IONESCU, *Lexicon*, p. 365-367.



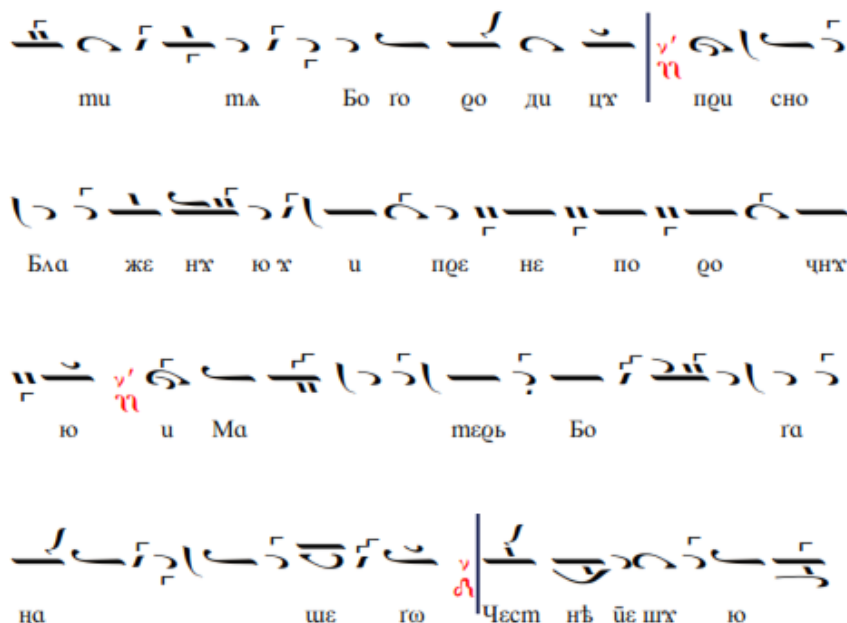
The construction of the melody is rather challenging for the interpreter because it has a lot of big intervals (jumps of three, seven and even eight notes). We may also observe the fact that the perfect 4th is used quite often after the cadence on Ni'. In fact, the combination of linear progression and intervals creates a rather unusual sound for a church melody in neumatic notation. Also, the range (ambitus) of this chant is impressive, and it requires an interpreter to have solid musical knowledge and good vocal abilities, since it extends from Di (Dhi) in the lower octave to Ga'.

The first two musical phrases⁸ (until the first note marker) do not even look like a hymn in a sticheraric tact. They have no ample melismas, and the frequent use of the gorgon determines a quite rapid execution. Our attention is also drawn by the end of each of these two musical phrases since they anticipate or illustrate the influence of the choral music with its tonal-functional principles. The landing on the cadence is made through the means of the leading tone, which is not at all characteristic to the Byzantine music.



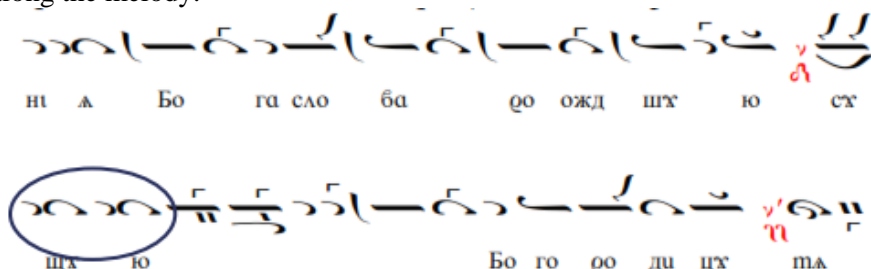
Another aspect of this chant is that each time we meet with a progressive evolution of the melody, either to the acute or grave register, the passage is done rapidly, using the gorgon or digorgon. The only moment when the interpreter is allowed to linger a little longer is the cadence, marked by a klasma.

⁸In this study, we consider a musical phrase from one note marker to the other.

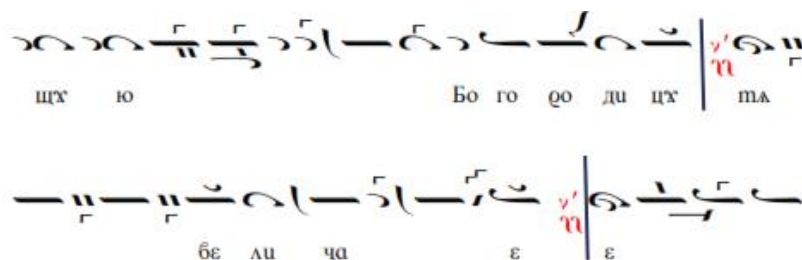


For instance, in the example given above, between the two marking lines, the gradual ascension towards Ni' and then the descent to Ni accompanied by a few turns of the phrase and some intervals represent a challenging passage for the interpreter given by the abundance of gorgons and digorgons. The turning of phrases, through the introduction of an interval, is used in order to interrupt the linear and monotonous ascension from Ni to Ni'.

The flow of the melody with such accelerations is also visualized with the help of the combination between apostrophos and elaphron, also known with the name of syneches elaphron, which occurs plenty of times along the melody.

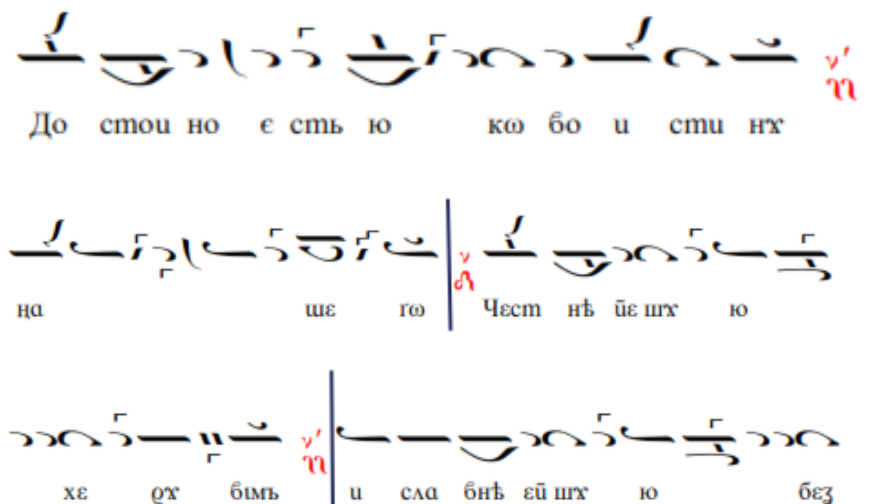


Towards the end of this chant our attention is drawn again by what we call an anticipation of the dominant seventh chord.

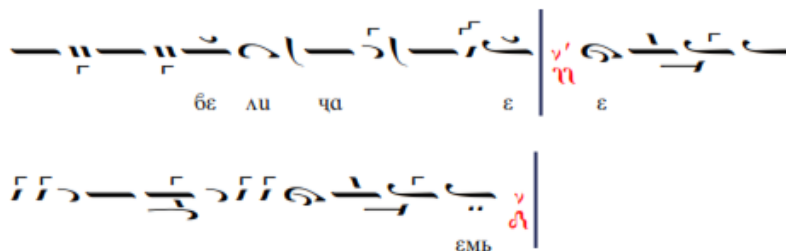


The dominant seventh chord can be identified between the two marker lines and is presented in a latent form, but it is certainly there, as a clear influence of the tonal-functional harmonies that started to penetrate into the Romanian musical environment.

Along the chant, we can identify some formulas that the author uses in several musical phrases. For example, the first phrase of the chant uses the same musical material and almost the same disposition as the fifth musical phrase. This is a common practice of the composers of Byzantine music to reuse some of the formulas along the melody. There is also this theory that a piece of Byzantine music is in fact composed by using a series of formulas put together in an inspired manner by the composer.



The end of the melody, the final cadence also brings the most extended melisma of the entire piece. I would consider it a double cadence since it is firstly situated on Ni' and then repeated on Ni.



As one may observe, the same formula is used on the acute register and then it is repeated on Ni, in both cases the basis is preceded by the interval of 4th or a jump of three notes. The descent from Ni' to Ni is gradual, but rapid, with the help of a series of gorgons.

From the point of view of the ornamentation, this chant is quite atypical because it should use more ornamental signs than it does. But this *Axion estin*, on the contrary uses very few ornamental signs. The most present are varia and psiphiston. The omalon occurs only twice during the melody and the antichenoma four times. We would expect to see such ornaments especially at the end of the musical phrases, to prepare the cadences, but this is not the case. The rest of the melismas which aren't as many as we would expect are created with the help of the temporal signs (gorgon and digorgon) and with the combination between apostrophos and elaphron (syneches elaphron).

Another "curiosity" of this *Axion estin* is the fact the melody does not modulate at all. This is very uncommon for a sticheraric chant that usually presents one or more modulations at least in the key moments of the melody. Maybe the predominance of the acute register did not allow a proper modulation.

This chant as we have it today, rather reminds us of the recitative style of singing characteristic to the Russian religious music, than of the psaltic music that was sung in the Romanian Orthodox Church in the 19th century.

Regarding the prosody in this chant, we may observe that the reason why the melody is placed so much on the acute register is the meaning of the text it illustrates. "It is truly right to bless thee, o Theotokos" is represented using the acute register to emphasize the worthiness of the Virgin Mary to receive such praises. When the composer presents the characteristics of the Theotokos, he passes from acute to the central octave, or the basis of the echos (Ni) because he mentions the human nature which is far from the purity of the Virgin Mary: "ever blessed, and most pure, and the Mother of our God". The effect is even more impressive since the following musical phrase starts with a reference to the Mother of God illustrated through a jump of seven tones: "**Thou** the more honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim". This entire phrase develops on

the acute register, because it speaks of the heavenly creatures, and the cadences are here on Ni'. The following descent to the basis of the echos is to express the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, His descent among us, His incarnation. This phrase is also brought into contrast with a jump of eight tones to illustrate again our addressing to the mother of God "thou the true Theotokos, we magnify thee".

Instead of Conclusions

The impact of the choral music on the Romanian ecclesiastical environment was extremely profound. It took decades for the priests and monks to accept choirs into churches and choral music during the religious services. But, through the presence of the Russian monks in Moldavian monasteries, and with the help of their creations and musical tradition, we think that the process of acceptance was at least partly eased. One cannot deny the value of such compositions firstly because these are the melodies that took the prayers of our ancestors to God, and secondly because one cannot deny history, but accept it. The manuscripts from Neamț Monastery hide between their covers many such treasures that will hopefully be used one day, and which constitute the thesaurus of religious music of Byzantine tradition of our country.

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Annexes:

Глас viii ^λπ δλ Νη λ

До стои но є сть ю ко бо и сти нх Бла жи

ми ма Бо го ро ди цх при сно

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 ше го Честѣ нѣѣ шѣ ю 125 хе рѣ вѣмъ и сла вѣѣѣ

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Typological, Synchronic and Diachronic Analogies from the Medieval Period in Săbăoani locality, Neamț county, Romania

Robert Simalcsik*

Abstract: The underlying material for the present study is represented by the human skeletons from two necropolises located in the area of Săbăoani commune (Neamț county) and which are significantly important for the history of this community. Another feature we favored in the present study is the anthropological type that gathers all individuals of a population which represents a certain association of characters.

Within Săbăoani community, chronologically (diachronically) speaking we can notice the perennization of the Mediteranoid medieval anthropological fund. Dinaroid elements have registered a continuous increase along with the Nordoid elements and consequently reached a top position among nowadays population, we also notice the appearance of Mongoloid elements in the medieval period. Several generations should succeed in the case of some dominant elements of the typological fund. The blend of typological features and their percentages have broadly modified along with the individual/population migration from one place to another.

Keywords: anthropological, typological analysis, Mediteranoid, Nordoid, Proto-Europoid, Dinaroid, Mongoloid

The Material and Method of the Typological Analysis

1. The Material

The underlying material for the present study is represented by the human skeletons from two necropolises located in the area of Săbăoani commune (Neamț county) and which are significantly important for the history of this community. Along with the osteological human material, the archaeological researches done in the course of several decades have brought to light a highly rich and compelling archaeological material which supported

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the completion of the chronological and cultural timespan of the necropolises.

The former necropolis from Săbăoani, chronologically dated in the 4th century A.D. has been the research subject of 10 systematic digging expeditions between 1966 and 2003, by 24 sections¹. The archaeological diggings were coordinated by Vasile Ursachi, archaeologist at the History Museum of Roman (Neamț county). The latter necropolis from Săbăoani, chronologically dated in the Middle Age between mid 14th and up to 16th century, was studied between 1989 and 2000². The archaeological diggings were conducted by Domnița Hordilă, archaeologist at the History Museum of Roman (Neamț county).

In the 4th-century biritual necropolis from Săbăoani were discovered 102 graves, of which 88 were buried and 14 cremated³. The anthropological analysis was done on a number of 57 buried skeletons (16 male, 19 female and 22 of undetermined gender) which were either complete or incomplete and served as the material supplied for processing and study.

In the medieval necropolis from Săbăoani (14th-17th centuries) were discovered a total of 1455 burial places⁴, of which 937 skeletons served as material for analysis: 399 skeletons from Săbăoani-Berindești necropolis (158 male, 130 female and 111 of undetermined gender) and 538 skeletons from Săbăoani necropolis (247 male, 160 female and 131 of undetermined gender).

The identification of the skeleton series for each of the two medieval neighboring necropolises (Săbăoani-Berindești and Săbăoani) was done based on the markings from the packages where the skeletons were brought. From a paleoanthropological, typological and paleopathological view, the two skeleton series were regarded as part of the same necropolis as they were actually using the same cemetery, formed the same population but with slightly different areas of inhabitation since Berindești village disappeared in late 16th century. The necropolises were chronologically placed in the same period and belonging to the same area, Săbăoani locality. Due to the disappearance of Berindești medieval village, the population of this locality moved largely to Săbăoani. Therefore, we shall name it the medieval necropolis from Săbăoani locality (14th-17th centuries).

¹ V. Ursachi, *Săbăoani. Monografie arheologică*, volumele I-II, Casa Editorială Demiurg, Iași, 2010, p. 23-34

² D. Hordilă, *Câteva considerații de ordin arheologic privind populația catolică din zona Romanului în secolele XIV-XIX*, in *Buletin Istoric*, 1, 2000, p. 59-82)

³ V. Ursachi, *op. cit.*, p. 23-34

⁴ D. Hordilă, *op. cit.*, p. 59-82

2. The Typological Analysis

Another feature we favored in the present study is the anthropological type that gathers all individuals of a population which represents a certain association of characters. Any population containing that many elements in different proportions⁵. Although nowadays there is a clear tendency to replace the method of typological researches, we see it as undoubtedly worthy of qualities which cannot allow its suspension from the anthropological research. Throughout the time the typological method has supplied the key features of subdividing the human population based on a rich documentary material. Even now, when some authors feel inclined to replace the individual as a study unit with the population, the typological method is the only one which can provide the necessary tools for studying the structure of the population. Again, despite the general tendency of going around or denying the issue of anthropological types, another segment of specialists carries on classifying and defining them on the grounds that the differences between populations are a real fact which can be seen all over the world. We need to specify that in the case of any population, including a prehistoric one, we cannot speak of a single anthropological type regardless of their habitat⁶. The blend between different anthropological types took place not merely in the contact zones of the population spread area, but also, up to degree, in the depths of the areas which lead to their trespassing and overlapping. Thus, the areas of human anthropological types, as far as the superior paleolithic, lost their isolation, broke off and underwent mixtures⁷. The best known and most commonly accepted system of typological classification in Europe is the one offered by Eickstedt comprising three large racial branches and 36 subbranches, among which there are also included paleo races that generated the current races and still persist nowadays in conditions of isolation⁸. In 1951 Cheboxarov came up with a classification based on the same principles yet preserving merely the race terms for groups of ancient origin with particular features obtained as a result of adjusting to different environments. In the case of the later-formed groups when adaptation had lost its vital meaning, the author suggests the title of

⁵ J. Hiernaux, *Problems of race definition*, Expert Meeting on the Biological Aspects of Race, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, Moscow, 1964; J. C. King, *The Biology of race*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1981

⁶ R. Biasutti, *Le Razze e I Popoli della Terra*, vol. I-IV, Unione Tipografica, Editrice Torinese, Torino, 1959

⁷ V. V. Bunak et al., *Antropologiya, kratkii kurs*, Moskva, 1941; R. Biasutti, *op. cit.*

⁸ E. F. von Eickstedt, *Rassenkunde und Rassengeschichte der Menschheit*, VIII, Stuttgart, Ferdinand Erik Verlag, 1934; C. Stevens Coon, *The Races of Europe*, New York, The MacMillan Company, 1954)

“anthropological types”. His system comprises three primary races, secondary races and more groups of anthropological types⁹.

In the case of the present study the determination of the anthropological type has been done only when the skeleton preservation state and the presence of the characteristic features allowed it (to make the specific observations). The anthropological type has been appreciated based on the classifications made by von Eickstedt (1934) and Vallois (1944, 1953, 1960, 1965), and completed by special taxonomic aspects as defined by other authors, such as Bunak et al. (1941), Roginschii (1948), Coon (1939), Comas (1960), Baker (1974) and Boev (1972). The anthropometric, conformation and somatoscopic features have been taken into consideration, as well as the medium height value and the robustness degree of each skeleton. A population analysis for each of the two necropolises has been done depending on the individual characterization of each skeleton from the series studied (from the 4th century A.D. and from the 14-17th century period).

I. Types of Populations in Sântana de Mureș

The anthropological data regarding the population that lived on the territory of our country in the 4th century A.D. should be interpreted with respect to the historical data about the existing Dacian tribes within the outer and intra-Carpathian territory conquered by Romans as well as the tribes that used to live in the outer Carpathian territory outside the Dacian-Roman, in other words, the land of free Dacians who also appear as other ethnonym, such as “Carpi” and “Costoboci”¹⁰.

Related to the matters presented above, we shall try to present some anthropological arguments concerning the existence of the population on the territory of our country after the retreat of the Roman administration in late 3rd century A.D., when a series of novel cultural elements (characteristic of Sântana de Mureș culture) emerged.

The osteological materials from the necropolises belonging to Sântana de Mureș culture in our country, to which we shall make references, are as it follows: Sântana de Mureș (Mureș county), Independența (Călărași county), Oinacu (Ilfov county), Erbiceni (Iași county), Pietriș, Valea Seacă, Bogdănești (Vaslui county), Barcea (Galați county), Miorcani, Hănești, Mihălășeni (Botoșani county). We would like to remind that the osteological

⁹ P. Boev, *Die Rassentypen der Balkanhalbinsel und der Ostagaischen Inselwelt und deren Bedeutung für die Herkunft ihrer Bevölkerung*, Verlag der Bulgarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Sofia, 1972

¹⁰ C. G. Giurescu, D. C. Giurescu, *Istoria Românilor: Din cele mai vechi timpuri până la întemeierea statelor românești*, Editura Științifică, București, 1974

material studied in the 4th century Săbăoani necropolis comes from burial places only.

The main typological features of the population from the above-mentioned necropolises are briefly presented next.

In Sântana de Mureș necropolis (Mureș county) the population is typologically characterized by the predominance of the Nordoid and Mediteranoid features. Two cases with some Mongoloid features were also reported.

In the biritual necropolis of Independența (Călărași county) the population is largely formed by Europoids, but there are two skeletons which present some Mongoloid features as well. The Nordoid and Proto-Europoid elements are prevailing in the case of male, complemented by some Mediteranoid elements, while, for female, the dominant ones are Mediteranoid, accompanied by Nordoid, Proto-Europoid and Alpinoid elements.

In Oinacu necropolis (Giurgiu county) the main features are Proto-Europoid and Nordoid with some Mediteranoid elements (especially female).

The necropolises from Erbiceni (Iași county) and Pietriș (Vaslui county) are characterized by Proto-Europoid and Nordoid-Alpinoid elements with little Mediteranoid influences.

In the necropolis from Hănești (Botoșani county) there is a dominance of the Mediteranoid features with little Proto-Europoid, Nordoid and Alpinoid influences.

Barcea necropolis (Galați county) there is mentioned a preponderance of Proto-Europoid and Mediteranoid elements ascribed to the native fund. In addition to it, but in a smaller proportion, there are also Nordoid and Alpinoid elements which makes room for the hypothesis sustaining their belonging to the Sarmatic or North-German populations.

The necropolis from Bogdănești (Vaslui county) distinguishes itself by three types: Mediteranoid (the main one for both genders), followed by the Nordoid and Proto-Europoid in smaller percentages. As structural elements we should point out the presence of some Dinarid elements and a few pale Alpinoid and East-Europoid influences.

In the necropolis from Valea Seacă (Vaslui county) there are two well-defined typological components, namely, the Mediteranoid and the Nordoid ones. The former is better expressed among female, while the latter is predominant among male.

Miorcani necropolis (Botoșani county) has a main Mediteranoid fund and a softened Proto-Europoid one, sometimes with brahicephalization elements. The Nordoid features are rarely met, while the East-Europoid and Alpinoid ones are isolated.

The necropolis from Mihălășeni (Botoșani county) contains Mediteranoid features, followed by Nordoid and Proto-Europoid, while the

Alpinoid and Ostic ones are poorly represented. A small percentage of Mongoloid elements was also registered here.

We should mention the fact that the typological data found by Romanian anthropologists in the resorts from North-Moldavia are very much alike to those from the necropolises found in Basarabia, from Mălăești and Budești¹¹. Thus, in all these series are met predominant Mediteranoid features to the detriment of the Nordoid ones. On the other hand, the series from middle Dnieper with skeletons from Cernjachov, Maslov and Dedovščina resorts, show many similarities with those from Independența series, where the Nordoid elements are prevailing, especially for male.

We can also notice that on the territory of our country, more precisely in the North-East area of Sântana de Mureș culture (Cernjachov), the Mediteranoid anthropological type is dominant. In the Southern regions the Nordoid elements are more numerous than in the Northern ones which we believe it natural since the Gothic breakthrough to the South-East of Europe had as final target the borders of the Roman Empire as any other migratory population had it allured by the brightness and riches of the world south of Danube. More we should not forget that the headquarters of the Gothic kings, the Court and the main fighter groups that constituted the Gothic army were stationed North of Danube, not far from its North bank and so border conflicts and invasions into the Roman empire were frequent¹².

To better illustrate the frequency of the typological characters in some necropolises from the North-East outer Carpathian area (belonging to the Sântana de Mureș culture), we have registered in table 1 the percentage typological data for Săbăoani series in comparison with other series from Moldavia.

In the skeleton series from Săbăoani necropolis (4th century A.D.), from the total number of points given, according to the typological diagnosis (6 for each skeleton), 91 belong to the Mediteranoid type (48,9%), 31 — Nordoid type (16,7%), 27 — Proto-Europoids (14,5%), 21 — Dinaroids (11,3%), 8 — Alpinoids (4,3%) and 8 points — East-Europoids (4,3%). The Mongoloid elements do not raise any points. These data provide, from an anthropological point of view, a synthesis on the variability of the population from Săbăoani in the 4th century A.D. and chiefly outline the native elements that brought their contribution to this structure.

¹¹ M. S. Velicanova, *Paleoantropologiceschii material iz moghilnicovcerneahovscoi culituri Moldavii*, Antropologiceskii Sbornic, III, 1961, p. 26-52

¹² D. Gh. Teodor, *Regiunile est-carpaticale Daciei în secolele IV-IX e.n.*, in *Symposia Thracologica*, 7, 1989, p. 198-200

Type	gender	Săbăoani	Mihălășeni (Botezatu, 2001)	Miorcani (Miu, Botezatu, 1991)	Bârlad, Valea Seacă (Botezatu et al., 1983)	Bogdănești (Botezatu et al., 1987)
		%	%	%	%	%
Mediterraneanoid	M	47,22	43,80	49,50	34,52	36,11
	F	50,58	47,40	46,17	45,83	41,90
Nordoid	M	17,80	14,83	17,22	30,24	26,18
	F	15,60	15,88	13,72	18,33	19,76
Proto-Europoid	M	15,87	16,96	15,00	16,90	17,14
	F	13,13	14,63	15,56	15,83	12,14
Dinaroid	M	13,83	18,75	21,11	13,14	11,11
	F	8,77	11,43	15,68	8,33	16,60
Alpinoid	M	2,18	2,02	-	-	5,55
	F	6,42	7,67	3,92	9,17	4,76
Esteuropoid	M	5,11	3,57	4,17	5,92	-
	F	3,49	3,01	3,92	0,63	4,76
Mongoloid	M	-	0,34	-	-	-
	F	-	-	-	1,66	-

Table 1. The frequency of the anthropological types (%) on gender in several necropolises from the 4th century A.D. belonging to Sântana de Mureș culture from Moldova

As previously mentioned, the paleoanthropological data concerning the population from the Transilvanian necropolis from Sântana de Mureș (Mureș county) indicate the presence of some Goths who came from East of the Oriental Carpathians and raised on their journey Carpathian-Dacian populations from Moldavia as well. The hypothesis drafted by the authors of the study is quite plausible if we are to take into account the archaeologists' opinions (Gh. Diaconu and Gh. Marinescu), who find cremated burial places in Șopteriu necropolis (Bistrița-Năsăud county) with a Carpi inventory dated between 295-297 A.D. showing that in late 3rd century A.D. groups of Carpi entered through North, West of the Carpathians. Their spiritual and material culture met the Dacian-Roman culture (in a symbiosis stage at that time) and influenced each other which lead to some particular features of this necropolis. Thus, in the necropolis from Sântana de Mureș (Mureș county) the dominant anthropological types are Nordoid and Mediterranean in similar proportions, while in the necropolis from Săbăoani (4th century A.D.) prevails the Mediterranean type, followed not so closely by the Nordoid one.

The two skeleton series from Independența (Călărași county) and Oinacu (Giurgiu county), located in the South-east part of the country in the Danube Plateau present similarities in terms of biometric and typological aspects, and they are represented by a population with dominant Proto-Europoid and Nordoid fund complemented by Mediterranean elements mostly visible in female. This shows us a mixture of native and Gothic population¹³, which does not come as a surprise since the Gothic breakthrough to the

¹³ M. Cristescu et al., *Contribuții la cunoașterea structurii antropologice a populației din cultura Sântana de Mureș-Cerneahov (Independența)*, in *Arheologia Moldovei*, VI, 1969, p. 149-166

South-East of Europe targeted the borders of the Roman Empire as any other posterior migratory population did attract by the culture and wellness of the world from the South of Danube¹⁴. The series from Săbăoani necropolis (the 4th century A.D.) is different from Independența and Oinacu series by a low percentage of Nordoid and Proto-Europoid elements in favor of the Mediteranoid features. The group of the two series from Bogdănești and Valea Seacă (Vaslui county), placed on the lower course of Siret river are fairly alike from a biometric point of view, especially in the case of the female series. From a typological point of view there is the same resemblance of characters which materializes into a co-dominant fund built from a Proto-Europoid, Mediteranoid and Nordoid melting pot (where the last one are lower in intensity than Southern necropolises), complemented by the brahicranial varieties of Dinaroid and Alpinoid nuances. In the case of these populations of a profound native character (Mediteranoid and Proto-Aeuropoid) the Nordoid elements can be merely attributed to the migratory populations that came from the North (Goths and Vandals) which were assimilated by the natives, while the brahicranial Dinaroid- Alpinoid variant can be related to a local typological variety or some Sarmatic influences. In comparison with these two series, the necropolis from Săbăoani (4th century A. D.) is different by a smaller percentage of the Nordoid and Proto-Europoid types.

Most of the skeletons studied and belonging to Sântana de Mureș culture, come from the medium course area (Săbăoani) and upper course area (Miorcani and Mihălășeni) of Siret and Prut rivers, a region rich in necropolises from the 4th century A.D.

Considering that Miorcani¹⁵ necropolises from Botoșani county provide a statistically representative osteological material and taking into account their geographical vicinity to the necropolis from Săbăoani, we have carried out a more advanced comparative analysis with these. From an anthropometric view, the skeleton series from 4th century A.D. Săbăoani, by its dimensional and conformation values, is more similar to the skeleton series from Miorcani necropolises. To specify the anthropological structure of the population who lived in this area between the 4th and 6th century we used dimensional and conformation data for the skeleton series from Miorcani and Mihălășeni necropolises.

If we should refer to the neurocranium, the cranial index is on average mezocranial for all three series. In the case of Săbăoani (76,85 u.i.) and Mihălășeni (76,79 u.i.) populations, the medium values of the cranial index are basically equal and slightly (elevated) than in the case of Miorcani

¹⁴ D. Gh. Teodor, *op. cit.*, p. 198-200

¹⁵ G. Miu, D. Botezatu, *Considerații asupra caracteristicilor paleodemografice la unele populații care au trăit pe teritoriul patriei noastre în sec. III-IV D. Chr.*, în *Studii și Cercetări de Antropologie*, 28, 1991, p. 13-18

population (76,05 u.i.). The brahicranial forms and those strongly brahicranial have a slightly higher percentage at Săbăoani (roughly 28% for male and 25% for female) and Mihălășeni (roughly 21% for male and 30% for female) as compared to the series from Miorcani (16% and 11%).

The upper facial index provides medium values which, in the case of all three populations, fits into the mezenic category as the values are basically equal for the male series from Miorcani and Mihălășeni (52,42 u.i. and 52,47 u.i.), but smaller than in the case of Săbăoani series (57,14 u.i.). There is a slight difference in the feminine series as the medium value of this index for Săbăoani is 50,00 u.i. (the upper limit of the mezenic category), while for Miorcani and Mihălășeni the upper facial index shows somewhat higher values (54,45 u.i. and 52,55 u.i.), also paced in the mezenic category.

Regarding the aspect of the orbit shape the feminine series (78,5 u.i. at Miorcani, 81,4 u.i. at Mihălășeni and 82,8 u.i. at Săbăoani) vary more than the masculine ones (81,6 u.i. at Miorcani, 80,9 u.i. at Mihălășeni and 81,1 u.i. at Săbăoani), yet the medium values belong to the same category — mesoconch which has the maximum of frequencies for all 3 series.

The difference reflected in the medium values of the feminine series is determined by a higher frequency of hypsiconch met at Mihălășeni and Săbăoani (31,39% and 30%).

As to the nasal index, we notice slight differences for all three populations as it follows: incipient camerrhine at Miorcani (51,93 u.i.) and accentuated mesorrhine at Mihălășeni (49,57 u.i.) and Săbăoani (50,45 u.i., but at the upper limit of this category). This interpopulation variation is given by the masculine series whose individual variability shows a higher frequency of leptorrhine forms at Mihălășeni and Săbăoani (roughly 30%) than Miorcani (roughly 14%), while, on this subject, the feminine series have a rather even behavior (50,3 u.i. at Mihălășeni, 51,4 u.i. at Săbăoani, 50,6 u.i. at Miorcani).

Concerning the height, the homogeneity of the masculine series is mirrored by the medium values of supermedial type (168,04 cm at Săbăoani, 167,8 cm at Miorcani and 168,1 cm at Mihălășeni). In the case of the feminine series the medium values of height are slightly different as it follows: Miorcani height (160,0 cm) is higher on average by 0,7 centimeters than Săbăoani (159,3 cm) and by 1,2 centimeters than Mihălășeni (158,8 cm), yet all three fit into the supermedial category.

Regarding the typological structure of the three populations from the North Moldavia (omitting the sample difference), there is a common anthropological fund expressed by the predominant Mediteranoid and Proto-Europoid elements which alongside the Nordoid and Dinaroid elements are quite frequently met, especially for male. What sets these populations apart is the presence of the brahicranial and even hyperbrahicranial features, often met at the populations from Săbăoani and Mihălășeni rather than that from

Miorcani and which may constitute a criterion for identifying some Alpinoid or Dinaroid elements.

The typological characteristics of the series studied up to now in our country and especially those from Moldavia belonging to the culture known as Sântana de Mureș, show a regional variability generally present in the large Europoid group. The mongoloid features are rarely met (Sântana de Mureș — 2 cases, Independența — 2 cases, Pietriș — 2 cases, Valea Seacă — 1 case, Mihălășeni — 1 case) and usually vaguely expressed in association with the dominant elements. The Mongoloid elements are missing in the 4th century A.D. necropolis from Săbăoani.

What is worth underlining is that in the case of a typological polymorphism, the Mediteranoid and Proto-Europoid elements (slightly tempered and gracilized) constitute the prevailing fund of the populations of this culture which could be attributed to the vernacular fund. This ascription can be done if we take into account that from neolithic and up to now the Mediteranoid forms have constituted the basic fund of most populations who lived in these places¹⁶. We cannot rule out the possibility that one or other of the Mediteranoid gracilized individuals from the series studied can present allogene elements brought by Sarmatic population as the Mediteranoid features have been identified in some Sarmatic series yet of low frequency. Along with these components there are some Nordoid elements which are either blended with other elements (Mediteranoid or Proto-Europoid) or in their classical form of a progressive intensity starting with the Northern areas of the country and going down to the South, notably stronger in men than in female.

Lastly, the Nordoid forms cannot be exclusively attributed to some populations of German origin who migrated from the Scandinavian Peninsula or generally to the European North (Goths, Vandals), they can also represent one of the typological components of the vernacular population. More, the brahocranial forms (Alpinoid and Dinaroid) raise the issue of their ethnic affiliation. Considering that some authors¹⁷ characterize the Sarmatic populations as brahocranial, it is assumed that these forms could be the result of influences brought by some Sarmatic tribes who were assimilated by the local population. Naturally, the issue is still open for debate waiting for an answer which could come from more advanced and complex anthropological findings and researches (morpho-biological, demographical, historical and social, cultural etc) done on as many as possible number necropolises similar

¹⁶ O. Necrasov, *Le processus de brachycéphalisation dans les populations de Roumanie à partir du Néolithique et jusqu'à nos jours*, Sonderdruck aus „Bevölkerungsbiologie“, Gustav Fischer Verlag Stuttgart, 1974, p. 512-524; Necrasov et al., *Cercetări paleoantropologice privitoare la populațiile de pe teritoriul României*, in *Arheologia Moldovei*, XIII, 1990, p. 173-223

¹⁷ *Ibidem*

to Sântana de Mureș (Cernjachov), as well as Mihălășeni, Miorcani and Săbăoani.

Further, a DNA analysis could bring valuable information in cross reference with all the data previously studied and mentioned here, unfortunately the high costs of such analysis pose a serious impediment at the moment.

II. The Medieval Populations

From a typological perspective, the medieval population were different from one geographical region to another. These differences could be more pronounced or softened in accordance with the distance between populations and the geographical, religious or cultural barriers. In the following we shall typologically outline the medieval population from Săbăoani within the large medieval population who lived on the territory of Moldavia at the time. Also, we shall compare it to some populations anthropologically analyzed throughout the time.

Largely, the medieval population from Săbăoani distinguishes itself (from a typological point of view) by the predominance of the Mediteranoid features (51,57%), followed by Dinaroid (17,28%) and Nordoid (13,44%).

To appeal to a comparative typological study we shall refer briefly to some data regarding the typological characterization of some skeleton series from late-medieval necropolises found on the territory of our country. Therefore, the main typological features of the medieval population are as it follows below.

In the necropolis from Piatra Neamț — *Bâtca Doamnei* in Neamț county (12-13th century) the typological fund is a mixing of Mediteranoid, Nordoid and East-Europoid, where the predominant elements are Mediteranoid.

In the necropolis from Doina in Neamț county (13-14th century), the Mediteranoid, Nordoid, Dinaroid and Proto-Europoid appear softened in various combinations. There are also some mongoloid features.

In the necropolis from Trifești in Iași county (13-14th century) there are mixtures of Mediteranoid elements (the dominant ones) with Alpinoid and Dinaroid elements and, also, mixtures between Alpinoid and Dinaroid elements.

The necropolises from Hudum in Botoșani county (13-15th century) reveals a blend of Proto-Mediteranoid-Dinaroid-Nordoid features. The Mediteranoid and Proto-Europoid elements are the dominant ones, followed by the Nordoid, Dinaroid and East-European elements.

In the necropolis from *Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii (Bordering Vornicenii)* in the Republic of Moldavia (14-15th century) prevail the Mediteranoid elements along with the Nordoid (males), Dinaroid, Alpinoid and East-Europoid ones.

The necropolis from Siret town in Suceava county (14-16th century) distinguishes itself by a predominance of Dinaroid and Nordoid elements in the case of male, while the female have chiefly Mediteranoid and Nordoid features.

The necropolis from Gherăești in Neamț county (16th century) shows a Dinaroid-Nordoid fund with East-Europoid (Ostic) influences.

In the necropolis from Traian in Neamț county (16th century) there is a blend of Dinaroid, Alpinoid and Nordoid elements. There are some mongoloid traces too.

In the necropolis from Răchiteni in Iași county (16th century) there are predominantly Dinaroid elements alongside with native brahcranial and gracilized Mediteranoid and Proto-Europoid elements. Accompanying these mixtures there are some East-Europoid and Nordoid elements as well.

In the necropolis from Vânători in Galați county (16th century) there is a distinctly typological complex of Mediteranoid-Dinaroid-Alpinoid type.

The necropolis from Siret in Suceava county (14-17th century) is characterized by a Nordoid-Mediteranoid mixture along with Dinaroid elements. There are some Proto-Europoid elements (men especially) and Alpinoid (female).

In the necropolis from Ștefănești in Botoșani county (16-17th century) there is a predominance of Dinaroid-Nordoid mixture in the case of male, while for female there is a Dinaroid-Mediteranoid blend.

The necropolis from the current Palas Iași emporium, the former princely court of Moldavia principality (17th century) located in Iași city (Iași county) is characterized by Dinaroid-Mediteranoid-Alpinoid complex, where the Nordoid and East-Europoid elements are secondary.

The necropolis from Bârlad in Vaslui county (12-18th century) shows gracilized Mediteranoid, Nordoid and Proto-Europoid elements next to more poorly represented Dinaroid, Nordoid and East-Europoid elements.

In the necropolis of St. Nicholas Ciurchi church located in Iași metropolis (16-18th century) there are predominant Mediteranoid-Dinaroid elements with some Nordoid, Alpinoid and East-Europoid influences.

In the necropolis of Banu church from Iași metropolis (16-19th century) there are Europoid-Dinaroid elements, complemented by Mediteranoid and Alpinoid ones.

In the necropolises from Valea Bistriței in Bicăz area located in Neamț county (17-19th century) dominate the features of the Europoid group but influenced by mongoloid elements. From the above mentioned we can notice that in 9 of the total 16 necropolises the Mediteranoid elements are

predominant (female especially): Piatra Neamț — *Bâtca Doamnei*, Doina, Trifești, Hudum, Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii*, Vânători, Bârlad, Ciurchi-Iași, Siret. Also, these elements appear in both sexes combined with Dinaroid and Nordoid features. In several medieval necropolises the dominant type is Dinaroid (Siret — men only, Gherăești, Traian, Răchiteni, Palas, Bârlad, Banu, Ștefănești). In one necropolis the typological dominant is Nordoid (Siret).

Quite interesting is the fact that the authors of the anthropological study done on the bony remains from Traian necropolis located in Neamț county (16th century) do not signal the presence of the Mediteranoid type but reveal some blended types which form the following mixture: Dinaroid-Alpinoid-Nordoid with some Mongoloid elements¹⁸.

III. The Diachronic Typological Evolution

From a typological point of view and considering the data regarding the 2 necropolises that make the object of the present study (the necropolis from the 4th century A.D. located in Săbăoani and the medieval necropolis from the 14-17th century found in the same locality, Săbăoani) as well as the data from the scientific literature concerning the typology of the contemporary population living in Săbăoani locality¹⁹, we can surprise the similarities and differences in the chronological evolution of the population typology which succeeded on the territory of Săbăoani throughout the time.

The skeleton series from the necropolis dated 4th century A.D. from Săbăoani (as mentioned in subchapter 5.1.3.) has a Mediteranoid predominance (48,9%), followed by Nordoid elements (16,7%), Proto-Europoid elements (14,5%) and Dinaroid ones (11,3%). The Alpinoid and East-Europoid elements have equal percentages (4,3%), while the Mongoloid elements are missing.

In the medieval skeleton series from the 14-17th century located in Săbăoani (as it results in subchapter 5.2.3.) the dominant features are Mediteranoid (51,57%), followed by Dinaroid (17,28%), then by Nordoid (13,44%) and Proto-Europoid (5,62%). The rarest typological elements are East-Europoid (4,79%), Alpinoid (4,5%) and Mongoloid (2,8%).

According to the scientific work signed by Botezatu et al. (*Variabilitatea...*, p. 23-28), it appears that based on the anthropological

¹⁸ O. Necrasov, M. Cristescu, *Contribution à l'étude anthropologique de la population moldave du XVI-eme siècle – Traian*, in *Annales Scientifiques de l'Université „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Iassy*, III, 1-2, 1957, p. 84-104

¹⁹ D. Botezatu et al., *Variabilitatea caracterelor antropologice cefalo-faciale ale populației din satele Săbăoani și Gherăești (jud. Neamț)*, in *Studii și cercetări de antropologie*, 32, 1995, p. 23-28

analyses done on the contemporary population (the measures, height and the cephalo-facial build were taken into account as well as other elements merely evident on living subjects such as pigmentation and aspects of somatoscopic build), the current typological fund in the population from Săbăoani is represented by a complex of typological features: Dinaroid-Nordoid-Mediterranoid (Botezatu et al., 1995 p. 23-28).

Conclusions

Within Săbăoani community, chronologically (diachronically) speaking we can notice the perennization of the Mediterranean medieval anthropological fund. The Mediterranean elements register a slight growth in the medieval period and a regression of incidence in the case of the contemporary population. We highlight the fact that the Dinaroid elements have registered a continuous increase along with the Nordoid elements and consequently reached a top position among nowadays population. Meanwhile, the percentage of Proto-europoid elements has been decreasing as they are not even met in the contemporary population. The Alpinoid and East-Europoid elements have remained present up to now in Săbăoani, but in low percentages. We also notice the appearance of Mongoloid elements in the medieval period (2,8%); we assume they are strongly connected to the Mongol invasions known in the Europe between 10th and 14th century as tartars²⁰. Although low in numbers, the Mongoloid elements are found nowadays population as well but rather insignificantly (0,7%)²¹.

Along with the spiritual, material and cultural evolution, circulation possibility of the population has grown and, under the circumstances, the change of typologies within different population has known a more accelerate rhythm and consequently the blend of typological features and their percentages have broadly modified along with the individual/ population migration from one place to another. Naturally, several generations should succeed in the case of some dominant elements of the typological fund. Nevertheless, the chance of modification is higher due to the demographic expansion and increased mobility of the populations nowadays.

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²⁰ V. Spinei, *Marile migrații din estul și sud-estul Europei în secolele IX-XIII*, Institutul European, Iași, 1999

²¹ D. Botezatu et al., *Variabilitatea...*, p. 23-28

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Fantaisies monacales : de Rutebeuf au Marquis de Sade

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Abstract: The aim of the article is to present the approach of the same theme – a girl penetrating in a monastery of monks – in two literary works belonging to different historical ages: the fabliau *Li diz De Freire Denize Le Cordelier* by Rutebeuf and an episode of the novel *Justine or the misfortunes of virtue* by the Marquis de Sade. Even though the aims of the two authors diverge, the common narrative structure evokes a fantasy that has survived over the centuries, the main focus of which is the violation of the sacred. It is also out of this common background that the contraries are emphasized at particular levels of the texts. The points analysed in the article include the portrait of the main character, the disguises used so that the “crime” is hidden, the interaction between the actors of the text and their vision of eroticism. In general lines, while Rutebeuf focuses on the public and its wellness, in both senses of amusement and education, Sade seems to write against the public, using a widespread fantasy not to entertain, but rather to vex.

Keywords: Rutebeuf, Sade, fantasy, monastery of monks, young girl, eroticism, disguising

L'image du couvent, en tant qu'espace sacré, interdit, a suscité à travers les siècles une fascination souvent impie, qui va jusqu'à briser les tabous de la sainteté, dans les fabliaux du Moyen Âge. Avec *Li diz De Freire Denize Le Cordelier*¹, Rutebeuf invite à découvrir l'histoire d'une fille qui s'est enfuie avec un moine qui avait su la persuader de la sainteté d'une vie conjointement, intimement monacale. Le même thème de la fille vertueuse qui arrive dans un couvent de moines apparaît, au XVIII^e siècle, dans le roman *Justine ou les malheurs de la vertu*² du Marquis de Sade, mais traité d'une autre manière et avec une nouvelle visée esthétique, que la présente étude se propose de sonder, au fil des pages et des siècles.

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¹ Rutebeuf, « Ci encoumence li diz De Freire Denize Le Cordelier », dans *Œuvres complètes*, éd. et trad. par Michel Zink, Paris, Bordas (Classiques Garnier), t. 1, 1989, [vi] + 514 p., document fourni par la société Bibliopolis, disponible en ligne sur Gallica, <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=NUMM-101490&M=tdm>.

² Donatien Alphonse François de Sade, *Justine ou les malheurs de la vertu*, Paris, Presse de la Renaissance, 1979.

À commencer par le portrait de la protagoniste, on remarque dans les deux textes la même figure de la fille élevée dans l'esprit de la religion, qui ne veut pas renoncer à sa vertu. Toutefois, les contextes sociaux et narratifs sont sensiblement différents, car Denise, fille de naissance noble se distinguant comme « la plus bele criature/ Que hom puisse troveir ne querre/ De Paris juqu'en Aingleterre »³, est courtisée par des chevaliers, et fait vœu de virginité en renonçant volontairement à une vie qui ne serait pas moins honorable aux yeux de ses contemporains – on pourrait même croire qu'elle est représentée comme plus honorable dans le fabliau. En revanche, pour Justine il n'y a que le choix entre la vertu et le déshonneur, dans le monde sadien où il n'existe que le paroxysme du mal et le bien démuné qui n'a aucune chance de survivre. Choisir la vertu ici signifie accepter de se nuire à soi-même, et de ce point de vue, Justine fait bien plus que Denise quand elle choisit sa voie. De plus, chez Justine, le sentiment de honte est profondément intériorisé : chaque fois qu'elle est déshabillée et soumise aux actions « impudiques », elle sent la honte en tant qu'émotion en soi, rapportée seulement à ses valeurs éthiques, et peut-être à un paradigme religieux renvoyant à son image de Dieu, tandis que pour Denise, la question est « Que ne li fasse faire honte »⁴. Cela veut dire qu'ici on se rapporte à un monde extérieur, plutôt qu'à un système moral appartenant à la conscience du personnage. La honte de Denise ne surgit qu'à l'idée que la communauté dont elle fait partie pourrait avoir vent des détails de son histoire. Ce fait ne saurait surprendre au Moyen Âge : comme Jacques Le Goff⁵ le remarque, l'individu ne se définit guère dans sa singularité, mais seulement en tant que membre (sinon représentant) d'une communauté dont il reflète, fût-ce sous un jour polémique, les valeurs.

Les deux filles entrent au couvent pour des raisons sensiblement différentes. Denise demande au frère Simon, un moine qui fréquentait la maison, « Que il sa mere requeïst/ Qu'en religion la meist »⁶ ; celui-ci, par ruse, la convainc de se déguiser en moine et de le suivre. Il y a un vrai rituel qui rend Denise moine : « Le lecteur est appelé à contempler la robe d'homme fendue et la chevelure coupée, comme si devenir homme était une

³ Rutebeuf, *op. cit.*, v. 18-20.

⁴ *Ibidem*, v. 235. Le ressenti de la honte en tant qu'émotion sociale passe à travers l'attitude de la femme qui découvre l'identité de Denise. La fille a honte premièrement face à cette femme, qui devient son complice dans ses rapports avec le monde, au lieu de dévoiler ce qui pourrait nuire à sa réputation – une complicité entre femmes pour couvrir une disgrâce spécifiquement féminine, à savoir celle d'avoir perdu sa virginité tout en brisant les lois du sacré. L'autre complicité se réalise entre la femme et l'auteur, car celui-ci efface aussi la honte en préparant une fin heureuse pour Denise. Il ne s'agit donc pas d'un délit condamnable, mais d'une déviation qu'on doit normaliser – de la pédagogie dans laquelle la honte ne devrait pas avoir sa place.

⁵ *Civilizația Occidentului medieval*, trad. Maria Holban, Editura Științifică, București, 1970, pp. 366-367.

⁶ Rutebeuf, *op. cit.*, v. 40.

amputation à la fois corporelle et vestimentaire : une castration »⁷ – et cette image du passage progressif d'un état à un autre se révélera pertinemment récurrente au cours de l'histoire. Justine, par contre, est introduite sans autre forme de procès dans l'univers d'un couvent qui est totalement contraire à ses attentes. Elle espérait arriver dans un endroit saint, protégé de tout le mal envahissant le monde. Le moment où la réalité se dévoile sous un jour cruel et cinglant survient seulement une fois qu'elle y a pénétré : « Nous entrons dans le couvent ; les portes se ferment »⁸. Un certain rituel se met en place là-dedans, une initiation plutôt improvisée, au moins de la perspective de la jeune fille : « à peine fus-je entrée que chacun s'avança vers moi »⁹, mais uniquement après avoir coupé toute liaison avec l'extérieur, où, en tout cas, comme l'avoue Justine, il n'y avait « nulle trace humaine »¹⁰.

On peut parler, dans les deux textes, du travesti qui sépare la vérité du couvent de celle officielle, que les gens connaissent et investissent de leur foi. Dans le texte de Rutebeuf, il s'agit premièrement du déguisement de la fille : « Desus s'arme li desfendi/ Que riens son conseil ne deüst »¹¹, qui lui évite de faire éventer sa ruse. Le deuxième jeu de masques se déploie à l'intérieur du couvent : on ne sait pas certainement si les moines connaissent ou soupçonnent la vraie identité du « frère Denise », mais on sait qu'ils se comportent *comme si* c'était un vrai moine. Une possible justification résiderait dans la configuration du monde des fabliaux, où le bien et le mal coexistent ; c'est « un sens de la *droite veritei* parfaitement compatible avec le mensonge »¹². Ceux qui pratiquent de telle ou telle façon le mal ressentent donc une sorte de honte : les cordeliers refusent ainsi de prendre position par rapport au fait que frère Denise soit une fille, bien qu'ils aient tous les moyens de le savoir. Par contre, le marquis de Sade déclare d'emblée qu'il veut « offrir partout le vice triomphant et la vertu victime de ses sacrifices »¹³. Conséquemment, il n'y a plus besoin de déguisements : les descriptions mêmes ne cachent rien. À l'intérieur du couvent, tout est connu, du moins par les moines¹⁴. Le seul déguisement qui reste toutefois nécessaire est celui destiné à rassurer le monde de l'extérieur dans son ensemble formellement appréhendé sinon totalisant¹⁵, qui pourrait nuire au bon fonctionnement de la communauté en tant que telle.

⁷ Brîndușa Grigoriu, *Actes d'émotion, pactes d'initiation : le spectre des fabliaux*, Editura Universitaria, Craiova, 2015, p. 221.

⁸ Sade, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 151.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹¹ Rutebeuf, *op. cit.*, v. 72-73.

¹² Brîndușa Grigoriu, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

¹³ Sade, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁴ Il y a toutefois le secret de ce qui se passe avec les filles « réformées » que Justine découvre pendant son évasion.

¹⁵ Seulement une partie, car il y a des gens qui aident les moines dans leurs actions, par exemple en leur emmenant des filles.

D'ici on déduit que les rapports constitués entre le couvent et l'extérieur se dédoublent chez Sade. En principe, il s'agit d'un espace clos : les portes se ferment derrière Justine et les constructions labyrinthiques ne permettent pas la sortie aux filles enfermées. Leur seule espérance réside dans leurs compagnes « réformées », mais qui semblent toujours oublier ou simplement se résigner à ne pas pouvoir aider les autres – Justine découvrira plus tard qu'elles sont en effet tuées – et leur lien avec un potentiel sauveur est ainsi coupé. De la perspective des moines, l'espace n'est pas du tout clos (comme il le faudrait dans un « vrai » couvent) ; leurs liens avec « l'autre monde », non pas des anges, mais des êtres humains les plus communs et aussi les plus dépravés, a pour but le soutien de leur activité. Dans le texte de Rutebeuf, il n'y a aucune différence de statut entre les moines, en particulier pour frère Simon et Denise ; le couvent est ouvert pour les deux. D'une part, c'est à cause de cette ouverture qu'ils sont découverts ; d'autre part, cela renvoie à une ouverture de l'esprit : ce qu'ils font, frère Simon ainsi que Denise, ils le font volontairement. Comme Denise n'a pas été forcée quand elle y est entrée, mais on l'a guidée selon son souhait, elle a la liberté d'en sortir, et le fait souvent avec frère Simon : « Parmi le païs la menoit,/ N'avoit d'autre compaignon cure »¹⁶. La sortie définitive commence par une « excursion » délibérée en dehors, par la prise d'un risque. Ensuite, c'est quelqu'un du dehors qui se rend compte que « frère Denise » est en effet une sœur. Il y a donc un échange continuuel entre les deux espaces ; c'est le même monde, une séparation n'est pas nécessaire lorsque rien d'impensable ne se passe à l'intérieur du couvent.

De nouveau, un rituel vient ponctuer l'évolution de la demoiselle dévoyée par l'amour : faire en sorte que Denise puisse redevenir une fille est un processus qui implique la présence d'une initiatrice (la femme qui découvre le secret) et d'un algorithme comprenant plusieurs étapes : elle doit dormir habillée en vêtements féminins, porter une robe le jour suivant, annoncer la mère – et lui mentir, pour qu'elle (et tout le monde avec elle) envisage un retour entier, y compris en « restaurant » la virginité de la fille, en tant que capital conjugal à faire fructifier... En fin de compte, « [a] un chevalier fu donee/ Qui l'avoit autre fois requise. »¹⁷ - *autrefois* voulant dire que le retour à l'état initial est complet et qu'il s'est réalisé progressivement. Au contraire, la sortie de Justine représente une évasion de la forteresse. Le dernier des obstacles est un mur qu'elle ne réussit à sauter qu'à sa deuxième tentative. C'est une marque de la division radicale entre le couvent-prison, où il y a certaines règles d'après lesquelles le mal fonctionne, et le monde connu, où règne l'imprévisible, et qui circonscrit lui-même plusieurs enclos de ce type.

¹⁶ Rutebeuf, *op. cit.*, v. 180-181.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, v. 332-333.

En ce qui concerne les rapports entretenus par les personnages, les deux textes font référence à une certaine *initiation* dont l'objet est la jeune fille, sauf que chez Sade il y a une dimension hiérarchique plus accusée, tandis que Denise et frère Simon ont presque le même statut. « Malgré ce désir de tremper dans la volupté, Simon n'est pas un vicieux ordinaire (...) Pour lui comme pour Denise, le sexe (illicite !) semble être une nouveauté. »¹⁸. De ce point de vue, on pourrait dire que l'initiation amoureuse est réciproque ; le moine s'introduit lui-même dans la sphère érotique en y introduisant conjointement Denise ; son statut d'initiateur n'est pas dû à son expérience dans des activités pareilles, mais à son état de moine et à son âge. Il reste donc à la base un initiateur religieux, qui explore le terrain de l'amour presque aussi accidentellement que la jeune fille « corrompue », dont la beauté est justement la première à corrompre le frère cordelier – c'est pour cela que « Moult par est contraire sa pence »¹⁹. Les autres moines ne sont complices au délit que de façon passive. Au début, ils ne connaissent pas les intentions de Simon : quand ils lui demandent à quoi il pense, sa réponse contourne la vérité : « - Je pens, fait il, a .i. sermon, / Au meilleur ou je pensasse onques. »²⁰. Toutefois, pour le lecteur qui connaît toute l'histoire, ses mots recèlent des allusions transparentes, car le sermon pourrait être celui qu'il avait destiné à la jeune aspirante à la vertu monacale, la « conversion » ainsi catalysée reposant sur les démarches qu'il lui avait proposées, et que Denise avait promis d'accomplir. La complicité entre les moines, si elle existe, reste subtile et inavouée.

La situation est totalement différente dans le couvent où arrive Justine : les moines partagent les informations ainsi que les filles. Pour Justine, ils deviennent des initiateurs ad-hoc, sans trop de préparations. Ce qui marque ce monde-là, c'est la domination comme règle de fonctionnement. Les femmes sont les esclaves des hommes et le mécanisme du pouvoir est très nettement construit. Il y a néanmoins un personnage dans ce système qui se rapporte au pouvoir dans les deux directions : c'est Ursule, la doyenne, qui soumet les filles qu'elle doit garder et qui est à la fois soumise aux moines. Une autre figure féminine, Omphale, devient à son tour l'initiatrice de Justine, en lui expliquant toutes les règles d'après lesquelles les moines exercent leur domination. Le destin de Justine est lié à cette femme, partenaire de souffrance, qui l'aide au début à s'adapter à sa nouvelle situation, et puis c'est à travers Omphale, à savoir grâce à sa « réformation », que Justine réussit à échapper. Les femmes du couvent sont donc liées l'une à l'autre dans leur statut d'objets asservis ; une possibilité qu'elles ont – et dont Ursule seule tire profit – est de se transformer en dominatrice envers les autres ; enfin, les rapports sont clairs, contrairement au couvent de Rutebeuf,

¹⁸ Brîndușa Grigoriu, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

¹⁹ Rutebeuf, *op. cit.*, v. 95.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, v. 114-115.

où il reste toujours une autre version des faits, une autre possibilité d'envisager l'identité et le « fonctionnement » des personnages²¹.

Après avoir vu quels sont les rapports à l'intérieur des deux mondes, on peut passer à la vision sur l'érotisme, qui relève de deux pôles opposés. Premièrement, à l'abri du couvent où Denise et Simon découvrent l'amour charnel, il s'agit d'une « véritable cour d'amour chrétienne »²² - l'amour courtois transplanté dans un espace inédit. Ce que nous dit le texte, c'est que « Frere Denize mout amerent / Tuit li frere qui laianz erent./ Mais plus l'amoit frere Symons »²³ - le dernier, d'un amour qui dépasse largement les limites de la chrétienté. Ce qui importe, c'est la réciprocité du sentiment et les faveurs que l'on fait à la dame-travestie : « Or out damoizele Denize/ Quanqu'ele vot a sa devise. »²⁴. Le moyen dont œuvre la séduction dans cette histoire est double sinon délibérément réciproque: d'une part, la beauté de la fille, qui séduit involontairement le frère cordelier, et d'autre part l'acte de langage de ce dernier : Denise est convaincue par la ruse que la vie parmi les moines serait sainte et apparemment tout ce qui se passe dans le couvent vient soutenir son hypothèse. Même l'érotisme reste ambigu ; elle ne le ressent pas en tant que mal condamnable, et l'accepte ainsi « volentiers ». Une conception totalement autre de l'érotisme apparaît chez Sade, où il y a une distinction nette entre l'amour et la jouissance : « Mais comment put-il venir dans la tête d'un homme raisonnable que la délicatesse eût quelque prix en jouissance ? Il est absurde de vouloir soutenir qu'elle y soit nécessaire ; elle n'ajoute jamais rien au plaisir des sens, je dis plus, elle y nuit ; c'est une chose très différente que d'aimer ou que de jouir ; la preuve en est qu'on aime tous les jours sans jouir et qu'on jouit encore plus souvent sans aimer. »²⁵, déclare Dom Clément. D'ici une typologie de l'érotisme qui transforme la femme en objet du plaisir de l'homme ; la jouissance de celui-ci est « non seulement très éloignée de ce qui peut lui plaire [à la femme], mais même se trouve contraire à ses plaisirs »²⁶. On parle donc seulement d'une seule direction de la séduction : il faut que les femmes-esclaves enfermées dans le couvent plaisent aux moines-bourreaux – mais comment ? Le premier principe à suivre, dans cet univers proprement tyrannique, est de faire souffrir l'autre. C'est l'image du Mal, du vice – donc du *désordre*. Il est inattendu de trouver dans un tel lieu une véritable organisation de la débauche : *l'ordre du désordre*, qui se révèle être le deuxième principe du plaisir sadien. L'explication réside dans la définition même du pouvoir : exercer du pouvoir sur l'autre, c'est lui imposer un ordre. De plus, comme le remarque aussi

²¹ Il ne faut pas oublier que Denise est travestie.

²² Brîndușa Grigoriu, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

²³ Rutebeuf, *op. cit.*, v. 170-171.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 157-158.

²⁵ Sade, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-194.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

Roland Barthes, l'amplification de la jouissance se fait « en respectant d'une part et en précipitant de l'autre les épisodes du rite »²⁷. Ainsi, les filles sont réparties en quatre groupes égaux d'après leur âge, il y a une couleur correspondant à chaque groupe etc. Ensuite, les punitions les plus diverses sont strictement réglementées.

Michel Delon propose une possible justification des traitements sadiens auxquelles sont soumises les filles, se ressourçant à l'exotisme civilisationnel : « De Montaigne aux Lumières, la diversité des coutumes lointaines a servi d'argument contre le dogmatisme moral et religieux ; elles battaient en brèche la prétention du christianisme de détenir le monopole de la vérité. D'Orient ou d'Amérique arrivaient les Hurons, les Persans et tant de bons sauvages qui ruinaient nos assurances ancestrales. Les libertins sadiens cherchent, eux aussi, aux quatre coins du monde, des usages qui légitiment leurs perversions personnelles. »²⁸. C'est l'ancrage dans un contexte extérieur d'une philosophie du Mal qui est énoncé dans le discours de Dom Clément : « Les hommes ne comprendront jamais qu'il n'est aucune sorte de goûts quelque bizarres, quelque criminels même qu'on puisse les supposer, qui ne dépendent de la sorte d'organisation que nous avons reçue de la nature ! Cela posé, je [...] demande de quel droit un homme osera-t-il exiger d'un autre ou de réformer ses goûts, ou de les modeler sur l'ordre social ! De quel droit même les lois, qui ne sont faites que pour le bonheur de l'homme, oseront-elles sévir contre celui qui ne peut se corriger, ou qui n'y parviendrait qu'aux dépens de ce bonheur que doivent lui conserver les lois ? »²⁹ ; « Le système de l'amour du prochain est une chimère que nous devons au christianisme et non pas à la nature »³⁰ – le monde renversé est ainsi justifié moralement, le *Weltanschauung* que le narrateur³¹ impose pouvant sembler aussi cohérent que celui qu'il conteste.

De son côté, le narrateur de Rutebeuf énonce d'emblée sa position : « Li abiz ne fait pas l'ermite [...] / Mais mainte gens font bele moustre / Et merveilleuz semblant qu'il vaillent : / Il semblent les aubres qui faillent, / Qui furent trop bel au florir. / Bien dovroient teil gent morir / Vilainnement et a grant honte. »³². Cette vision concorde avec la fin de l'histoire, où la femme mariée (à savoir une femme respectable, qui a aussi de l'expérience

²⁷ *Le Plaisir du texte*, Éditions du Seuil, 1973, p. 21.

²⁸ « La copie sadienne » dans *Littérature*, n°69, 1988, « Intertextualité et révolution », pp. 87-99, p. 88.

²⁹ Sade, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

³¹ On préfère *narrateur* au lieu d'*auteur* ayant en vue l'opinion d'après laquelle Sade serait en effet *moraliste* : « Le marquis n'a dans son œuvre peint vices et crimes que pour les faire détester ». (Audegean Philippe, « Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer, *Sade moraliste. Le dévoilement de la pensée sadienne à la lumière de la réforme pénale au XVIIIe siècle*. Préface de Maurice Lever », dans : *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, Quatrième série, tome 105, n°3, 2007, pp. 507-512, ici p. 507.)

³² Rutebeuf, *op. cit.*, v. 1-13.

socialement pertinente), agent du rétablissement de Denise à sa situation normale, sermonne ainsi le moine (« sermonneur »): « Fauz papelars, fauz ypocrite,/ Fauce vie meneiz et orde. »³³ D'ici résulte le but que l'auteur s'était proposé concernant le public : une histoire moralisatrice, qui divertisse et enseigne à la fois. La fin reflète un idéal moral de l'époque : « Or ot non ma dame Denize/ Et fu a mout plus grant honeur/ Qu'en abit de Frere Meneur. »³⁴. Rutebeuf ne manque pas l'opportunité de faire de la critique sociale, à travers les paroles de la femme qui révèle le secret : « Vos desfendeiz au jones gens/ Et les dances et les quaroles,/ Violes, tabours et citoles/ Et toz deduiz de menestreiz!/ Or me dites, sire haut reiz,/ Menoit sainz Fransois teile vie? »³⁵.

Enfin, le motif du couvent apparaît dans le fabliau de Rutebeuf comme un milieu affectueusement communautaire se développant en marge de la société, qui se voit satiriquement ciblé pour son non-conformisme moral aussi bien que pour sa duplicité théologique-érotique, tout en servant de prétexte à s'amuser en amusant le lecteur, car l'histoire ne donne pas de raisons de s'effrayer. Il n'y a aucun (sens du) mal qui affecte véritablement Denise, ni dans le couvent, ni après qu'elle en sort, aucune punition même pour son comportement impropre. Chez Sade, au contraire, le placement d'une telle action dans un couvent est l'une des faces de la révolte : on n'est pas d'accord avec l'ordre imposé par l'église, on le renverse et, pour rendre le contrepoids plus violemment pertinent, on y implique les représentants mêmes de celle-ci. Ce qui reste toutefois commun aux deux discours, c'est le fantasme d'une fille pénétrant dans un couvent de moines, en brisant les tabous au risque de se voir elle-même briser. Une fantaisie intellectuelle sous-tend ces entre-deux-mondes, en les faisant basculer entre l'ordre, le désordre et le contre-ordre³⁶.

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³³ *Ibid.*, v. 244-245.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 334-335.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 258-263.

³⁶ L'expression est utilisée par Françoise Barteau par rapport au monde compensatoire du Morois dans les textes français de la légende tristanienne ; voir *Les Romans de Tristan et Iseut: introduction à une lecture plurielle*, Paris, Larousse, 1972, p. 154 sq. .

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Medieval Elements in Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*

Paula-Andreea Onofrei *

Abstract

Published in 1831, the classic historical Gothic romance *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* is representative for narratology, since the plot is majestically set in medieval Paris and Victor Hugo manages to create a specific Middle-Ages atmosphere without having studied in a formal manner about the specificity of medieval times, therefore he is a medievalist *avant-la-lettre*. Moreover, it is important to underline Hugo's attention to details, the realism of description and the manner of giving shape to vivid characters, the predilection for creating memorable, powerful epic moments with a deep religious-ethical component. Furthermore, our purpose is to analyze medieval and modern elements in the novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, also insisting on the symbols present in the novel, its impact on the readers and also the narrative techniques used by Victor Hugo.

Keywords: medieval, modern, text analysis, writing technique, narratology, narrative techniques, film adaptation.

This article has emerged as a natural reaction to the writing of Victor Hugo, characterized by the prevalence of visual elements, of details connected to Gothic art and, of course, to the narrative techniques of the writer who has proved to be a medievalist *avant-la-lettre*.

Firstly, we would like to underline the fact that perhaps no other work of Victor Hugo, except for *Les Misérables*, the other masterpiece of the French author, has received so much attention regarding its cinematographic representation. Fortunately, we had the chance to see several film adaptations, among which we consider *The Hunchback from Notre Dame from 1997* the best¹, being an Alliance Communications production, starring Richard Harris as Dom Frollo, Salma Hayek as Esmeralda, Mandy Patinkin as Quasimodo, Edward Atterton as Pierre Gringoire, the film was directed by Peter Medak. This deep connection between Victor Hugo's book and cinema has its roots in the fact that the author's writing style is predominantly visual, not to mention the narrative themes and techniques of the novel. If we

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¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCHm5DURhMw>, viewed on 26 November 2018.

analyze the second chapter of Book V from the novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, we discover the ways in which literature supplanted architecture as the first mode of expression of civilization. Furthermore, the ways in which Hugo put accent on motion and visualization in his written pages are, according to the words of Bradley Stephens from the introduction to the book published in 2010 by Signet Classics, “almost prophetic of the rise of the moving image over the written word”². In this respect, we have wondered about the impact of this work written in the 19th century over the nowadays reader, especially taking into account the modern ways of creating cinematographic representations of classic books. Modern times are marked by great changes, also regarding the perception of classic literature. Most people do not have the necessary time for reading, this is the reason why they prefer to see a movie made after a book which is considered part of the basic, undeniably well-written books of classic literature. Therefore, when we asked our students of the first year, studying Computer Science at the University “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” if they had read the book, we were surprised to notice that there were only 41 out of 300 that have read the book, while more than a third (to be more precise, 156 students) had seen the movie based on the book.

In this respect, we consider that this book’s popularity is explainable by the fact that it anticipated “a modern, image-driven culture”; for example, there are numerous images with the elaborate architecture of Notre-Dame which has always inflamed the imagination of people; moreover, there is a scene in which Quasimodo is fighting against the Parisian crowd. Furthermore, we believe that the essence of this perpetual attraction of the writing of Hugo is due to the fact that not only are these images well-drawn, but also dynamically animated: Quasimodo slides down the cathedral’s façade to rescue Esmeralda “like a raindrop rolling down a pane of glass”³ or when “the waves of that human sea”⁴ part under boiling metal that pours down from Notre-Dame heights, the page creates in the readers’ mind a cinematographic sequence of images.

In this novel, Victor Hugo’s major focus is on the notions of perspective and observation. In connection to these issues, we have noticed that the author frequently uses verbs of appearance and perception and there are also allusions and metaphors. We have identified the motif of the eye in the following fragments: in the northern part of the cathedral, there is a

² Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, Translated by Walter J. Cobb, with a new introduction by Bradley Stephens and an Afterword by Graham Robb, Signet Classics, 2010, p.X.

³ Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, Translated by Walter J. Cobb, with a new introduction by Bradley Stephens and an Afterword by Graham Robb, Signet Classics, Penguin Books, London, 2010, p. 344.

⁴ Idem, p.414.

window which resembles the only open eye of Quasimodo; Esmeralda's beguiling dark eyes often focus on the narrator's description of the gypsy dancer; Frollo's devilish madness is betrayed by "the look of hell"⁵ which lies in his searching eyes. To complete the literary painting, the characters of this novel are forever watching one another.

In the article "Medievalism and Modernity in Victor Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre Dame*"⁶, Alex Novikoff underlines that the first section of the book contains a historical reconstruction which offers an excellent example of Hugo's medievalism. First of all, the novel opens on the 6th of January 1482, when it was celebrated the annual Feast of Fools. The Feast was a celebration specific to France which was respected both by clergy and laic people before the 16th century, the main idea of this event was the inversion of power, a mockery meant to give the poor the power that they did not have, power, dignity and impunity were "briefly conferred on those in a subordinate position", according to Novikoff. In this respect, this feast was somehow a medieval successor of the Roman *Saturnalia* which also had a parodic function. The Feast of the Fools starts with the election of Quasimodo as "king". A major advantage of this novel is the fact that it offers the readers a complete portrait of medieval society, accomplished through the recognition of the tensions that exist among the different classes. Hugo's intention was to trace current social and political problems back to their medieval roots and, in order to achieve the maximum effect, he reconstructed medieval Paris with its buildings and its people. Consequently, the reader is invited to imagine the hub of intellectual life back then: the Cité, the University, the Palace of Justice. Of course, the biggest point of attraction is the Cathedral Notre-Dame de Paris, which also gave the original title of the novel. Later on, it was changed to Quasimodo, the Hunchback of Notre-Dame, but Hugo believed that the emphasis should be on the Gothic majestic cathedral, not on the morbidity of Quasimodo. In order to underline the beauty of the neglected marvels of Paris, there are numberless digressions. In one of his characteristic *cri de coeur*, Hugo said: "Our fathers had a Paris of stone; our children will have a Paris of plaster". How exactly did Hugo manage to re-create medieval Paris? By reading, of course, his sources being Henri Sauval's *Histoires et recherches des Antiquités de la Ville de Paris*, published in 1724 and still read by experts today. He also relied on P. Jacques de Breul's *Le Théâtre des Antiquités de Paris* (1622) and Pierre Matthieu's *Histoire de Louys XI, roy de France* (1610).

⁵ Idem, p.294.

⁶ Alex J. Novikoff, *Medievalism and Modernity in Victor Hugo's Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Fiction and Film for Scholars of France – A Cultural Bulletin, <https://h-france.net/fflh/classics/medievalism-and-modernity-in-victor-hugos-hunchback-of-notre-dame/>, last seen on 17 September 2018.

Regarding the narrative techniques that Victor Hugo uses, we have noticed the massive usage of descriptions of significant medieval Parisian places, thus contributing to the impression of moving painting. A strategy that the writer uses in order to attract the reader is the novel's interpretative ambiguity, the message is left for each consumer of literature to be decoded; according to Bradley Stephens, "this freedom of interpretation is surely another of the novel's lasting strengths. [...] The narrator never adopts a moralizing approach to the events he describes, obligating readers to understand the text for themselves."⁷

Notre-Dame de Paris has a dramatic effect on the outside world. In 1831, "medieval" meant unsafe housing, dark doorways and festering drains. The word "gothic" was an insult. Therefore, according to Graham Robb, when critics wanted to accuse Hugo of artistic vandalism, they called his writings "Hugothique".⁸

Reading the descriptions of the medieval places that used to mark medieval Paris, we believe that the purpose of creating these long passages with minute details regarding what used to exist once in that place is the salvation of medieval treasures. In the preface to the second edition, Hugo underlines the idea of saving these buildings from the hammer of progress. Not only did Hugo manage to describe representative building, but also he created memorable characters that have continued to live in the imagination of readers over decades: the penniless poet Gringoire; the demonic, debauched priest Frollo; the handsome guardsman Captain Phoebus; the deaf bell ringer Quasimodo; the amazingly beautiful gipsy girl called Esmeralda who makes everybody fall in love with her, the gipsy woman being always followed by her only friend, the performing goat Djali (the same name of Djali was given by Madame Bovary to her lapdog twenty-six years later).

How exactly has *Notre Dame de Paris* inspired film industry? Well, in 1923, appeared the movie *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, starring Lon Chaney as Quasimodo. The same combination of repulsion and sensitivity can be detected in Charles Laughton's incarnation of Quasimodo in 1939, while Anthony Quinn in 1956 and Sir Anthony Hopkins in 1982 gave this character life in a similar manner. In 1996, Walt Disney Pictures released an animated version of the novel. Closer to our times, appeared *Batman* in 1989, having Tim Burton as its protagonist. We have identified in *Batman* the themes of surveillance and detection to the backgrounds of a society marked by injustice and corruption, just like in the novel of Victor Hugo. In a nutshell, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* is a complex Gothic Romantic novel

⁷ Bradley Stephens in *Introduction to Victor Hugo's The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, Signet Classics, Penguin Books, London 2010, p.xiii.

⁸ Graham Robb in *Afterword to Victor Hugo's The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, Signet Classics, Penguin Books, London 2010, p.505.

whose purpose is to shed light on all the aspects of a medieval Paris which has very many things in common with the modern version of Paris, thus inviting the readers into a journey of comparison and discovery.

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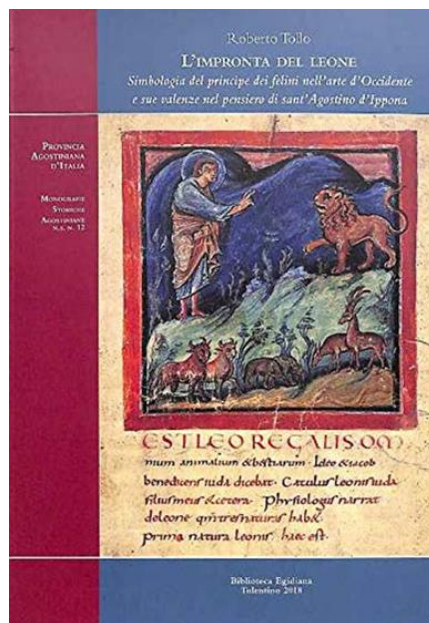
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BOOK REVIEWS

The Lion's symbolism in European art reflected in the studies of Dr. Roberto Tollo

Cristian Ungureanu

Roberto Tollo, *L'impronta del Leone. Simbologia del principe dei felini nell'arte d'Occidente e sue valenze nel pensiero di sant'Agostino d'Ippona*, Biblioteca Egidiana, Tolentino, 2018, 138 pages.



The book to which we dedicate this review investigates the iconological roots of the lion theme (*Phantera leo*, Linnaeus, 1758), starting from its fame in the ancient world to subsequent adoption by the Christian religion, underlining the authority of Master Augustin of Hipona and of Girolamo di Stridone.

Structured in ten thematic fascicles, the volume benefits from a competent introduction, signed by the priest Pasquale Cormio and also has an inspired preface written by the author. Illustrated with several dozen photos of case studies presented and analyzed, accompanied by four appendices with the necessary notes and added explanations, the present study is completed with an essential bibliography, complementary illustrations and a topographic index of the Romanesque sculpture workshops.

Despite the difficulties caused by the seismic events that, since August 2016, have reached the regions of Lazio, Umbria and Marche, with devastating effects for the church of San Nicola, the “Egidian Library” of the Augustinian community of Tolentino has continued the cultural activities, including the present monograph by Dr. Roberto Tollo. The collaboration between the author and the Egidiana editorial house includes several books dedicated to the historical-religious and iconographic research on the patrimony of the Augustinian communities, with international resonance.

In this context, Dr. Tollo coordinated the work of hundreds of scientists involved in the elaboration of iconographic studies on works and artists in the service of St. Augustine’s Order, including a large number of case studies

and syntheses of artistic and spiritual phenomena, between the 13th and 18th centuries.

In the current volume, that has a highly suggestive title “The mark of the Lion. The symbology of the prince of felines in Western art and its valencies in the thinking of Saint Augustine of Hipona” the author proposes an ample investigation into the historical sources of the lion’s representations, presenting biblical, patristic and medieval themes in order to highlight the great interest this symbolic motif has gained in the ancient world, as well as the reasons for it’s subsequent takeover of the Italian Christian culture and art (sculpture and painting) from the Middle Tyrenian area.

This book is expanding on a previous study, entitled “The thorn in the paw. The transmigrations of an iconographic subject”, published by Dr. Roberto Tollo in 2014. Throughout the net of countless case studies invoked, the author presents the multiple and complementary valencies of the lion, an ancient and complex zoomorphic figure, loaded with positive symbolic attributes, such as defender of high moral and spiritual values, but also the expression of evil, infernal realities. Inspirational references to sacred texts show us the lion having the profile of power and greatness, identified with the Christ-Leo of the tribe of Judas, the one who rose from death by trampling over death¹. When invested with the attributes of the fierce beast, the lion identifies itself as the opponent, who kills, terrorizes and drives away the baptized Christians from the path of faith.

The same ambiguous hypostasis is attributed to the lion also in depictions of texts that narrate episodes from the lives of the holy monks or the great hermits such as Antonie the Great, Macarie or Pavel Tabeul. We can add our remark on the fact that countless projections of this symbolism attributed to the lion in Western Christian literature and art are found in a similar or even identical manner in Eastern Christian culture.

Resuming the thread of our review, the Romanic iconography illustrated in this book, with sculptures or paintings of manuscripts, depicts Christ symbolized by a lion that protects a lamb, a deer or even a human figure, between its paws. Again, ambivalently, when the lion is depicted as biting from human heads and bodies, it’s identified with the one who strikes the sinners with death, as exemplified by the 13th-14th century sculpture at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Bari.

A famous representation in the Romanesque iconography, to which the author pays special attention, is the one whose literary source tells us about the slave Androclus. He extracted a wooden splinter from a lion’s paw. The huge feline would remember the slave’s charitable gesture, and when Androclus was thrown to the beasts in the arena of the Maximus Circus in

¹ Roberto Tollo – “The mark of the Lion. The symbology of the prince of felines in Western art and its valencies in the thought of Saint Augustine of Hipona”, pag.19

Rome, the lion -participant in the judicial show - spared the doomed benefactor and defended him from the attack of a panther. The scene, chronicled by many ancient authors, such as Pliny the Elder, Seneca, Aulus Gellius or Claudio Elliano, retained an exceptional symbolic reverberation, so it was converted into moralizing stories in the early centuries of Christian literature and perpetuated in the following millennium. Roberto Tollo follows in this volume a rich series of renderings of the Roman legend, transpositions in pen drawing, engravings in various specific techniques, sculptures and plaster reliefs, each providing an interpretation of the ancient literary sources of the story.

The lion is depicted in countless hypostases, among which with prevalence and recurrence are those of the defender of truth and the righteous faith. Very often sculpted at the entrance of churches and cathedrals, flanking the sumptuous entry gates in the edifices or defending the sarcophagi from the attack of malignant spirits, the lion is illustrated as an unflinching guardian, or as a fierce assailant of some prey that he either overwhelms or bites, among the victims the dragon is often present, as is the case of the the pulpit made between 1158 and 1161 by Master Guillielmus for the Cathedral of Pisa, which was subsequently taken down and reassembled at the Cagliari Cathedral.

Alongside the lion, the symbolic apparatus of the Romanesque art includes a vast array of beasts, gentle or ferocious, which are also laden with well-defined symbolic functions and are most often plastic projections of the texts of some important Western medieval Christian authors, such as the Fathers of the Church, saints Augustine and Ambrose. The lamb and ram are always the symbol of Christ – The Lamb of God, while corresponding or complementary hypostases accompany the zoomorphic projections of patristic teachings. The dragon is the fantastic beast that embodies the enemy of the Son of Man, the bull symbolizes the sin of pride, the horse as well, the hypostasis of splendour. The stag is also accused of vanity while the bear, who “dies” at the beginning of the winter, to be “reborn” at spring, becomes an insulting competitor of Christ. Books with moralizing stories, endowed with exorbitant bestiaries, are sources of inspiration for the sermons of those times, as well as medieval treatises, often fantastic, of natural history.

The author concludes his historical periplus in iconography dedicated to the King of felines and the ancient or medieval, pagan and paleo-Christian sources, reaching the boundaries of the XVIIIth century. Roberto Tollo, resumes – in a symbolic cyclicalloop – the same pagan motif of the slave Androclus, that would bind a secret friendship with his lion saviour. This time we find him as the Saint Jerome who helped, as well, ridding a lion in the desert of the pain caused by a thorn in its paw. In the end, the author finds a few modern directions in which the symbolic role of the lion resurges,

Donizetti's opera music, G.B. Shaw's theater, or in academic painting², reaching the spirit of the postmodern era, when a character like the zoologist Kevin Richardson suggests a warmer approach to the gigantic felines, whom he finds to be docile, even affectionate before a man laden with good intentions, such as the ancient Androclus.

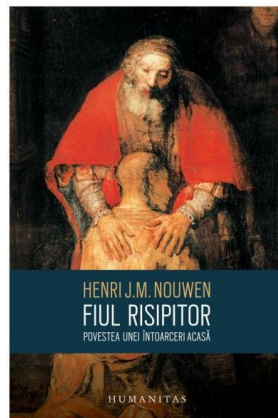
The historic periplus, culturally expanded, suggested by the art critique Roberto Tollo, on the fascinating symbolic identity of the lion, developed over millennia in European art, focusing especially on those made in the Augustian Patristic spirit, is also a source of inspiration for the cultural explorers, theologians, art historians and contemporary artists, who recognise the fact that symbolic structures are perennial and immutable withing their inner essence, reclaiming their function when times demand it.

² *Idem*, page 42.

The Return of the Prodigal Son. A Lesson of Life Through Faith and Art

Adrian Stoleriu

Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*, Humanitas Publishing House from Bucharest, 2017, 194 pp



The reader who is searching for a good book which can easily charm one's soul can actually stop now over the work of Henri J. M. Nouwen, called *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*, edited in the Romanian language in 2017 by Humanitas Publishing House from Bucharest. Over these 194 written pages, written in an original and fluent style, combining the rigours of a text which can easily be placed both in bibliographies with a religious specificity and in the ones that belong to the artistic field, the book of Henri J. M. Nouwen is focused on the description of some experiences lived by the author of the work himself, after visualizing and discovering the meanings of the work *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, painted around the year 1668 by the well-known Dutch artist Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn (1606-1669).

Based on the deep meanings of the Biblical parable in which the old father receives his prodigal son with so much joy, after having considered him lost for a long time, the impressive creation of Rembrandt had an unusual effect on Father Henri J. M. Nouwen who was in a sensitive moment of his lifetime. The accidental discovery of a poster of the famous painting determines him to find the hidden message that the work transmits, thus making a journey to Hermitage Museum from Sankt Petersburg, where he would effectively meet the masterpiece. The work awakens feelings and inner sensations to the unusual visitor, marking the beginning of a spiritual trajectory of analysis and introspection, finally offering him a superior perspective of comprehension and of living his own life. This is the key moment for understanding his entire spiritual way, consisting in the successive identification with each of the main characters of the painting. Moreover, the structure of the book which describes this impressive spiritual endeavour reflects, through its three parts, the empathy of the author who puts himself in the position of each of these characters: the younger son, the elder son and the father.

The description of this experience has the defining features of an initiation ritual which is difficult and long-lasting, in which the passing through each phase represents an existential condition, impossible to avoid or to substitute. Deep and honest introspection makes the author pass through the three stages of his accomplishment as a human being, a recurrent theme of universal literature which is old or more recent. By reading these pages several times, the reader repeatedly has the possibility to experience a feeling similar to the one while reading the novel *Laurus*, of the Russian writer Evgenij Vodolazkin, this work also appeared in Romanian in 2012, at "Humanitas" Publishing House. Just like the main character of this book, Arseny, slowly transforms himself into Ambroglio, afterwards in *Laurus*, by passing through a series of defining ontological hypostases, sketched in the four parts of the work (*The Book of Knowledge*, *The Book of Giving Up*, *The Book of the Path* and *The Book of Serenity*), Henri J. M. Nouwen himself passes through a process of transfiguration, passing from the age of the childhood of consciousness (the one of the prodigal son) to the one of full maturity, illustrated by the image of the father, the mundane expression of the goodness and wiseness of God.

The elaborated consciousness process that Henri J. M. Nouwen lives and describes in the pages of this book is connected in a specific way to the discovery of the meaning of life that he finds in the living of life itself, while giving up on the inner, interior child and while symbolically identifying oneself with the person of the old father of the Biblical parable and from the painting of Rembrandt.

The book represents, on the whole, a suggestive questioning of the problem of human identity, delicately exploring the territory of memory, consciousness and spirit. The reading of this work incites to launching a set of questions that both the author and the reader address themselves: Who are we, at a deep level? Are we only just the person that has reached a specific phase of life, or are we, simultaneously, the amount of all our passing identities, of the moments and experiences that we have lived up to the present moment, during our entire lifetime? Or...Can we simultaneously be both the image of the prodigal son and of the forgiving father? The answers to these questions and the identification with the father can be found by following three paths, described by the author as it follows: sadness, forgiveness and open-heartedness. These are the spiritual terms of reference of the initiation path that the painting *The Return of the Prodigal Son* made by Rembrandt symbolically marks not only for the writer of this captivating book, but also for the large public. In a nutshell, we can state that we are in front of an obvious proof of the way in which art can change thoughts, ideals, characters and finally, destinies.

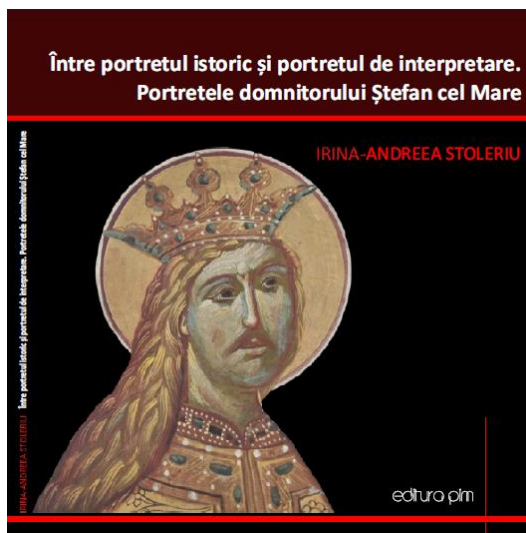
***Le visage d'un
voïevode à travers les
ans / A Voivode's Face
through the Years***

Codrina-Laura Ioniță

Irina-Andreea Stoleriu, *Între
portretul istoric și portretul de
interpretare. Portretele*

*domnitorului Ștefan cel Mare
/ Entre le portrait historique et
le portrait d'interprétation.*

*Les portraits du voïevode Etienne le Grand, Éditions Pim, Iași, 2018, 160
pages*



Le volume de la jeune chercheuse Irina-Andreea Stoleriu, *Între portretul istoric și portretul de interpretare. Portretele domnitorului Ștefan cel Mare / Entre le portrait historique et le portrait d'interprétation. Les portraits du voïevode Etienne le Grand*, paru aux Éditions Pim, Iași, en 2018, est issu d'une brillante thèse de doctorat soutenue en 2012. Dédié à la directrice de la thèse, Madame le Professeur Tereza Sinigalia, ce travail révèle chez son auteure les qualités attendues d'un digne disciple de sa maîtresse. En se constituant comme une remarquable étude scientifique, le volume illustre de nouvelles facettes de la recherche en histoire de l'art en ce qui concerne l'image de voïevode Etienne le Grand dans ses représentations à l'époque médiévale et à travers le temps. Pour répondre aux exigences d'un approfondissement rigoureux, l'ouvrage débute avec une clarification des concepts. En partant de la typologie du portrait, l'auteur souligne la différence entre le portrait de donateur et le tableau votif et entre le portrait original et le portrait d'interprétation (avec une distinction inédite entre le portrait historique, le portrait d'interprétation et le portrait de réinterprétation).

Ainsi, selon la période où ils ont été réalisés, les portraits d'Etienne le Grand peuvent se regrouper, en lignes générales, en quatre catégories. Les premiers sont ceux réalisés à l'époque du voïevode, et qui conservent mieux les traits de son visage. Toute une série de tableaux votifs inspirés des images initiales continuent à être peints les décennies suivantes dans les églises construites par le prince. La deuxième époque significative pour la

réinterprétation des portraits du voïévode est bien plus tardive, au XIX^e siècle, et se distingue par les œuvres conçues dans le cadre du programme de Gheorghe Asachi, qui essaye, par un mouvement éducationnel, d'atteindre à une mise en valeur collective, voire nationale, du passé. On reprend alors un autre modèle du visage d'Etienne le Grand, assez différent de l'original du *Tétraévangile*, un modèle qu'Antonie Russet et Gheorghe Duca imposent en 1677, à l'occasion de la restauration de l'une des églises bâties par le prince, Saint Nicolas de Iași. Si le troisième moment de l'évolution des portraits d'Etienne le Grand est initié sous le règne du roi Charles I, le dernier est plus près de l'époque moderne et contemporaine et se rattache à la canonisation du voïévode en 1992, qui détermine un changement de perspective allant du portrait à l'image iconographique.

La personnalité du prince moldave, resté dans la mémoire de ses contemporains comme un souverain chrétien plein de courage, est appréciée à l'époque par le Pape Sixtus IV ou par l'historien polonais Jan Długosz. Les siècles suivants ont connu aussi l'appréciation de sa figure, matérialisée dans les écrits de nombreux historiens, écrivains ou poètes qui ont fait son portrait littéraire. Dès les plus anciens (les historiens moldaves Grigore Ureche, Ion Neculce ou Dimitrie Cantemir, les Polonais Jan Długosz, Matei Miechowski ou Bernard Wapowski) jusqu'à ceux des derniers siècles (A. D. Xenopol, Nicolae Iorga, Constantin C. Giurescu, Dinu C. Giurescu, Virgin Căndea, Răzvan Teodorescu, Tereza Sinigalia, Ion Solcanu et autres), l'image du voïévode s'avère être celle d'une personnalité liée tant à la spiritualité renaissante, qu'à celle du christianisme oriental.

L'ouvrage continue avec des études de cas des principaux portraits du voïévode. Comme nous l'avons déjà précisé, les premiers portraits analysés sont ceux contemporains au voïévode. Parmi les œuvres commandées par Etienne le Grand lui-même, la plus ancienne que l'on garde de son visage est la miniature du *Tétraévangile* du Monastère Humor, réalisée par l'hiéromoine Nicodim en 1473. Ici le prince Moldave offre l'Evangile à la Vierge assise sur un trône près de Son Fils. Un autre portrait, cette fois sculpté, est celui préservé au monastère Vatoped du Mont Athos. D'autres portraits du voïévode, datant de son époque, se retrouvent aussi en broderie. Toujours contemporains avec le prince, les tableaux votifs de l'église *Saint Ilie* de Suceava, de l'église *La Sainte Croix* de Pătrăuți et de l'église *Saint George* du Monastère Voroneț supposent une composition différente, plaçant la figure du voïévode d'une part auprès des images du Christ et de l'intercesseur (peints à la manière byzantine), d'autre part auprès des images de sa famille (avec une différence d'exécution des portraits laïques, qui se révèlent plus réalistes). La présence ou l'absence des uns ou des autres membres de la famille a permis une datation plus exacte de la fresque. Si le visage d'Etienne le Grand est ici plus ou moins comparable avec celui de la miniature, ses

vêtements sont totalement distincts, renvoyant plutôt à la tradition du Constantinople.

Avec les tableaux votifs de l'église *Saint Nicolas* de Dorohoi et de l'église de la Pentecôte (*La Descente du Saint Esprit*) de Dobrovăț, on ouvre la série des portraits posthumes du voïévode, des portraits d'interprétation, selon la taxinomie proposée par Andreea-Irina Stoleriu. Si à Dorohoi une note d'originalité consiste dans le fait que les personnages sont séparés par des arcades peintes, à Dobrovăț la nouveauté vise l'absence de la famille du prince : seuls les voïévodes, Etienne et ses fils, y sont représentés.

En ce qui concerne la réinterprétation du portrait d'Etienne le Grand, Irina-Andreea Stoleriu affirme qu'un moment important serait le XIX^e siècle, où Gheorghe Asachi se tourne vers le passé, en essayant de ramener vers l'actualité, par la lithographie, le visage d'un héros de la Moldavie. Selon une hypothèse souvent évoquée, la source d'inspiration pour Gheorghe Asachi aurait été le portrait votif de l'église *St. Nicolas*. Bien éloigné d'image originelle de *Tétraévangile*, le modèle proposé par G. Asachi s'impose pourtant pour d'autres portraits, tant sculptés (la statue du français Emmanuel Frémiet placée devant le Palais Administratif de Iași) que peints (le nouveau tableau votif de l'église *Saint Nicolas* restaurée par André Lecomte de Noüy).

A la fin de son étude, Irina-Andreea Stoleriu se penche vers les réinterprétations contemporaines du visage du voïévode. Elle a choisi, pour appuyer son analyse, quelques icônes actuelles et deux tableaux votifs, peints de nos jours, l'un de l'église de Borzești, près de lieu de la naissance du prince, fresque réalisée par les frères Mihail et Gavril Mroșanu, et l'autre de l'église de Putna, la nécropole du voïévode, peint par Grigore Popescu-Muscel.

On ne saurait conclure cette présentation sans remarquer l'exceptionnelle qualité graphique du volume, devenu une véritable œuvre d'art qui vient compléter pertinemment le texte. Ainsi, le livre d'Irina-Andreea Stoleriu se recommande comme un instrument utile et enrichissant pour ceux qui désirent découvrir l'image d'Etienne le Grand à travers les époques, en investiguant le passé au-delà de son aura légendaire.

***Interdisciplinarity in The Sleep
of Reason, by Dumitru
Constantin Dulcan***

Paula-Andreea Onofrei

Dumitru Constantin Dulcan, *Somnul rațiunii / The Sleep of Reason*, Editura Eikon, București, 2014, 171 pages



In the book *The Sleep of Reason*, Doctor Dumitru-Constantin Dulcan reunites a few essays and micro biographies written in a special, extremely well-documented manner. The title may be misleading for some people, because it may lead them to think that the work is about imagined events. On the contrary, after having read this book, we realized that it is a lucid work in which the author approaches some controversial nowadays topics that can be regarded from multiple perspectives: they do have connections with science, art, philosophy and even theology.

Furthermore, the style of *The Sleep of Reason* is marked by orality, by free speech, without any restraints, there are a lot of reflections and comments that will make the reader feel fascinated by the presented perspectives.

Why do I appreciate this book? Because, first of all, it is focused on the human being. The anthropocentric character of this writing can be detected even from the first pages, where the author manifests his attitude towards human ambivalence. The anthropology painted by the words of Doctor Dulcan is not an idealistic one, but we can speak about a realistic manner of presenting things, the author has in view both the positive and negative aspects of the human being.

Therefore, if we have a closer look at the content of this book, we realize that there are diverse topics: “*Quo Vadis, Homine?*” [Where are you going, human?], “*Somnul rațiunii naște monștri*” [The sleep of reason gives birth to monsters], “*Panem et circenses*” [Bread and circus], “*Eșecul religiei sau comentarii la un război*” [The failure of religion or commentaries to a war], “*Filosofie și medicină*” [Philosophy and medicine], “*Evoluția –*

conștiință sau hazard?” [Evolution – consciousness or hazard?], “Cu viața pe moarte călcând sau comentarii la o carte a unui confrate” [Life stepping on death or commentaries to the book of a fellow of mine], “Gânduri răzlețe la o descoperire anunțată” [Scattered thoughts at an announced discovery], “Lumina profesorului Vlad Voiculescu” [The light of teacher Vlad Voiculescu], “Petre Brânzei – omul” [Petre Brânzei – the human being], “Odobleja – neșansa geniului” [Odobleja – the failure of a genius], “De ce, Doamne?” [Why, God?], “Boala și arta” [Illness and art], “Relația dintre geniu și boala epileptic” [The relationship between a genius and epilepsy], Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, Gustave Flaubert, F.M. Dostoevsky, Vincent van Gogh, “Sexualitatea ca mister și finalitate” [Sexuality as mystery and finality], “Cum gândim sau cum putem fi induşși în eroare” [How we think or how we can be misled], “Drumuri spre Eminescu” [Paths towards Eminescu], “Între <Inteligența materiei> și <Somnul rațiunii>” [Between <The Intelligence of Substance> and <The Sleep of Reason>].

The first chapter – *Quo Vadis, Homine?*, actually has an intriguing title, we are invited to think about the origin of these words, the book *Quo Vadis*, written by Sienkiewicz. From my point of view, it is a powerful essay written in a simple manner, but in the same time having a meditative character. In this respect, we are going to quote a fragment:

“Human being, who are you and where are you heading to? You have had God and you betrayed Him. You sank into pleasures and you got lost. You became exhausted by pain and you haven’t learned anything. You have embellished the Earth and then you burnt it. You have put a bandage on wounds and you have wounded people. You have given food to some and you have let other people die of starvation. When were you a human being and when your opposite?!¹”

It is simply flabbergasting how the author manages to shed light on the duality which characterizes our human nature, inviting us, the readers, inside the universe of deep reflexion. His optimist view is logically connected to the acceptance of the human being with all one’s strengths and weaknesses, I could not say that there is a single moment when the human being is seen as being guilty for something. Even the topic of sexuality is painted in bright colours, seen as one of the mysteries of creation, having almost magic connotations and a specific degree of sanctity, reminding us of *The Song of Songs* from the Bible and of some reflections of Paul Evdokimov.

¹ Dulcan, Dumitru Constantin, *Somnul rațiunii*, “Eikon” Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, p.19, our translation from Romanian.

In a nutshell, *The Sleep of Reason* beautifully complements the other book of Doctor Dulcan called *The Intelligence of Substance [Inteligența materiei]*, the one that has brought the author's recognition in our contemporary culture.