

## STUDII ȘI ARTICOLE

### ARTICLES

#### **Le temps et la Liturgie dans la théologie du Père Alexander Schmemmann**

drd. Cristi Vaida<sup>1</sup>

##### **Résumé**

La présente étude se concentre sur la question générale du temps liturgique dans la vision théologique du Père Schmemmann. Dans ses études, il montre que la base théologique de tout le culte de l'Église est *le souvenir* ou l'*anamnèse*, par lequel l'ensemble de l'œuvre salvatrice de Dieu dans l'histoire est actualisé et porté au présent. L'*anamnèse* est le principe fondamental du culte liturgique, et elle doit être liée à l'eschatologie, qui n'aura pas lieu seulement à la fin des temps, dans un avenir lointain, mais qui est anticipée dès maintenant par le culte liturgique. Par l'anamnèse liturgique, souligne le Père Schmemmann, il y a une descente de Dieu dans le temps de ce monde, d'où le concept de *Liturgie du Temps*, qui signifie une ouverture et une transparence du temps mondain dans le Royaume de Dieu, une intensification de ce temps par la présence du Christ dans ses cadres. Les différentes valences de la *Liturgie du Temps* dans l'œuvre du Père Schmemmann constituent également une partie importante de la présente étude.

**Mots clés :** Liturgie, temps, culte, célébration, anamnèse,

##### **Introduction**

La question du temps liturgique dans la théologie du père Schmemmann est une réflexion sur le rôle de la mémoire ou de la remémoration dans la vie de l'Église. Ainsi, il

---

<sup>1</sup> Cristian Vaida, Fr. PhD. Secretar at Orthodox Archbishopry of Sibiu, cvaida2003@yahoo.com

part du principe que le rythme quotidien, hebdomadaire et annuel qui compose la vie liturgique de l'Église est lui-même un souvenir ou une remémoration constante de Dieu : *"Sans exagération aucune, nous pouvons dire que la remémoration, c'est-à-dire le fait de se souvenir de tout devant Dieu, la prière pour que Dieu "se remémore", se souviennent, constitue le centre de tout le service divin de l'Église, de toute sa vie....L'Église se "souviennent" constamment, chaque jour, chaque heure, à travers un événement ou un autre, à travers un saint ou un autre, car c'est précisément dans ce "souvenir" que réside l'essence de chaque fête et de tout le service divin de l'Église... Le souvenir est au cœur de la vie, de la prière, de la vie de l'Église".*<sup>2</sup>

### **1. L'anamnèse - un principe fondamental de la célébration liturgique.**

La signification des fêtes et de tous les services de l'Église réside dans ce que le père Schmemmann considère comme *"une célébration de la mémoire"*. Tout le culte de l'Église est fondé sur le *souvenir*, ou *anamnèse*, dans lequel le passé est ravivé et rendu visible dans le présent. *"On peut dire, sans exagération, que toute la vie de l'Église est une commémoration et un souvenir continus. À la fin de chaque messe, nous faisons référence aux saints "dont nous célébrons le mémorial", mais avant tout mémorial, l'Église est le souvenir du Christ... Dans le Christ, la mémoire est redevenue le pouvoir de remplir le temps interrompu par le péché et la mort, par la haine et l'oubli. Cette mémoire, comme pouvoir sur le temps, et la rupture de celui-ci est précisément ce qui se trouve au cœur de la mémoire liturgique, de l'aujourd'hui liturgique."*<sup>3</sup>

À ce stade, le père Schmemmann s'inscrit pratiquement dans une longue tradition qui a attaché de l'importance à la mémoire et qui a joué un rôle central dans l'histoire théologique de l'Église. Par exemple, Augustin considérait le souvenir, ainsi que la compréhension et la bonté, comme des manifestations de l'image de Dieu dans l'homme. C'est en se souvenant de Dieu, en le comprenant ou en le connaissant et en l'aimant que se manifeste la dimension théologique de l'être humain et de la personne. Sous la forme d'une analogie trinitaire, Augustin nous exhorte à laisser l'esprit se souvenir de Dieu, comprendre Dieu et aimer Dieu, concluant que ces trois actes peuvent être comprimés en un seul : *"honorer ou adorer le Dieu incréé"*.<sup>4</sup> L'acte de se souvenir de Dieu et l'acte d'adorer Dieu s'impliquent mutuellement et définissent le statut de l'homme en tant qu'être vivant. C'est dans ce sens que le psalmiste s'exclame : *"Car ce n'est pas dans la mort qu'il se souvient de toi. Et en enfer, qui te louera ?"* (Psaume 6:5). Cet acte

---

<sup>2</sup> A Schmemmann, *L'Eucharistie – Le Sacrement du Royaume*, traduit par le Père Boris Răduleanu, Bucarest, Anastasia, 1993, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, *Le Grand Carême*, traduit par Andreea et Laurențiu Constantin, Bucarest, Doris, 1998, p. 105-107.

<sup>4</sup> Augustin, *Later Works*, sélectionné et traduit avec des introductions par John Burnaby, Philadelphie, the Westminster Press, 1955, p. 113.

représente la quintessence de la constitution théologique de l'homme, tant sur le plan ontologique ou final que relationnel.

Cependant, le Père Schmemmann note que "*notre théologie scolastique est presque complètement silencieuse sur cette question*". Schmemmann explique cela par le fait que la théologie scolastique "*a proclamé comme seul critère la "méthode scientifique", par laquelle la notion de mémoire semble objectivement insuffisante, et la voie subjective et psychologique apparaît odieuse à cette "science". Dans l'interprétation et la restructuration de la foi en tant que doctrine "objective" fondée principalement sur des "textes", la mémoire et même la vie n'ont pas leur place. Dans ce cas, le souvenir qui sous-tend la vie, la prière, le vécu de l'Église semble être en dehors du champ de vision théologique...*"<sup>5</sup>.

L'approche de Schmemmann sur la question et l'importance de l'anamnèse dans l'acte liturgique trouve des parallèles idéologiques dans la philosophie, avec des antécédents qui remontent thématiquement à Platon. La référence à Platon est significative car sa philosophie a façonné le monde grec antique et a donc profondément influencé la pensée chrétienne à bien des égards. Platon considère le souvenir mis en évidence par l'art poétique - dépendant de la récitation, du drame, du rythme, du chant, etc. - comme une manifestation de la réalité, qui est cachée à la vue des formes réelles et atemporelles. Le temps de ce monde est rempli de contradiction, de multiplicité et de devenir sans fin, de sorte que la seule anamnèse que Platon confirme est l'anamnèse en tant que souvenir ou mémoire des formes éternelles qui a lieu dans l'âme. Ainsi, l'idée d'anamnèse ou de souvenir s'inscrit dans un contexte plus large concernant le problème de la connaissance et la théorie des idées ou des formes. Platon a imaginé une réalité idéale, objective, supérieure, un monde de formes et d'idées absolues, qui s'oppose au monde terrestre des apparences. Les formes ou les idées en général se réfèrent à des essences abstraites, statiques et non matérielles, ou en d'autres termes à des essences en elles-mêmes. L'ensemble de la connaissance humaine se réalise et se développe dans le registre de l'anamnèse ou du souvenir. Par exemple, nous savons tant de choses sur la beauté parce que l'âme se souvient qu'elle l'a vue avant la naissance et que, grâce à l'anamnèse, nous pouvons nous souvenir de la beauté. Parce que la forme ou l'idée de la Beauté dans notre âme est déchue et affectée, la forme ou l'idée de la Beauté en elle-même brille de façon singulière et éternelle.<sup>6</sup> Pour Platon, le besoin de Formes ou d'Idées absolues et éternelles est un besoin moral. Les formes ou les Idées qui vivent dans un monde absolu sont connues parce qu'elles participent ou se matérialisent dans les individus, leur donnant ainsi un certain degré de réalité. Platon fait une distinction entre

---

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *L'Eucharistie*, p. 127

<sup>6</sup> Platon, *La République*, vol I (livres I-VI) et vol. II (livres VI-X), traduction, commentaires, notes par Andrei Cornea, Bucarest, Teora-Universitas, 1998.

l'écrit et la parole, qui ne peuvent pas donner une image exacte de la réalité absolue, mais seulement une image fantomatique ou illusoire.

Le Père Schmemmann reprend certaines des approches thématiques platoniciennes, mais les développe dans une direction qui suggère certaines corrections. Il décrit la liturgie comme un drame sacré, qui a son propre rythme sacramentel, avec des moments et des étapes spécifiques : rassemblement, offrande, action de grâce, etc. Ainsi, la célébration liturgique a besoin des sens, du corps, du concret, et se fonde sur eux : la théologie liturgique est toujours "*une invitation à goûter et à voir et une promesse d'être parfait dans la communion, la vue et la vie*". *L'exégèse biblique, l'analyse historique, l'élaboration doctrinale convergent en définitive vers la célébration et la préparent : l'acte de témoigner et de participer au mystère lui-même ; cette épiphanie de vie, de lumière et de connaissance sans laquelle tous les mots restent "humains" - trop humains.*"<sup>7</sup> Dans le culte liturgique, il nous est donné "*un aperçu du royaume de Dieu... nous sommes rendus participants à la nouvelle réalité*".<sup>8</sup>

Pour le Père Schmemmann, dans la liturgie, il y a une auto-identification du connaisseur avec le connu - une participation (et pas seulement une assistance) à l'acte concret et à la célébration. De ce point de vue, la remémoration, le souvenir ou l'anamnèse jouent un rôle central. L'anamnèse ou le souvenir, que le Père Schmemmann considère comme central dans le culte liturgique, n'est pas une simple remémoration historique, mais implique une action et une participation concrètes du chrétien, à travers lesquelles l'œuvre du salut est réactualisée dans sa plénitude. Ainsi, l'anamnèse n'est pas basée sur un simple souvenir des formes (un processus qui aurait lieu dans l'âme humaine), mais l'anamnèse est basée sur l'action : récitation, rythme, communion, prière, chant, etc. L'échec de la théologie chrétienne à reconnaître la centralité de la mémoire liturgique signifie en réalité un échec de la mémoire liturgique à atteindre le but générique qu'elle devrait atteindre. À cet égard, Robert Taft souligne que "*le Nouveau Testament et la Liturgie ne nous racontent-ils pas cette histoire sainte, encore et encore, comme une anamnèse éternelle ? Nous faisons l'anamnèse, le souvenir, de cette puissance dynamique de salut dans nos vies, afin qu'elle pénètre le plus que possible dans les profondeurs de notre être, pour cette construction du corps du Christ*"<sup>9</sup> Depuis les temps apostoliques, l'anamnèse est considérée comme un processus impliquant une action. Dans la *première épître aux Corinthiens* (11,24), l'anamnèse est associée à l'action dans le récit de la dernière Cène : "*Faites ceci en mémoire de moi*" (Luc 22,19).

---

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, "Liturgie et théologie", dans *GOTR*, n° 17, 1972, p. 98.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, "Problems of Orthodoxy in America: II. Le problème liturgique", *SVTQ*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1964, p. 173.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Taft, S.J., *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West. The Origins of the Divine Office and its Meaning for Today*, deuxième édition révisée, Collegeville, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press, 1993, p. 336.

L'anamnèse doit également être liée à l'eschatologie, qui n'aura pas seulement lieu à la fin des temps, dans un avenir lointain, mais qui est déjà anticipée par le culte liturgique. Le Père Boris Bobrinsky souligne que *"nous devons nous rappeler que l'assemblée eucharistique ne se souvient pas seulement du passé historique ou du présent céleste ou sacramentel, mais aussi du futur, elle se souvient que le Seigneur vient. Par l'Eucharistie, l'Église est entièrement tournée vers le Christ, qui n'est pas seulement ici, mais aussi "celui qui vient"<sup>10</sup>*. L'eschatologie est plutôt la présence du Christ déjà connue dans le passé et donc accessible pour nous maintenant.<sup>11</sup> L'"entrée" du Christ dans le temps de ce monde est résumée dans les paroles d'adieu aux Apôtres : *"Je suis avec vous pour toujours, jusqu'à la fin du monde"* (Matthieu 28,20). La liturgie du temps signifie une ouverture et une transparence du temps du monde vers le Royaume de Dieu, une intensification de ce temps par la présence du Christ dans ses cadres. Par l'anamnèse liturgique, il y a une descente de Dieu dans le temps<sup>12</sup>. Nous ne devons pas chercher à nous dissocier de l'apparente multiplicité temporelle de ce monde, mais plutôt, en tant que chrétiens, nous affirmons que le Christ vient à nous dans les heures et les jours de nos vies, qui sont en effet souvent interrompus et fragmentés, bien que par le Christ nous soyons sauvés et introduits dans le contexte plus large du salut historique. Ce parallélisme temporel (entre le temps humain et le temps du salut) trouve son intersection et sa signification dans le temps liturgique, qui *"donne un sens au temps"*. *Le temps véritable n'est pas seulement le flux cosmique des moments. C'est aussi l'enchaînement des événements humains qui sont autant de ruptures et de recommencements, de la naissance à la mort, d'une génération à l'autre, d'un siècle ou d'un millénaire à l'autre. Ces événements sont toujours le résultat d'un échange de mots et de réponses, et donc d'un jeu qui donne un sens au temps. Ces échanges symboliques entre partenaires sont mémorisés et transmis dans une tradition de mots et de gestes qui font partie du tissu de l'histoire. En outre, le temps est marqué par un échange de paroles et d'actions symboliques entre la divinité - ou, pour parler de manière moins personnelle, entre la transcendance - et les personnes, ainsi que par leur mémoire. Or, l'action symbolique spécifique dont le lieu chrétien est la messe introduit dans le déroulement du temps une dimension particulière et, en un certain sens, définitive. Le temps cosmique et humain est imprégné par le mystère du Christ effectivement raconté et rendu corporellement présent dans les symboles liturgiques et dans leur pistil, dans*

---

<sup>10</sup>Professeur Boris Bobrinsky, *La Communion du Saint-Esprit*, traduit par Măriuca et Adrian Alexandrescu, Bucarest, EIBMBOR, 1999, p. 476-477).

<sup>11</sup>Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory. Political and Liturgical Theology in Dialogue*, Collegeville, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press, 2000, pp. 73-138.

<sup>12</sup>Michael Kunzler, *The Church's Liturgy*, traduit par Placed Murray OSB, Henry O'Shea OSB, Cilian Ó Sé OSB, Monks of Glenstal Abbey, Ireland, LIT Verlag, Munster, Berlin, Hamburg, London, 2001, p. 61-68.

*l'Eucharistie. Au cours même de son déroulement, le temps atteint alors son terme, qui est le Christ ressuscité, et reçoit son sens ultime, qui est la communion avec Dieu dans l'Esprit...Ayant ainsi atteint son terme dans la Liturgie, le temps peut paradoxalement continuer son déroulement immanent, fait de décisions et d'actions humaines sur les choses, car, grâce aux symboles liturgiques, il a retrouvé un sens, une direction et une loi de développement...Le temps rituel, anticipation du temps éternel, libère la temporalité concrète..."*<sup>13</sup> La célébration de la Liturgie du Temps nous permet de le discerner. Nous nous souvenons de Dieu par nos actes de culte ou d'honneur liturgique, et par ce souvenir nous rendons le Dieu éternel présent dans nos vies. Le souvenir ou l'anamnèse ou la mémoire a un sens et une fonction transcendants, orientés vers l'éternité : "*La mémoire est l'activité d'assimilation intellectuelle, c'est-à-dire la reconstitution à partir de représentations de ce qui est révélé par l'expérience mystique dans l'Éternité ou, en d'autres termes, la création dans le Temps de symboles éternels....Nous pouvons à nouveau entrer en contact avec la réalité mystique déjà vécue, qui est au-delà du Temps, qui est à la base d'une représentation maintenant passée et qui sera le fondement d'une autre représentation, future et liée à la précédente par l'unité de son contenu mystique...*"<sup>14</sup> Grâce à elle, nous parvenons à transcender les limites temporelles qui fragmentent la vie et l'existence humaines. Cette anamnèse liturgique est revendiquée et revalorisée par le Père Schmemmann dans sa discussion et son analyse de la question de la Liturgie du Temps, et elle constitue le principe et le point de départ de cette approche.

## **2. La conception chrétienne sur le temps.**

Le Père Schmemmann commence sa discussion sur le temps liturgique en considérant ses racines juives, exprimant ainsi implicitement "*la conviction qu'une tradition ne peut être comprise que génétiquement, en référence à ses origines et à son évolution*".<sup>15</sup> Alors que dans le monde grec antique, le temps était considéré comme répétitif et cyclique, dans le monde juif, le temps était perçu comme linéaire et ouvert à toutes les possibilités.<sup>16</sup> Pour les Juifs, le temps acquiert une nouvelle compréhension ou signification et est rempli d'attente, d'espoir et d'accomplissement, le tout en relation

---

<sup>13</sup> Ghislain Lafont, *Une histoire théologique de l'Église. Itinéraire, formes et modèles de la théologie*, traduction Maria-Cornelia Ică jr, Sibiu, Deisis, 2003, p. 459-461.

<sup>14</sup> Pavel Florenski, *La colonne et le fondement de la vérité : essai d'une théodicée orthodoxe en douze lettres*, en roumain par Emil Iordache, Fr Iulian Friptu et Fr Dimitrie Popescu, Iași, Polirom, 1999, p. 132-133.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Taft, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Lucian Boia, *La fin du monde. Une histoire sans fin*, traduit du français par Walter Fotescu, Bucarest, Humanitas, 2000, p. 11-32. L'ouvrage fondamental et de référence sur ce thème est *Le mythe de l'éternel retour. Archétypes et répétition*, écrit par Mircea Eliade, dans la traduction de Maria Ivănescu et Cezar Ivănescu, Bucarest, Univers Enciclopedic, 1999.

directe avec le tout-puissant Yahvé : "Pour la première fois, les prophètes valorisent l'histoire, dépassant la vision traditionnelle du cycle - une vision qui assure à toute chose une éternelle répétition - et découvrent un temps avec une signification unique. Pour la première fois, nous voyons s'affirmer et progresser l'idée que les événements historiques ont une valeur en soi, dans la mesure où ils sont déterminés par la volonté de Dieu. Ce Dieu du peuple juif n'était plus une divinité orientale créant des gestes archétypaux, mais une personnalité qui intervient sans cesse dans l'histoire, qui révèle sa volonté à travers les événements. Les événements historiques deviennent ainsi des "situations" de l'homme face à Dieu et, en tant que tels, acquièrent une valeur religieuse que rien n'aurait pu fournir auparavant. On peut donc dire que les Juifs ont été les premiers à découvrir la signification de l'histoire comme épiphanie de Dieu, et que cette conception a été reprise et amplifiée par le christianisme".<sup>17</sup> Le rituel humain s'est transformé d'une manière d'interpréter la nature en une manière d'interpréter l'histoire<sup>18</sup>, qui signifiait le temps dans son déroulement. Ce temps linéaire a été ponctué de manière décisive par le Sacrement de l'Incarnation, par la venue du Fils de Dieu dans le monde, qui a ainsi divisé l'histoire en deux et lui a donné un sens depuis la création jusqu'au Royaume de Dieu. Le père Schmemmann s'appuie sur cette perception historique judéo-chrétienne du temps lorsqu'il considère l'"ordre" orthodoxe du culte : les ordonnances et les rites de culte quotidiens, hebdomadaires et annuels établis par l'Église. Seul un temps dans lequel Dieu est entré peut offrir à l'homme la possibilité d'en sortir ou de s'ouvrir à la présence de Dieu.

### **3. Les valeurs de la Liturgie du Temps dans l'œuvre du Père Alexander Schmemmann.**

Le Père Schmemmann considère et discute également l'hypothèse selon laquelle la liturgie du temps est apparue à la fin de la période post-constantiniennne et a marqué "une révolution liturgique".<sup>19</sup> Gregory Dix soutient que l'eschatologie de l'Église primitive était incompatible avec les temps et heures naturels caractéristiques du culte tardif. Pour Grégoire Dix, il ne peut y avoir de liturgie enracinée dans le temps parce que l'Église elle-même se considère comme sortant du temps, comme renonçant à ce monde qui vit entièrement dans le temps. Son eschatologie équivaut à un renoncement au monde. Selon Grégoire Dix, la nature eschatologique de l'Eucharistie a disparu à l'époque de Constantin. C'est à cette époque qu'est apparue une nouvelle idée - la sanctification du temps - qui était totalement étrangère à l'Église primitive.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour*, pp. 103-104.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Taft, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

<sup>19</sup> Gregory Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, Continuum, 2007, p. 317.

<sup>20</sup> Alexander Schmemmann dans *Introduction à la théologie liturgique*, trans. hierom. Vasile Bârzu, Bucarest, Sofia, 2002, p. 117-125.

D'autre part, le père Schmemmann se réfère à une théorie qui fait remonter la liturgie du temps à l'origine de l'Église. Cette théorie, avancée par le père Freeman et C. W. Dugmore, soutient que le culte chrétien est issu du culte juif, principalement de la synagogue. Puisque le culte juif avait une liturgie du temps liée à des cycles quotidiens, hebdomadaires et annuels, nous pouvons supposer que la même structure existait dans le culte chrétien primitif.<sup>21</sup> Diverses études et découvertes à Qumran ont clairement montré la dépendance du culte chrétien vis-à-vis du culte synagogaal. C. W. Dugmore écrit que "dès le début, les services quotidiens, calqués sur le rituel de la synagogue, étaient communs à l'Est et à l'Ouest, bien qu'en certains endroits, on ait pu s'écarter de la coutume générale de l'Église".<sup>22</sup> La question que l'on peut se poser est de savoir si ces deux points de vue - celui de Dix d'une part et ceux de Freeman et Dugmore d'autre part - sont nécessairement exclusifs ? Le père Schmemmann soutient que Dix a raison de souligner l'eschatologie inhérente au culte chrétien, mais il estime que Dix interprète mal la nature de l'eschatologie de l'Église primitive. Si le Père Schmemmann est d'accord avec l'affirmation de Dugmore concernant les racines juives de la liturgie de l'époque, il estime que Dugmore ne parvient pas à établir clairement le lien entre le culte hérité de la synagogue et l'Eucharistie. Quoi qu'il en soit, le point important sur lequel insiste le père Schmemmann est qu'il y avait une continuité et une "dépendance structurelle" entre la structure du culte et de la prière de la synagogue et la structure du culte chrétien primitif : "Nous avons ici une dépendance d'ordre, pas simplement une similitude d'éléments séparés, mais une identité de succession et une subordination relative d'une partie à l'autre, qui définit en elle-même la signification liturgique de chaque partie."<sup>23</sup> Tout en déclarant que beaucoup plus d'études sont nécessaires sur les interrelations entre le culte de la synagogue et celui de l'Église primitive, le P. Schmemmann déclare qu'il est d'accord avec les conclusions de W. O. E. Oesterley, auteur de *The Jewish Background of Christian Liturgy* : "Les premières communautés chrétiennes ont continué et préservé la forme traditionnelle du culte de la synagogue à laquelle les personnes qui composaient ces communautés étaient habituées... Ainsi, lorsque le moment est venu de créer un culte chrétien indépendant, il était tout à fait naturel qu'il soit influencé - tant dans sa forme que dans son esprit - par ce culte traditionnel qui était si proche des premiers chrétiens."<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup>Dr. Constantin Preda, "Foi et vie de l'Église primitive. Une analyse des *Actes des Apôtres*" (thèse de doctorat), in rev. *Études théologiques*, série II, année LIV, n° 1-2, janvier-juin 2002, p. 85-139.

<sup>22</sup>C. W. Dugmore, *The Influence of the Synagogue on the Divine Office*, Oxford University Press, 1944, p. 57.

<sup>23</sup>Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction à la théologie liturgique*, p. 102.

<sup>24</sup>W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Jewish Background of Christian Liturgy*, Oxford University Press, 1925, p. 90.



Le père Schmemmann fait remarquer que de nombreux chrétiens d'aujourd'hui ont l'impression que le culte des premiers chrétiens était "harismatique" et n'était donc pas fixé dans un ordre particulier. Ce n'est que lorsque les dons harismatiques diminuent que l'on croit que les formes et l'ordre sont fixés. Cependant, le père Schmemmann suggère que l'étude comparative des formes liturgiques a montré que "*les dons harismatiques n'excluaient pas la règle et qu'un typique, au sens d'une structure générale, a bien été adopté par les chrétiens à partir du judaïsme*".<sup>25</sup>

Cependant, le père Schmemmann affirme que le culte chrétien avait la prétention d'être nouveau par rapport à la synagogue. En quoi consiste cette nouveauté ? "*La nouveauté de ce culte ne provient pas de sources non juives (il est juif dans sa forme et dans son esprit), mais consiste plutôt en sa nouvelle relation avec l'ancien culte traditionnel.*"<sup>26</sup> La nouveauté du culte chrétien réside dans la complétude qu'il apporte à l'ancien culte (juif) ; les chrétiens des premiers siècles croyaient que l'ancienne loi et l'ancien culte acquéraient leur véritable signification dans le Messie.<sup>27</sup> Le Père Schmemmann cite Gregory Dix : "*Le christianisme est apparu dans le monde non pas comme un recueil d'affirmations intellectuelles à débattre, comme la philosophie grecque, mais comme l'Israël de Dieu, renouvelé en Jésus. Avant tout comme une vie (une "voie"), une vie déterminée par Dieu dans tous ses aspects : religieux, moral et social ; une vie qui ne pouvait être véritablement vécue que dans "l'Alliance" avec Dieu et donc dans la société établie par cette Alliance par Dieu lui-même.*"<sup>28</sup> Ainsi, le père Schmemmann considère que le Christ lui-même a accepté le culte officiel, mais qu'il a en même temps condamné le légalisme et l'importance excessive accordée aux rituels extérieurs. "*Le principal point d'accusation était que ces explications du culte obscurcissent et déforment son sens, en font une fin en soi, alors que son véritable but était que, par son intermédiaire, le peuple puisse être mis en mesure de reconnaître et de recevoir le Christ.*"<sup>29</sup> La nouveauté du culte ne se trouve pas dans le baptême ou l'eucharistie, mais plutôt dans son contenu : les actes liturgiques étaient liés pour la première fois à la venue du Messie, Jésus-Christ. Le culte n'avait désormais plus d'autre contenu que le Christ lui-même, qui exhortait ses disciples : "*Faites ceci en mémoire de moi*" (Luc 22, 19). Ainsi, les disciples ont compris le culte comme la présence du Christ, comme la *parousie*. Cette nouvelle conception du culte annonçait ce que le père Schmemmann appelle le "*dualisme liturgique*" : non pas un dualisme au sens de deux cultes existant séparément l'un de l'autre et dont l'un finit par disparaître, mais un

---

<sup>25</sup>Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction à la théologie liturgique*, p. 103.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid*, p. 106.

<sup>27</sup>Vladimir Petercă, *Le messianisme dans la Bible*, Iasi, Polirom, 2003, p. 167-204.

<sup>28</sup>Gregory Dix, *The Jew and the Greek : A Study in the Primitive Church*, Westminster, Dacre Press, 1953, p. 28.

<sup>29</sup>Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction à la théologie liturgique*, pp. 108-109.

dualisme de perfection et d'achèvement. Le nouveau culte ne remplace pas l'ancien, tout comme le Nouveau Testament ne remplace pas l'Ancien Testament : "*le nouveau n'a de sens qu'à condition que l'ancien soit préservé*".<sup>30</sup> Il est donc vital de comprendre l'utilisation de l'héritage juif par l'Église primitive afin d'apprécier la plénitude et la profondeur historique de la *lex orandi* chrétienne. Le Père Schmemmann rappelle à ses lecteurs que "*nous devons considérer le dualisme liturgique du judéo-christianisme non pas comme un phénomène fortuit d'une époque révolue, mais comme l'expression fondamentale et originale de la lex orandi chrétienne*".<sup>31</sup> À ce stade, le père Schmemmann revient sur la thèse de Gregory Dix concernant la nature eschatologique de l'Eucharistie de l'Église primitive, qui, selon Dix, était incompatible avec toute liturgie de l'époque. Le problème auquel Gregory Dix est confronté dans son argumentation est celui d'expliquer le passage de l'Église primitive, avec son eschatologie de renoncement au monde, à l'Église tardive avec sa Liturgie du temps et donc son affirmation (valorisation) du temps du monde. En accord avec Gregory Dix, le père Schmemmann admet un nouveau départ dans la tradition liturgique, lorsque l'Église a incorporé les chrétiens d'entre les Gentils. Cependant, le père Schmemmann est critique à l'égard de la compréhension de l'eschatologie de Gregory Dix, qui, selon lui, n'est pas complètement opposé à la sanctification du temps. Comment cela est-il possible ? Comment l'Église primitive a-t-elle pu, d'une part, affirmer le temps de ce monde et, d'autre part, croire que la fin de ce monde pouvait survenir à tout moment ? Le père Schmemmann discute du contraste entre la conception juive du temps, linéaire, et la conception hellénistique, cyclique.<sup>32</sup> Pour les Juifs, l'eschatologie n'était ni un renoncement au temps ni une sortie du temps. Pour les Juifs, "*le temps lui-même peut être décrit comme eschatologique en ce sens qu'en lui se développent et se produisent les événements qui donnent au temps son sens, qui le transforment en processus ou en histoire et qui l'orientent vers un eschaton et non pas précisément vers une fin ou un abîme - non pas vers ce qui le laisserait sans sens, mais vers sa consommation dans un événement final révélant sa pleine signification. L'eschaton n'est donc pas une fin, mais l'accomplissement de ce qui s'est développé dans le temps, de ce fait auquel le temps a été intrinsèquement subordonné comme moyen et qui a une fin, de ce fait qui le remplit de sens. Les cycles du temps (du temps naturel) ne sont pas autosuffisants pour le Juif car ils sont entièrement subordonnés à Yahvé, à un Dieu personnel. Ils constituent la révélation du Dieu vivant qui a créé le monde et qui 'tient toutes choses dans sa main'*".<sup>33</sup> Dans ce sens, le temps est considéré comme un mouvement vers le plan de Dieu pour l'accomplissement ou l'achèvement du monde. Le

---

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid*, p. 111.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 111-112.

<sup>32</sup>Oscar Cullmann, *Le Christ et le temps. La conception chrétienne primitive du temps et de l'histoire*, traduite par Floyd V. Filson, Philadelphie, Westminster Press, 1964, pp. 88-123.

<sup>33</sup>Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction à la théologie liturgique*, p. 119.

temps est orienté vers le royaume de Dieu. En tant que culte du Dieu de l'histoire et du Dieu de la grâce, le judaïsme accepte donc le temps humain et la vie humaine dans tous leurs aspects : "Le matin, le soir, le jour, le sabbat, les jours de fête - tout cela a une signification eschatologique, comme des allusions au dernier et grand jour du Seigneur, qui vient dans le temps".<sup>34</sup> En d'autres termes, le Père Schmemmann souligne que pour le judaïsme, les heures, les jours, les semaines, etc. sont eschatologiquement transparents : le temps est celui "dans lequel et sur lequel le Dieu vivant d'Abraham, d'Isaac et de Jacob veille constamment et qui révèle sa véritable signification dans le royaume de Yahvé, "le royaume de tous les siècles"".<sup>35</sup>

Le père Schmemmann affirme que cette conception juive du temps a été incorporée dans l'eschatologie de l'Église primitive. La différence ne réside pas dans leur théologie du temps, mais plutôt dans leur compréhension des événements par lesquels le temps est désormais mesuré. Alors que le temps juif est toujours orienté vers le futur Messie, l'Église primitive, comme l'Église d'aujourd'hui, affirme que le Messie est déjà venu, et que le royaume de Dieu est à notre portée, déjà accessible pour nous. Ainsi, pour l'Église primitive, l'eschatologie ne doit pas être comprise uniquement dans un sens futuriste, ni être assimilée à un renoncement au monde. Au contraire, l'Église affirme que l'événement eschatologique central, dans lequel est révélé le sens ultime de la création, de l'histoire et du salut, a déjà eu lieu en la personne de Jésus-Christ. Ainsi, la distinction entre le temps "sanctifié" et le temps "eschatologique" disparaît et le père Schmemmann réalise une synthèse entre l'accent mis par Gregory Dix sur l'eschatologie de l'Église primitive et l'accent mis par Dugmore sur l'héritage juif et la sanctification du temps. Pour l'Église, tout le temps est sanctifié et devient " *le temps dans lequel le salut donné par le Messie est maintenant réalisé.* "<sup>36</sup> Ainsi, pour le père Schmemmann, l'eschatologie n'est pas une doctrine sur la fin des temps, mais " *une dimension de toute foi et de toute théologie, un esprit qui imprègne et inspire de l'intérieur toute la pensée et la vie de l'Église.* "<sup>37</sup>

Cette conception de l'eschatologie est particulièrement visible dans la description que fait le Père Schmemmann de l'Eucharistie, qui ne signifie pas un renoncement au monde, ni une sortie hors du temps, mais plutôt une affirmation de la réalité de la présence du Christ dans le temps. De ce point de vue, l'Eucharistie n'est pas comprise comme une répétition de la venue du Christ, mais l'Eucharistie est plutôt une exaltation et une participation de l'Église à la *parousie* du Christ et donc à un nouvel *éon*. Le temps n'est pas vidé et dépourvu de valeur, mais il est au contraire rempli de la possibilité de participer à la vie du Royaume de Dieu, à l'ère de Dieu qui vient. "*La venue du Messie*

---

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid*, p. 119.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid*, p. 120.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid*, p. 121.

<sup>37</sup>Idem, "Prière, liturgie et renouveau", p. 13.

est un événement du passé, mais dans sa venue, sa vie, sa mort et sa résurrection, son royaume est entré dans le monde en devenant une vie nouvelle dans l'Esprit, donné par lui comme une vie en lui."<sup>38</sup> Cette nouvelle vie du royaume s'actualise dans l'assemblée eucharistique "lorsque les fidèles se réunissent pour participer au Corps du Seigneur".<sup>39</sup> Ainsi, l'Eucharistie manifeste l'Église comme participation à la vie nouvelle en présence du Christ ressuscité. Le père Schmemmann souligne que l'Église sera plus tard tentée de comprendre le mystère de l'Eucharistie par des concepts empruntés à la philosophie grecque : par des catégories de cycle et de répétition. Pourtant, l'Eucharistie "n'est pas la répétition de son apparition ou de sa venue dans le monde, mais l'élévation de l'Église vers sa parousie, la participation de l'Église à sa gloire céleste".<sup>40</sup> Ainsi, l'Eucharistie est l'affirmation de la présence du Royaume du Christ dans le temps de ce monde. Il est important que le père Schmemmann ajoute qu'une telle compréhension du temps en tant qu'attente et accomplissement "n'est pas un état passif, c'est un ministère responsable, c'est "être comme Il était dans ce monde"<sup>41</sup> C'est ainsi que l'Église a commencé à développer son propre rythme temporel "comme une affirmation de la réalité du monde que le Christ est venu sauver".<sup>42</sup>

Pour montrer que ce rythme du temps dans l'Église primitive n'est pas une simple spéculation, le père Schmemmann revient sur les pratiques et les racines historiques de la liturgie. La première, et peut-être la plus visible, était le cycle hebdomadaire centré sur le septième jour, le sabbat - un jour de participation au repos de Dieu après la création. L'église primitive a suivi la célébration juive du sabbat tout en révisant l'idée du septième jour. De manière significative, l'Église a établi dès le début un rythme hebdomadaire centré sur le septième jour, une pratique incontestablement en continuité avec le judaïsme.

Quant au cycle annuel et au cycle journalier, beaucoup pensent qu'ils ne se sont pas développés avant l'époque de Constantin. Il existe de nombreuses preuves, dans l'Église primitive, d'une compréhension du temps comme "cadre nécessaire à la prière". Le père Schmemmann puise ses preuves dans les écrits pré-nicéens où la prière était effectivement associée à des heures privées. La Didache<sup>43</sup>, Tertullien<sup>44</sup>, Cyprien de Carthage<sup>45</sup>,

---

<sup>38</sup> Idem, *Introduction à la théologie liturgique*, p. 121.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>43</sup> *Didache ou Enseignement des Douze Apôtres*, VIII, 3, traduit par le P. Dumitru Fecioru dans *Ecrits des Pères Apostoliques [PSB 1]*, Bucarest, EIBMBOR, 1979, p. 29.

<sup>44</sup> Tertullien, *Sur la prière (De oratione)*, XXV, traduit par Eliodor Constantinescu dans *Apologétique de la langue latine [PSB 3]*, Bucarest, EIBMBOR, 1981, p. 243-244.

Origène et la tradition apostolique d'Hippolyte indiquent tous trois heures ou temps de prière. Le Père Schmemmann se réfère en particulier à Cyprien qui écrit : " *mais pour nous, frères trop aimés, en plus des heures observées autrefois, d'autres temps de prière ont été ajoutés. Nous devons aussi prier le matin, afin que, par la prière du matin, nous puissions célébrer la résurrection du Seigneur... Au coucher du soleil aussi, quand le jour s'achève, nous devons de nouveau prier, car le Christ est le vrai soleil et le vrai jour, devant lequel se retireront le soleil et les jours de ce monde. Et quand vient la nuit, selon les lois de l'univers, qui font alterner les jours et les nuits, il est à l'avantage des fidèles de prier même dans l'obscurité de la nuit, car pour les fils de la lumière, même la nuit est le jour.*"<sup>46</sup> Le peuple est invité à s'asseoir et à écouter la parole de l'enseignement après les prières, ce qui montre que les prières ne sont pas seulement privées, mais ont souvent lieu dans l'assemblée de l'Église. Les trois éléments de base qui constituent les ordonnances actuelles des vêpres et de la prière du soir - le chant des psaumes, des prières et des hymnes - remontent au culte juif dans la synagogue. Ainsi, le père Schmemmann estime qu'il y a suffisamment de preuves pour prouver un développement précoce du cycle de culte quotidien chrétien. On ne peut donc pas parler d'une "révolution liturgique", comme Grégoire Dix prétend qu'elle a eu lieu à l'époque de Constantin, "*mais simplement du développement et de l'ordonnement de la tradition ancienne*".<sup>47</sup>

Enfin, le père Schmemmann se penche sur l'année ecclésiastique et se demande si le rythme du cycle annuel faisait partie ou non de l'expérience de l'Église primitive. Là encore, il estime que les preuves indiquent que l'Église primitive, s'appuyant sur la théologie juive de l'époque, a conservé une conception de l'année comme unité liturgique. La preuve la plus évidente d'un cycle annuel se trouve dans l'adoption par l'Église des deux principales fêtes juives, la Pâque et la Pentecôte. Dans la tradition liturgique de l'Église primitive, deux fêtes annuelles du salut étaient célébrées ; l'Église a conservé ces fêtes, réaffirmant leur signification à la lumière du Christ et de l'Esprit Saint.

L'Église primitive célébrait le culte et priait à des heures fixes, sur une base quotidienne, hebdomadaire et annuelle. Le rythme du temps comprend à la fois le temps comme accomplissement de la présence du Christ et le temps comme attente et espérance de la plénitude du royaume de Dieu, lorsque Dieu sera tout en tous. Ainsi, le père Schmemmann conclut que la liturgie, les cycles du temps et l'eschatologie de l'Église primitive ne sont pas incompatibles : "*bien qu'il soit impossible d'affirmer l'acceptation*

---

<sup>45</sup>Saint Cyprien *sur la prière du Seigneur (De dominica oratione)*, XXXIII-XXXV, traduit par le professeur David Popescu dans *Apologetique de la langue latine [PSB 3]*, Bucarest, EIBMBOR, 1981, p. 484-486.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid*, p. 484-485.

<sup>47</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction à la théologie liturgique*, p. 134.

*universelle d'une liturgie du temps développée dans l'Église primitive pré-constantinienne, il est nécessaire et possible de retracer ses principes généraux et donc son commencement historique à partir de la règle de prière originale, apostolique et judéo-chrétienne (lex orandi). Nous sommes arrivés à cette conclusion non seulement par l'examen de la théologie du temps qui existait dans l'Église primitive et qui constituait le trait dynastique de son eschatologie, mais aussi par tout ce que nous savons des formes, des structures et du contenu de son culte.*<sup>48</sup>

### **Conclusions**

En approfondissant les aspects de la temporalité liturgique tels que le père Alexandre Schmemmann les a indiqués dans ses études et recherches, nous comprenons pourquoi il est considéré dans la théologie contemporaine comme l'un des plus grands liturgistes orthodoxes et l'un des artisans les plus représentatifs de la synthèse entre dogmatique et culte orthodoxe. À travers tous ses livres et études, il cherchait à approfondir la compréhension de l'orthodoxie, qu'il considérait comme la voie naturelle de l'homme vers Dieu. Le Père Schmemmann révèle que le culte liturgique est l'expression de notre participation réelle à la temporalité transfigurée par la Résurrection du Christ, et que les services cultuels sont les entrées mystagogiques de l'Église et de toute la création dans la vie pascale et eschatologique du Royaume de Dieu couronnée par la Divine Liturgie, le mode concentré et suprême de communication du Royaume de Dieu aux hommes comme l'éternité de la communion personnelle d'amour entre la Très Sainte Trinité et la création divinisée.

---

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid*, p. 141.

## The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuș reflected in the Securitate Archives

Iuliu-Marius Morariu<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** Important personality of the Romanian Theology of the 20th century, but also of the Universal Orthodox one, Fr. Andre Scrima was not only the delegate of the Ecumenical Patriarch Ahtenagoras to the Second Vatican Council, but also a professor and a writer with deep approaches in the ecumenical and spiritual field. In the same time, he has the epistolary vocation. Conscious of this fact, we try there to offer to the readers an unpublished letter kept in the Archives of the former Securitate, written in 1957, shortly after his arrival in Benares, where the Romanian clergyman will prepare a PhD. thesis. Addressed to his spiritual father, the Archimandrite Benedict Ghiuș, the document contains not only a complex description of the travel that he had before to arrive in India, but also a presentation of the meetings that he had, of his activity and of the way how the Orthodox faith was perceived in the ecumenical field by the Catholics and Protestants. The document is therefore important not only due to its autobiographical relevance, but also because it comes to show the way how the Romanian theologian from the French area understood the ecumenical realities, the role that the Orthodox Church could play in their evolution and also for the complex descriptions offered there.

**Keywords:** ecumenism, Benares, Ecumenical Institute from Bossey, Yves Congard, Jean Danielou.

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD. Iuliu-Marius Morariu (protosinghel Maxim) „Ioan Lupaș” Centre, Faculty of the Orthodox Theology, „Babeș-Bolyai” University from Cluj-Napoca, Romania; University of Pretoria, South Africa Since 2022 he is also the ecclesiarch of the Diocesan Cathedral „Saint Great Martyr George” from Quebec and the exarch of the Monasteries from the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada. He published, edited, coordinated or translated 39 books and more than 300 studies and articles.

Father Andre Scrima has benefited recently by the interest of the researchers. A lot has been written about Father Andrei Scrima in lately. In the decades that passed after the events of 1989, his work was returned, partly during his lifetime, partly posthumously, to readers in the Romanian space.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, some of his representative texts have been translated and edited in other languages,<sup>3</sup> and in recent years monographs, studies and articles dedicated to the activity and biography of the great Romanian theologian have been released.<sup>4</sup>

However, there are still many interesting things about the work and legacy of the great Romanian theologian that could be brought to attention by contemporary research. Thus, for example, the way in which his activity in the ecumenical area was reflected in the documents of the former Romanian Securitate could constitute a subject worth to be investigated. According to the data provided by the Archives of the National Council for the Study of Security Archives (ACNSAS), there were three files on the name of the Romanian theologian.<sup>5</sup> Two of them are subordinated to the Information fund, and one to the Foreign Intelligence Service. It is interesting that among the information dedicated to the archimandrite there are also documents concerning other great contemporary

---

<sup>2</sup> Andrei Scrima, *Timpul Rugului aprins*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1996; André Scrima, *Antropologia apofatică*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2005; André Scrima, *Biserica liturgică*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2005; André Scrima, *Comentariu integral la Evanghelia după Ioan*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. André Scrima, *L'accompagnement Spirituale. Il movimento del Roveto ardente e la rinascita esicasta in Romania*, Editions Qiqajon, Bose, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> See for example: Ioan Alexandru Tofan, *Omul lăuntric - André Scrima și fizionomia experienței spirituale* Editura Humanitas, București, 2019; Anca Manolescu, Bogdan Tătaru-Caxaban, Miruna Tătaru-Cazaban (eds.), *O gândire fără țărături: ecumenism și globalizare*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2005; Nicu Dumitrașcu, "Andre Scrima and the Power of Spiritual Ecumenism", în *The Ecumenical Review*, year 68 (2016), nr. 2-3, p. 272-281; Mihaela Grigorean, „André Scrima, visionnaire du transreligieux”, în *Transdisciplinarity in Science and Religion*, year VI (2009), p. 69-82; Anca Manolescu, „La paix chretienne comme dialogue: le pere Andre Scrima”, în: *Irenikon*, an LXXXVIII (2015), nr. 1, p. 1-55; Maxim Morariu, „Correspondența părintelui Andrei Scrima cu Patriarhul Justinian reflectată în arhivele Securității”, în *Tabor*, an XIV (2020), nr. 10, p. 79-85; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Elements of Father Andrei Scrima's Ecumenical Activity as Reflected in File No. 0005468 from the "Securitate" Archives”, în *Review of Ecumenical Studies*, an 12 (2020), issue 3, p. 497-511; M. Velati, *Separati ma fratelli. Gli osservatori non cattolici al Vaticano II (1962-1965)*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2014; Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban, Diana Dumbravă (eds.) *André Scrima. Expérience spirituelle et langage théologique. Actes du colloque de Rome, 29-30 octobre 2008*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta, Roma, 2019; Radu Bercea, "Essai sur l'herméneutique 'en acte' d'André Scrima," în *New Europe College Yearbook*, an 6 (1998-1999), p. 24-36.

<sup>5</sup> See: ACNSAS, *Fond SIE*, dossier no. 2601; ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. I; ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. II.



*The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuș reflected in the Securitate Archives*

theologians, such as Father Chesarie Gheorghescu,<sup>6</sup> which appeared there, either by mistake or because the repressive institution wanted to use the same methods of intimidation in his case as in the case of the aforementioned archimandrite.

From the documents, it appears that the former Security was precisely informed about his departure to India (some of the informants even trying to prevent it) and that he was always aware of what he published, supported or spoke during the various demonstrations. His relationships with different people,<sup>7</sup> the correspondence he sent to the country, or that he received from here, were intercepted, and the studies published in various prestigious magazines in the West were translated, although often those who read them did not have the competence to understand them.

His correspondence represents an interesting aspect, which over time has been the object of tracking and interception. Thus, two letters that were sent to him by Patriarch Justinian, one in Switzerland and one in Benares, are preserved, the latter in response to another sent by Father Andre, the one sent by him from the Indian university centre to the Primate of the Romanian Orthodox Church,<sup>8</sup> a long letter also sent from Benares on 06. 08. 1957 (actually completed on 16 August and sent, as it seems, a day later)<sup>9</sup> to father Benedict Ghiuș and several letters addressed to the same father and to father Sofian Boghiu<sup>10</sup> and the answers received from them (but these dating before his departure to India, when he was on the road).

---

<sup>6</sup> Chesarie Gheorghescu (1929-2017), Orthodox archimandrite, theologian and writer. Sent by the Romanian Orthodox Church to study at the Saint Tikhon Academy in Zadonsk in Moscow during the communist period, he refused to return to the country. Blackmailed by the authorities, he will eventually return, which will lead to his imprisonment and persecution for several years. For more information on his life, work and work, see also: Chesarie Gheorghescu, *Ofrandă cu smerită închinare pe altarul sfânt al preoției slujitoare; (la 8 decenii de viață)*, Editura Conphys, Râmnicu Vâlcea, 2009; Miriam-Felicia Cărămidaru, *O sumară prezentare a vieții și operei Arhimandritului Doctor Chesarie Gheorghescu*, Editura Mănăstirii Dintr-un Lemn, Frâncești, 2002; Chesarie Gheorghescu, *Minăstirea Dintr-un Lemn*, Ediția a-4-a, Editura Episcopiei Râmnicului și Argeșului, Râmnicul Vâlcea, 1987; Chesarie Gheorghescu, *Studii de teologie fundamentală și apologetică: teză de licență*, ediția a 2-a, Editura Conphys, Râmnicu Vâlcea, 2010; Chesarie Gheorghescu, *Pomelnicul Sfintei Mănăstiri Dintr-un Lemn - județul Vâlcea (precedat de o succintă relatare istorică)*, Editura Almarom, Râmnicu Vâlcea, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Thus, for example, the informants spoke in different characterizations both about the special relationship that will exist between Father Scrima and Patriarch Athenagoras, but also about the knowledge he had in spaces such as the Palestinian one, or in Israel. Cf. ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, file no. 0005468, vol. II, f. 1-4.

<sup>8</sup> See: Maxim Morariu, „Corespondența părintelui Andrei Scrima cu Patriarhul Justinian reflectată în arhivele Securității”, p. 79-85, pentru mai multe informații cu privire la acest aspect.

<sup>9</sup> ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. I, p. 353-364.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 367-373.

From all the preserved correspondence, the densest in message and content is certainly that sent to Father Benedict after his arrival in India. Transcribed, most likely by the Security organs according to the original manuscript, a fact that explains the technical editing errors, the mistakes made in the writing of proper names, but also the carelessness in terms of punctuation and the use of capital letters, it represents a text that can be subsumed both autobiography and journal, theological analysis, or research with ecumenical valences.

The young monk presents to his spiritual father the experiences he had during the long journey to the Indian lands, where he will prepare an interesting doctoral thesis dedicated to the existing similarities between Christianity and Hinduism.<sup>11</sup> He would tell him about the Swiss and Greek stops, about the twists and turns of the road, the interactions between cultures and spiritualities and the challenges they had raised. At the same time, he will carry out a complex evaluation of ecumenical realities and potential dialogue bridges, looking at the Christian world as a whole through the eyes of the man concerned with those of spirituality. As expected, the Security will not understand much of what is described here by the Romanian theologian. The unsigned note that accompanies the text comes to emphasize the fact that Father Scrima wrote to Father Benedict and only focuses on the fact that, among other things, he mentions the publication of a text in the French magazine *La Reforme*,<sup>12</sup> which will later be translated in the supervision file and to which Father Bartolomeu Anania will even make a chronicle of him in the magazine *Orthodoxy* of the Romanian Patriarchate, a fact that will not escape the vigilant eyes of the security guards<sup>13</sup> (it is debatable to what extent this chronicle did not even contribute to the arrest of the future bishop).

However, the text is important from several points of view. On the one hand, the father describes the meetings he had and talks about how he met important theologians from the Western world, such as the Dominican C.J. Dumont, who will accompany his series of studies published in the Catholic magazine *Istina* from Paris with an interesting preface,<sup>14</sup> Father Yves Congar, who will also evoke him in the pages of a volume of dialogues,<sup>15</sup> Cardinal Jean Danielou and many other figures who will later stand out during the Second Vatican Council, at which the father will participate as a personal

---

<sup>11</sup> Anca Manolescu, „La paix chretienne comme dialogue: le pere Andre Scrima”, p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. I, p. 352.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> C. J. Dumont, "Pour un dialogue sur la piété hesychaste", în *Istina*, an 5 (1958), nr. 3, pp. 293-294. Cf. Andre Scrima, "L'avenement philocalique dans l'Orthodoxie roumaine", în *Istina*, an 5 (1958), nr. 3 p. 295-398; Andre Scrima, "L'avenement philocalique dans l'Orthodoxie roumaine", în *Istina*, an 5 (1958), nr. 1, p. 493-416; Andre Scrima, "L'avenement philocalique dans l'Orthodoxie roumaine", în *Istina*, an 5 (1958), nr. 4, p. 443-474.

<sup>15</sup> Jean Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité, Jean Puyo interroge le Père Congar*, Le Centurion, Paris, 1975, p. 147-152.

*The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuş reflected in the Securitate Archives*

observer of the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras. On the other hand, he critically analyses both Catholicism, Protestantism, Greek Orthodoxy, which he has the opportunity to know on his way to Mount Athos, or that of the French space (where he makes contact with prominent exponents of the Saint Serge Institute in Paris). He objectively assesses realities, reads the signs of the times and even manages to anticipate future realities. As an erudite young man and a man open to dialogue, he is called to speak to others about the beauties of Orthodoxy and thus becomes a true apologist for it. In addition, he manages to forge strong personal ties that will cement over time, impressing with intelligence and objectivity. All these aspects are presented to Father Benedict in a downright enthusiastic manner. The discovery of Catholicism and the various forms of manifestation of monasticism, in the apostolic and religious form, in the West, is not only a reason for amazement for him, but also the opportunity for new insights. The desire to discover hesychasm is the bridge that Andre Scrima makes fruitful in order to understand the common heritage. She is also the one who transforms him into a desired and requested presence in various Catholic spaces, also delaying his arrival in India. As a man who wishes for unity, but is at the same time aware of the obstacles and deficiencies that come to provide a strange dynamic to this issue, he wants to emphasize the fact that:

"Once again, it's about the nuances and the fine instrumentation of some attitudes that can be partially related to them, especially about overcoming them. Because the reunification of the Churches will not be the result of our negotiations and ability, but will be the gift of the Lord to the people of the "good will" of the mystical body, it is an acute human problem. Let us not be afraid to become human again precisely when this thing is so difficult (now at the end of the above, the hypothesis of a misplaced interpretation of my words comes to mind: I hope for those who will read these lines, that they will not think to consider me a "Catholicist" or something like that, I wish to all my brothers to have had the experience of the absolute Holiness of Orthodoxy, as I have had lately, and also the glimpse of the true obligations arising from it)."<sup>16</sup>

Nor the formal aspects, which transform him into a true author of travel diaries, are avoided by the disciple in the correspondence he has with his spiritual father. Father Andre thus manages to describe what the experience of repeated flights meant for him, how it marked and impressed him and even to present, not without some lyricism, the elements and the sea in a description with interdisciplinary relevance. Aspects related to the accommodation to the complicated climate of India, along with issues regarding the meetings with the young theologians from Beirut are also evoked in the broad description that seems to invite Father Benedict to live through the eyes of the curious child who was Father Scrima then, the experience of meeting, visiting and praying.

---

<sup>16</sup> ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. I, p. 356.

In all the presented aspects he never forgets to mention the fact that the main focus of all the steps he undertakes falls on aspects of an intrinsic nature, with mystical relevance. The Lord must be at the centre of all things, and this aspect is in fact the only one that matters, he keeps mentioning with real frequency. His vocation as a hesychast is not shaken by the difficulties of the journey, nor by the various experiences lived or by the complex and challenging process of acclimatization. On the contrary, they all come to help strengthen a genuine vocation.

So Father Andre Scrima talks about all these aspects in the pages of the letter sent to Father Benedict. Unfortunately, his Security file does not preserve the response of the hesychast who remained in the country, a fact most likely due to the confiscation of his letter. We reproduce here his extensive epistle, accompanied by the Security note, with the desire to contribute also to the rediscovery of a great Romanian theologian who, unfortunately, is still better known today in the Western space than in the Romanian one, despite the efforts undertaken by various researchers.

## **Appendix**

### 1.

#### NOTE<sup>17</sup>

From the attached letter sent by the Romanian monk Scrima Andrei from India to Benedict Ghiuș from the Patriarchate, the following follows:

In the magazine "La reforme" appeared an article written about the Romanian Orthodox Church, signed by the Orthodox Professor Clement Olivier, a close friend of Professor Loschi, both from Paris.

The article published in this magazine is a result of the meetings that Scrima Andrei had with various elements from Paris, where Professor Clement Olivier was also present, who signed the respective article. –

Scrima Andrei shows in that letter that the above-mentioned article appeared without his knowledge, but he knew that Professor Clement Olivier intended to write this article and asked him not to mention his name in that article, but at most his capacity as a monk .

ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. I, f. 352 r.

### 2.

Benares. 06. 08. 1957

Letter from Father Andre Scrima to Father Benedict Ghiuș

---

<sup>17</sup> The document is undated and unsigned.

*The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuș reflected in the Securitate Archives*

Benares 6. VIII. 1957

Dear and beloved Father Benedict,<sup>18</sup>

I was in Locarno when I wrote you last, around the end of February. I am now at Neneres, in the heart of India, of course I have crossed seas and lands to get here. I would even like, with Your Holiness's permission, to dwell for a moment on what may be more impressive (to others) in my existence now, namely the very fact of traveling, the mirage of the itinerant condition. Does it remind you of the morning in November when I detached myself from the earth unconsciously, I would say with acute normality? I felt that from that moment I was freed from the "journey" and that I was entering the "path", which is something else entirely. You are on your way only when the journey from outside intersects with the itinerary inside in as many signs of the cross: primacy then no longer belongs to one road or the other, but to the one who embraces them with the signs of his presence and creates them through this embrace. Behold, indeed the way is the living God, and apart from Him the journey is illusion and entertainment. I cannot say much about advancing in Him, in which we are more drawn in than penetrated with our "powers": I find myself, on the one hand, caught and indebted to the Lord not only with my whole being, but I would say, beyond it, deeper than my life. I am, in fact, only the projection of this relationship of absolute obligation for everything that does not belong to me because it is given to me; maybe that's why, on the other hand, I sometimes feel growing in secret and preparing something that might be (and might not be) another beginning of life in Him, of life, in short - a mystery of love and interpenetration. This would truly be the rest at the end of the endless road. And I want to add the feeling that I do not think alone - and I did not get here alone: I know and recognize very simply how much I am supported by the prayers of the first brothers and the brothers who are always added: I therefore ask you, with humility and trembling, don't stop praying for me, therefore for us.

But I will try to share with you some of the signs of my ways from outside, which once again, are not only from outside and as usual I address all those whom I include in the same brotherly love, even if I admit - and lament - my impotence to give everyone at least fragments of my time which, quite simply, almost no longer exists even for me: it's strange to live in another duration from which "your time" goes as the fruit of an understanding, of an effort, but more chosen of a grace.

So, that November morning I left very naturally, like something that happens because it absolutely had to happen, because (please understand) it had already

---

<sup>18</sup> Benedict Ghiuș (1904-1990), Romanian archimandrite and theologian, known mainly for his work in the spiritual revival movement *The Burning Brush*. He was one of the most important Romanian Orthodox theologians of the last century and the mentor of Father Andrei Scrima. For more information on his life and work, see also: [http://romlit.romanialiterara.com/index.pl/lotul\\_rugul\\_aprins.\\_preoi\\_i\\_martiri\\_\\_benedict\\_ghiuș?caut=ghiuș](http://romlit.romanialiterara.com/index.pl/lotul_rugul_aprins._preoi_i_martiri__benedict_ghiuș?caut=ghiuș), accessed 22. 08. 2021.

happened. I was sitting in the seat of the plane and I felt that another spring had been triggered, releasing and putting into action what, unknown, had been prepared for that day and hour: nothing can equal the burst of consciousness that the Lord works in us as in his heaven (this "in" is truly supernatural); from that moment the world reveals itself in a different way. Then we arrived in Switzerland. Now I can recapitulate, somewhat, the Swiss moment and try to find a place for it that I believe is providential: contact with authenticity. As before - before and after - by God's will we met the peaks from the first moment, which is not unimportant (and which once again had been arranged through small and unsuspected details, meetings, previous contacts). I had a vision of the Protestant universe in its entirety and in its depth: I realized, live, its problems, aspirations, tendencies, needs, difficulties, nostalgias, prospects (I stop) (which of course involved meetings, discussions, conferences, debates, I was quite busy, thank God!, without tiring, I gave academic lectures, I "fought" weighted and orthodox, when I had to). I could present my observations in this way: on the one hand an interesting attempt (without further clarification) of contemporary Protestantism to [have] constituted a body of tradition in matters of doctrine, on a necessarily philosophical (though not classical-philosophical) basis, because the liturgical or experimental-mystical basis is missing. It is in any case a genuine moment, a first stage.

"Philosophy" uses that personalist and introspective (a overcoming of Cartesianism inward, inward, which is not without enriching the problematic field of philosophy and general culture - and perhaps also the problematic of the anthropology of religious experience). Usually and unfortunately - the representatives of this tendency are somewhat less willing to observe and take up the themes of the authentic Christian tradition, which they encounter in the Orthodox and the Roman Church: this I believe also because the act itself - or the work - of creation under certain conditions it absorbs you and shuts you down. (K. Barth<sup>19</sup> is less celebrated today, and up close he can be likable, but woefully inadequate). The other trend, this organic and deepened one of an overcoming of the old Protestant base in the sense of accepting the Liturgy, the sacramental life and exceptionally, the integral monastic life. This is the case of the community from Taizé (near Cluny), where the Rule of St. Benedict (costum, vows), the Orthodox liturgy, liturgical singing was adopted, adapting of course. I think the event will have [an] unsuspected consequence; once entered into the higher determinism of the monastic life it is impossible not to go all the way. (The community is emerging, it recently opened a community of sisters in Grandchamp (Suisse) and another of brothers in Bavaria). Moreover, if I am not mistaken, I also shared with you in the letter from

---

<sup>19</sup> Karl Barth (1886-1968), is a Swiss Protestant theologian, considered the most important representative of his confessional area since Jean Calvin until today. For more information on his life, work and theology, see also: Henry Babel, *La théologie de Karl Barth: le pour et le contre*, La Baconnière, Neuchâtel, 1967.

*The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict  
Ghiuş reflected in the Securitate Archives*

Locarno<sup>20</sup> the impression that I want to repeat now regarding the perspective of the reunion of Christendom: it is necessary to predict, for each confession (especially [for those] non- traditional) a move forward and not a forced return to an abandoned stage, rather lost and which even today may seem foreign to them, but a real move forward and a genuine deepening of their own Christian experience until the moment when with the help and the work of the Spirit, what today is repugnant (dogma, mysticism, monasticism, will be rediscovered as a new universe (and it always is) encountered through a personal drama.

And then came Paris. Like Switzerland and like absolutely all the places and countries I passed through, France meant the man to me. You remember my favorite adage about inner travel: It wasn't a hunch, it was a premonition. I understood now that the inner itinerary is the one that goes through people and therefore through history. Not the one that goes through landscape and geography. Paris was supposed to mean for me the encounter - the most authentic and delicious - with Catholicism, as I could not have had it anywhere. The city remained, I wouldn't say unknown, but just like that. I didn't even notice the spring that triumphantly entered the city. I did not visit the Louvre (it was shown to me, from afar, one day by two SJ<sup>21</sup> parents accompanying me on my way. I did not see the Picasso retrospective. It was performed in a new interpretation. "The Damnation of Faust" I did not listen to it. To top it all off, I didn't even notice the scholarly arabesques of fireworks poured over the Seine one evening to greet an imperial procession. I went to the Biblioteque Nationale only once to work, I forgot to tell you that in Switzerland I was offered a contract, which I signed with a German house in Gotingen, republishing the "Protestantische Real Enziklopadien" and which asked me to collaborate on an article on some spiritual problems. I turned in the article before the deadline (here they work differently). So, almost ironically, I did not see Paris, although I lived in it and met its people. But on my way, it remained one of the most meaningful and more blessed stops.

It will be very difficult for me to present to you here my contacts and dialogue with our Catholic brothers: it was something full of seriousness, gravity, nostalgia and hopes, results that mark forever. And above hopes, of results that always mark, all dressed in the clearest elegance and honesty of love without confusions, sentimentalisms or arriere-penses. Of course, the quality of people is decisive in such cases (again the peaks, but I had an overwhelming and unbelievable experience of an interest and a longing to know to meet again *d'acueillir l'Orientalisme*, broadcast widely and deeply, as a sign which cannot be ignored by anyone. From the contempt, then the ignorance until now not long ago, it passed imperceptibly and almost miraculously to the respect and eagerness to know (no doubt we must not overgeneralize, but what I say now is typical). And the

---

<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately the text of the letter from Locarno was not kept in his tracking file (n. n.).

<sup>21</sup> Jesuits (our note).

Orthodox continue most of the time to let the Holy Fathers speak, without today's sons speaking creatively in the same spirit (again, let's not generalize, but what they say is unfortunately typical).

We still do not answer those who ask us and we do not give as much as we should to those who ask us. That is why I admired the perseverance of those who, in the interest of the Western Church, devote themselves to knowing and sharing the truth about Orthodoxy, or Orthodoxy in short. Such a man is Mgr. Dumont<sup>22</sup>, director of the "Istina" center (a noble private hotel on Bd. d'Auteuil). Seeing him up close, I realized the reality of the fact that these people are "interested" in Orthodoxy first of all out of love for the Lord and His Church, then from the sincerity and seriousness of a vocation to reactivate spiritual values that belong to Christian universality. If some Orthodox, asked to respond to the dialogue or only record it, affect a wary attitude and insist on always seeing a perfidious tactic of grabbing and abolishing, that is aside, because things have been like this until recently, but it will come very soon the time, or has come, when this excuse or pretext will no longer be usable (seriously); but on the other hand, I realized live, in Orthodox circles, the impossibility of employment and even, very sadly, a lack of solid theological - and intellectual - detail, necessary in today's work. And I tell you: beyond the complexity and turmoil of history, the mystery of the meetings and reunions between the two branches of the triangle of the Church remains a fundamental fact. Hence the ever-new obligation, for both parties, to continuously decipher the signs of time and eternity, to restore their understanding, to educate their means. It is no longer possible, it is no longer allowed to waste too much time, precisely for "tempus non erit emplius". And because the ebb and flow of defence and mistrust work especially in us, I think we should be attentive to these tendencies, perhaps legitimate, but whose unvarnished application can block even the economy of divine grace: the tendency to define ourselves by opposition ("we are something else": this brings narrowness and the loss of universal character). The tendency to fiercely attack one aspect of the front (let's say Thomism), without seeing how it is compensated and balanced to the point of exhaustion in the vast and multilateral edifice of the Church (a tendency that can lead to a strange "ignoratio elenchi"; without realizing it you get out of the problem, you miss the train). Finally, I also signed for myself (thinking of my precious friends in the country) the tendency to give an extremist mystical interpretation, driven more by the coherence of a mystical lyricism, to some minor differences that are thus elevated to the rank of impediments diriments (it is, at the limit, the tendency of the rascals; one can only make the sign of the cross in one way), one can only etc..., a very high and subtle

---

<sup>22</sup> C. J. Dumont (1923-2001) was an important French Catholic priest and historian of the last century. For more information on his life and work, see also: <https://alleanzacattolica.org/jeandumont-1923-2001/>, accessed 22. 08. 2021 și <https://journals.openedition.org/dominicains/1228>, accessed 21. 08. 2021.



*The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuș reflected in the Securitate Archives*

"mystical" meaning obliges us to respect the Eucharist celebrated with unleavened bread, even if the parents did it, I'm afraid that in this way we replace the mystical, living and organic "situation" with speculation or speculative mysticism).

Once again, it's about the nuances and fine instrumentation of some attitudes that can be partially related to them, especially about overcoming them. Because the reunification of the Churches will not be the result of our negotiations and ability, but will be the gift of the Lord to the people of the "good will" of the mystical body, it is an acute human problem. Let us not be afraid to become human again precisely when this thing is so difficult (now at the end of the above, the hypothesis of a misplaced interpretation of my words comes to mind: I hope for those who will read these lines, that they will not think to consider me a "Catholicizer" or something like that, I wish all my brothers had the experience of the absolute Holiness of Orthodoxy, as I have had lately and also the glimpse of the true obligations arising from it.).

The Catholic Church is obviously going through a crisis that I would also briefly include in the 3 points above: but it is a recognized crisis, consciously assumed. The critical moment formally returns to the same old confluence between the new situation of the Church (living community of believers) and the rigid, sometimes intractable leadership of the Vatican. (Personally, I have the impression that this rigidity is also not without a benefit for the quality of the new realities: it imposes a control, a selection, a period of verification and maturation, which prevents fantasy, improvisation, imposture, in Romanian, nonsense, which is always our sweet temptation in matters of spiritual life). Here, a French prelate said to me one day: *Aue voulez-vous mon cher*, it seemed last year that the Almighty had decided to rid us of the current pope, but then he changed his mind.

It is becoming more and more obvious that this crisis is a team problem and the radical solution will lie in a change crisis of the ultimate team. For the first time in ages, it looks like the "new" team is on the horizon. Until then, many regrettable errors of stupidity occur: for example Fr. Congar<sup>23</sup> does not have the right to live in Paris (he can come to visit, but without permanent residence) among other things because he stood up against the maintenance of Latin education in the Church. Then other injustices and machinations in which, as usual, purely personal passions are mixed. But I repeat, the

---

<sup>23</sup> Yves Congar (1904-1995) was an important Dominican monk of French origin who became a cardinal of the Catholic Church. He stood out by publishing valuable works on ecclesiology and ecumenism, but also by actively participating in the Second Vatican Council and by the suggestions made then. For more information on his life and work, see also: Aurelian Băcilă, *Spiritul Sfânt și Tri-unitatea divină la Boris Bobrinskoy și Yves Congar: cercetare asupra Spiritului Sfânt într-o perspectivă ecumenică*, Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu-Lăpuș, 2006; Jean Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité, Jean Puyo interroge le Père Congar*.

conclusion is encouraging, because the number of total Christian vocations is increasing and with it the general style is always rising higher.

However, I would also like to offer you some (broken) lines from the portraits, the situations, the events encountered in this context: it is obviously quite difficult. However, I have new news about P. Heitz. I didn't meet him in Paris. He is no longer in France. He is no longer in the Catholic Church either: he switched to Orthodoxy, unfortunately in rather ambiguous circumstances. The last stage was in "Istina" 5-6 years ago, when he met a woman, apparently an Armenian, from whom he was unable to part (even before the official marriage a child was announced, who would stillborn). In this situation, he met a very dubious character, P. Kowalewski, Orthodox (?), who immediately proposed his re-ordination as an Orthodox priest, after the civil marriage, which, according to his theologians, caused the nullity of the Catholic ordination. Said and done. But the Exarchate of Moscow, with whom the sinister Kowalewski (although it sounds like in detective novels, the expression is appropriate), was in communication with him, rightly refused to march: Father Heitz remained suspended, in obscurity. Mgr. Dumont, to whom it was evidently a personal pain, nevertheless spoke of him with much love and admiration: he told me that he had rarely seen a person with such a strong and deep priestly vocation as Father Heitz. Upon his departure from "Istina", P. Heitz really dramatically divided some of his personal belongings, he left the books to the institute, the vestments of a priest, and the chalice in which he served the first Eucharist after his ordination years ago, asked to be handed over when possible, P. Ghiuș. So you were known at "Istina" and it is still believed there that the only person who can help him remains Your Holiness. He is at present somewhere in Germeins (I have not yet got his address, but if I get it I will send it to you with a request to write to him); I only know that another child followed, that the wife is not of the best quality (the classic misfortune of the defrocked), that P. Heitz is active in some orthodox circles: Mgr. Dumont believes or hopes he will return to health.

One day, accompanied by a prelate, I went to visit a Carmel in Bouogne (residence of Carmelite nuns). It was a Carmel of strict observance: when I entered the parlour, I saw a strong grating, provided with sharp nails towards the visitor, and like a thick curtain towards the nuns (Saint Theresa, as a Spaniard to appear her daughters). At one point I started really scared: a cavernous voice was heard, not very distinct, almost gloomy. She was the superior Mother, speaking from beyond. After I was introduced, the Mother Superior gathered the Carmel beyond the grill, raised the curtain, because all the Carmelites were provided with a similar Arab veil (it was still a concession in my honor) and without being waited, I had to talk. I was amazed and humbled - understanding how well known the prayer of the heart was in the Carmelite environment, from the pilgrim's reading, other studies and from the conferences of the Istina fathers. I tried a kind of community meditation on the spot (if I can say it this way: that is, not only an exhibition, but also the participation of the audience through

*The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuș reflected in the Securitate Archives*

questions and the sharing of my own experience): for me it was a divine joy. A few days later I found myself with letters from the Superiors of other Carmelites in the province, who invited me to their monasteries, for the same reason (P. Chenii <sup>24</sup>who was in Paris and had heard about it tells me: "Mon pere, vous allez devenir le precheur du Carmel"), but I thought it better not to go.

Then I spent a day at Saulchoir (including the services) I don't think I'll soon forget that day. There were 260 Dominicans, in their white and black robes, chanting rhythmically, mysticizing measured to the cadence of their gestures, at the same time normal, spontaneous, free in their lives. I had a full, hot, exciting high voltage afternoon. P. Ple, the director of "Le Vie spirituelle", who was there, asked me to write down what I spoke (I wonder if I will do it: I have so many requests for contributions to the theological and philosophical journals in those parts that I would it takes a year just for something like that.). And then, I got to know up close in a kind of long-awaited recognition, all those names that, not long ago, were exotic: P. Danielou, <sup>25</sup> P. Bouxer, G. Marcel, <sup>26</sup> P. Chenu, P. Vilain, etc. Not simple visits, but deep-seated connections that continue to deepen. As I wrote to Bro. Codin, it was not only a personal experience, but a check of our entire community. I tell you, there is also a Sainte Europe, let's not only look for the mystical sanctity of other exotic lands, I have learned to love the authentic quality of these people who maintain the mystery of life according to God "in the old world" and I repeat the situation of our community is included in the present, for example, the problem that concerns your Holiness, if you see it, I think it would be hailed as a highly valid formula. And I also understood that "the spirit of the mind which today strives to understand and express fundamental realities must be a broad and comprehensive spirit." The era of specialists has passed - you can imagine my surprise when in the most authoritative intellectual circles, the activity of a P. Jugie, Grumel, etc. she was considered as fatally bound to "blunder," as the above persons, though

---

<sup>24</sup> Cel mai probabil este vorba despre dominicanul francez Marie-Dominique Chenu (1885-1990), una dintre vocile importante a Conciliului II Vatican. Cf. Marie-Dominique Chenu O.P., *La Chiesa nel mondo. I segni dei tempi*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 1965.

<sup>25</sup> Jean Danielou (1905-1974), iezuit francez, cardinal, membru al Academiei Franceze, una dintre vocile cele mai reprezentative ale teologiei apusene a veacului trecut. Cf. <https://www.academie-francaise.fr/les-immortels/jean-danielou?fauteuil=37&election=09-11-1972>, accessed 22. 08. 2021.

<sup>26</sup> Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), filosof scriitor și gânditor francez. Pentru mai multe informații cu privire la viața și activitatea lui, a se vedea: Simone Plourde *Gabriel Marcel, philosophe et témoin de l'espérance*, Presses de l'Université du Québec, Montréal, 1975; Simone Plourde, *Vocabulaire philosophique de G. Marcel*, Éd. Du Cerf, Paris, 1985; Pietro Prini, *Gabriel Marcel et la méthodologie de l'inverifiable*, Economica, Paris, 1984; Paul Ricoeur,

*Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers, deux maîtres de l'existentialisme*, Temps Présent, Paris, 1948.

honourable workers and archivists, "had no more culture than a cook," someone who is a man of culture and an honest man told me. We who suffer from the mirage of intellectual work, confirmed in the old book, should also remember. We need not so much outward respect for the letter as boldness of spirit, and all that once could seem to me even in myself, the danger of an excess of erudition or commerce in general ideas, I understood to form the binding fabric, the humanism of every thinker from here. I'm sorry I can't say more - but you can imagine for yourself - what it meant to meet and talk with the above people[s] and others. P. Danielou is likeable, but threatened by a worldly and cultural popularity that overwhelms him (we had interesting discussions on some texts from St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Macarius the Egyptian, published in a new lesson by Jeager) . An exceptional man is P. Bouyer, former Protestant pastor, today orator and professor at the Inst[itute] Catholique. He is a strong intellectual and spiritual presence (he wanted to become Orthodox after overcoming Protestantism, but he did not have an open heart towards the communities of Orthodoxy, he is strongly imbued with the Eastern tradition and wrote an exceptional book: "Le sens de la vie monastique" - among other things. I will write to him to send it to you.

He was giving a lecture at the Inst[itute] Catholique on Areopagite spirituality and some issues of modern philosophy, of course I had something to say. Regarding him, I want to make a request: He told me that he was a colleague at the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Paris (years 1928-1930) with two Romanians: P. Emilian Vasilescu,<sup>27</sup> about whom I gave him all the information and a Nicolae Iliescu I have not heard of.

And as he would like to know everything there is to know about him, please ask Fr. Emilian and possibly Fr. Cazacu and write me here, if necessary, the very address of this N Iliescu. P. Lialine, when he heard of my presence in Paris, wrote to me inviting me to Chevetogne. I couldn't go anymore. I couldn't even go to the Trappists, where the prayer of Jesus is very present.

I should also say a few words about Orthodox circles. Their situation is complex. They are in a transitional stage. The old Russian diaspora is dying out (the luminaries disappeared long ago), the new generation, raised among foreigners, is looking for its personality. And according to the good Eastern tradition, a lot of intrigues, scandals, conflicts, enemies (on the first day, visiting 3 professors from S[ain]t Serge, each spoke ill of the other: I was immunized from the country. I saw - today - old Zander, warm, human, sweet. I reminded him that once upon a time at a religious congress, he said to S[andu] Tudor<sup>28</sup>: "Brother, I bless the Lord that I met you".

---

<sup>27</sup> Emilian Vasilescu (1904-1985), Christian theologian and philosopher. Mircea Păcurariu, *Dicționarul teologilor români*, București, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 1996, s. v. Emilian Vasilescu.

<sup>28</sup> Daniil Sandu Tudor (monk Agaton) (1896-1962), Romanian writer, poet and monk, the initiator of the "Burning Rug" spiritual revival movement, imprisoned by the communists on

*The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuș reflected in the Securitate Archives*

And I also added: "give me permission to return now in the name of my connection with P. Daniil these words." He burst into tears. He asked me about Bishop Tit Simedrea,<sup>29</sup> and about Father Sterian. Lossky<sup>30</sup> remains the most serious of them. The lady and he send you many warm greetings (I knew from you how you visited him one evening when the little girl was sick. The lady is still grateful to you today for the prayers you raised for their child). Philokalia and the course of P. Stăniloae<sup>31</sup> produced an exceptional impression: indeed, the confrontation with spiritual problems there are many powerful documents. There were presentations and discussions around them.

As for the Akathist "Burning Brush", I was proposed to publish it: I think I had a chance to find a poet capable of translating it and I am thinking of editing it - Deo volente in parallel text two colours (red and black) and stylized vignettes. Lossky hearing him interrupted me and said: "I think he is of the family of the Spiritual Centic of ION of the Cross" (a few days ago I received here in Benares a letter from a friend in Switzerland saying: "M- I was impressed and enriched by what I read [in] *"La Reforme"* - a French religious periodical about Romanian Philology and Le Buisson Ardent"<sup>32</sup>. I am also curious to see what was written without my knowledge, probably an echo of the discussions during my time there: as soon as I have the magazine, I will send it to you (the publishing house of the Akathist is a Dominican one).

I have to stop. It's clear, I think, that the French stage was happy. It happened to me very often (in Switzerland and France) to give a dissertation in the morning, to give an

---

grounds of "mysticism" and died in the Aiud penitentiary. For more information on his life and work, see also: Aurelia Bălan-Mihailovici (eds.), *Ieromonahul Daniil – Sandu Tudor și „Rugul Aprins de la Mănăstirea Antim la Mănăstirea Rarău*, Editura Charisma, Deva, 2010); Carmen Ciornea, *"Să nu fiți căldiceii!"*: Sandu Tudor și întemeierea Rugului Aprins: (1940-1952), Editura Eikon, București, 2018; Carmen Ciornea, *Sandu Tudor și asociațiile studențești creștine din România interbelică*, Editura Eikon, București, 2017.

<sup>29</sup> Tit Simedrea (1886-1971), was for a time vicar bishop of the Archdiocese of Bucharest (1926-1935), then bishop of Hotin (1935-1940), and then metropolitan of Bucovina (enthroned in 1941). For more information on his life and work, see: Alexandru M. Ioniță, *Tit Simedrea Mitropolitul - repere biografice*, Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2002; Artur Silvestri, *Secretul „Rugului aprins” – pornind de la câteva documente despre Mitropolitul Tit Simedria*, Editura Carpathia Press, București, 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958), Russian theologian and philosopher, professor in St. Petersburg and Paris. For more information on his life and work, see: Olivier Clément, *Orient-Occident: deux passeurs, Vladimir Lossky et Paul Evdokimov*, Labor et Fides, Genève, 1985; Nicoleta Pălimaru, Ciprian Vidican, Anatolie Negruță (coord.), *Teologie și spiritualitate la Vladimir Lossky*, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1991), was the most important Romanian theologian (our note).

<sup>32</sup> Cu privire la apariția acestui text Securitatea va fi informată și din alte surse. A se vedea: ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. 1, f. 54.

exposition in the afternoon, to participate in philosophical discussions in the evening until late at night (not once in three different languages in Switzerland in the ecumenical environment). That is why I ask you to support me with your prayers. Under these conditions the road to India and India itself was becoming more and more uninteresting, less glamorous. The environment was serious, the insistent request, the prospects of fruition by God's mercy seemed clear. If I still left, firstly because I realized that if I don't have a moment of retreat now, at the beginning of the new road, I don't know if I will ever be able to have it again. I was occupied, shattered, disintegrated, in time and even in strength (I did not read a book in all that time): then it seemed to me that I understood certain signs pointing to India as an ordered place (for example, I met at Mount Athos "by chance as it must happen", the man who gave me the necessary recommendations for certain personages and circles in India and Tibet); finally, last but not least, I came here because I am a monk and I have to obey when the Primate of my Church insists on this (I have a somewhat special, traditional "bless and forgive" obedience, Moldovalah and I think more difficult, but I felt it was inexcusable to derogate; I stayed a month in Greece—most of it at the Holy Mountain. Greece is Hellenic, chauvinistic and orthodox, the clergy is difficult beyond the permissible limits of spiritual and moral life). Although they all wear uncultivated beards and greasy locks, I ask the lyrical defenders of this hairy apparatus from us to be more reserved with the prediction of this dubious innovation and today displayed out of inertia and indiscriminately, Churches are full on holidays, noisy and undisciplined, life sacramental is missing almost entirely. At the Faculty of Theology in Athens, although all the professors are laymen, educated in Protestant schools (I attended the solemn meeting of the proclamation of Bratavis as a member of the Hellenic Academy. I talked with him and others, and please forgive me, I did not feel the spirit of deep renewals. More promising is the Thessalonica theological center where a layman republishes Palamas). The Holy Mountain is undeniably holy, and at one point I had the strange and hard-to-express feeling that its being is of such absolute uniqueness that its connection with the rest of mankind has always been indirect on the visible plane carried out mainly through envoys, messengers and not by the direct impartation of its essential secret, which thus remained intact. And it is intact to this day, even today when the monasteries are deserted, when meat is eaten, when stupid quarrels (political, nationalist, calendar) grind the spiritual dignity of the place. Very few young monks and many policemen, rare and almost inaccessible to the immeasurable personality. (I met the Russian hermit who composed the foreword for the English edition of the Philokalia: he is 82 years old, speaks perfect English and French, does not love a lot of people). (I open another parenthesis here, to mention what I forgot to say above - otherwise I forgot a lot of things - regarding P. Gouillard: he is no longer a monk, he is no longer Catholic, he married and went to Mohammedanism Sufism through "traditionalist" circles. He translated the Philokalia after this step and this explains the Sufi appendix). Seen up close, all traditionalists: Schuon, etc., are

*The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuș reflected in the Securitate Archives*

embarrassing and often comical, take my word for it, though I can give you some juicy details. I remember the overwhelming seriousness with which some of our brothers "adhered" "internally" to the phenomenon and my heart sinks: I dare to name Ștefan Todirașcu,<sup>33</sup> to whom I send this detail and especially my love. Schon and I were neighbors for four months. To return to the Holy Mountain. For me it was a final blessing before leaving the continent. I will not forget the night services in the secret chapel - I tremble when I think about it - of the Dionysius monastery (I kissed the tomb of Patriarch Niphon), the sunrises of monasteries from the ridges and the lights glimpsed on the aromatic paths of the mountain; the order that still echoes in some lavras and that allows you to suspect how "organized" Orthodox monasticism was in its prime. I open another parenthesis: I have the impression that from God's deep economy, made sensitive in history to direct it to its meaning, Eastern Christianity is today experiencing the end of the Constantinian era (as the Western one is experiencing the end of the renaissance and the Council).

The union with the age (fruitful and of course justified, characterizing the Constantinian institution, is disintegrating: we have only to look at what has been happening in Orthodoxy for 40 years. You remember that we were also discussing these things in the country. Now I think we have observed live. It is a fact, before any appreciation: it would not hurt to take a step forward or a step up to the style and values that were of the pre-Constantinian apostolic age).

The 10 days I spent in Beirut were a divine gift that totally humbled me. I don't even know really why I stopped in Beirut at 2:50 at night, getting off the plane, and how I came into immediate contact with the Lebanese Orthodox youth, who are incredible in the authenticity of faith, simplicity, Christian enthusiasm. Young students raised in French culture are serious and talented. You can imagine what our meetings were like. We parted praying together and bracing ourselves. But what is happening to the official church is unimaginable: the Episcopate and the administration are in a horrible state. I don't want to add anything more, but all Orthodox Churches should repent with ashes on their heads for what is happening in the Patriarchate of Antioch. We have no right to accuse others of their sins, when we have an obligation to humble ourselves for the unimaginable sacrileges we allow. - (I shudder to think that others may be punished unknowingly for the sins of the other members of this body). - Please mention - as a saint - at prayer these young Orthodox: Archim Ignatio, Erom, George, Paul, Albert, George.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ștefan Todirașcu a fost un scriitor român de orientare creștină, prieten al lui Alexandru Mironescu. Pentru mai multe informații cu privire la viața, activitatea și relevanța operei și gândirii sale, a se vedea și: <https://www.crestinortodox.ro/religie/un-exemplar-uman-stefan-todirascu-155230.html>, accessed 22. 08. 2021.

And finally I have arrived in India. It was 'the height of the hot season, when existence was defied not in one or other of its places and in its essence, as a possibility. Non-being was more logical, more natural, more normal than fear: L-univers n'est qu'un faut dans la purete du non-etre" is a "truth" of extreme intellectual blasé and current Indian biology (when insects are added, the dust storms, now the monsoon with the respective steams). It was a difficult debut, thank God, but not too difficult, as a kind of preliminary trial. There were also days when I really suffered from thirst, water not being able to be drunk in certain places except boiled because of cholera epidemics, influenza, etc. I wanted to shout: "In the refrigerator, refrigerators." I give an extension for a refrigerator"! I would have gladly traded Indian mysticism for European technique. Then I came to Benares. I saw yogis, ascetics, snuyassini, temples, monkeys, gathurs, funeral pyres: all these are real, but not very important. The only thing of value - therefore priceless - remains our inner situation before God and in Him. The rest, even the miracles, are only signs that need to be proven and covered inside. It was said more clearly, the ultimate truth is the joy of serving the Lord. It protects you from dangers seen and unseen, even miracles that would happen through you or with you, pride can no longer touch you because you were nothing (or were nothing and almost nothing) there. Externally speaking, here in Benares I am busy writing a doctoral thesis in philosophy (the title in Romanian would sound something like this: "Essay on the Anthropology of the Ultimate Stage. Samys-Vedantabhssye and the Eastern Tradition"<sup>34</sup>), learning a little Sanskrit (which I don't like place), to hold some conferences on some philosophy topics (initially P.S.P. Patriarch sending me an unexpected substantial help allowed me to give up the lectureship of French language and literature that had been offered to me and which would have threatened my personal time) . However, I say it with all humility, I wish I had come to India just for that. For the moment though: "I'm not reading" further. Is it because the signs are silent when you have arrived at the appointed place, and they must be replaced by personal effort, humble and persistent, as the necessary response of freedom? Pray for me.

I am happy as often as I can share the Orthodox tradition with the people here, simply and without proselytizing. The experience is new for everyone (there is also a Spanish abbot here with whom we hugged from the first day and who gave us this definition of tosmom: "that which refers to many volumes and tends to fill many volumes" and Dr. in physics-mathematics and I have taken up again - partly sparingly - and this line of concerns which is not at all to be abandoned and where I hope with God's will to reach some valid understandings. I have to close these lines, as you can see from the journey outside I have said a great deal. Yet I must not be ungrateful: I also retained the beauties of Switzerland, the line of glaciers, the south of St. Gothard towards Lago

---

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Anca Manolescu, „La paix chretienne comme dialogue: le pere Andre Scrima”, în *Irenikon*, LXXXVIII (2015), no. 1, p. 33.



*The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuș reflected in the Securitate Archives*

Maggiore, with the promising and sonorous names—Airolo, Belliuzona, Ascona; the sky overflowing over the Mediterranean lands in Greece and Lebanon; before the nostalgic nobility of some Parisian streets; now the torn landscapes of Central India. I liked airplanes, I say this mainly because Brother Codin, wide aircraft and docks, friends of man and states.

One night right in the middle of it, I find myself flying over Milan; below, the city became known [in] multi-colored flames, transposed, trans-encrypted, if I can speak like that in the light: from above the plane answered with its lights and in the cabin with gentle intimacy everything distilled defending a kind of enchantment, of a premonition of innocence. And then the long 10-hour flights where you can do your morning canon over the Arabian desert and all the way to Bombay to read a mystical study of Lossky. I didn't really like the sea (it's beautiful especially on the shore; I also had a storm on it in the Eastern Mediterranean and I understood why the apostle of the apocalypse condemns it to perish at the second birth of the creature being the habitation of the dragon: although it has a master, they always try to act like they don't have it).

Let me also recall that the community of brothers is always presented to me (no forgetfulness, at least on my part), and there is a kind of care and entreaty in me that you have a special attention for young friends. I can tell you something that may seem curious. A desire of mine now would be the action "organization deeper than in the Romanian obsession: is it good at administration?" I have learned some things from running the big Swiss institutions that are equivalent to orchestrating a symphony – working with the people and for the people. You cannot imagine how often I think of E. Toma, B. Vaida, Gigel, (Vășii and Câdea), Duțu and all the others and how much I want them to deepen in the only knowledge and achievement worthy of the greatness and humility of man that accomplished in God. I remembered that exactly 10 years ago we were in Govora. I was also young then, I had a confused premonition that the only authentic name of the future is the living God. And how much I used the connection with the elders. Here I must mention the eternal Daniel P. Allow me to confess to you that I wrote these lines representing his Holiness to me as well as Your Holiness. I think he might answer me. And I also think that they would now recognize how inscrutable the Lord's ways can be and different from the solution of monopolistic discipleship - I don't say monopolistic - which is legitimate, but which should have waited. For His Holiness I would like to mention the strange problem in the Dead Sea desert. I don't know if their situation is fully known in the country. With that enigmatic order of a perfect Essene monastery from decades before his incarnations, (which provided for hours of meditation, reading during the meal, periods of examination of conscience), a monastery with which it seems St. John the Baptist had been connected , but later rejected it. - But his archetypal relationship with Christian monasticism seen as a style and dimension of spiritual life becomes all the more significant. (The parents of the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem showed me photographs, reliefs of the exhumed remains of

the monastery perfectly recognizable (pardon my pun). Its superior was a mysterious "Maitre de la Jusrice" persecuted, tried and executed by the Pharisees). I would also like to remind him that the Grail was cut from the emerald that fell from the forehead of the angel of light, after sin, and taken over by the Ionian line of the world, water and blood: matter of the Mediterranean. (I was initiated at Monserrat in Spain, the famous abbey built according to tradition on the Grail mountain, Montsalvatch). –

I am glad that the Russian books that I sent from Paris have been received at the Theological Institute and I hope also at the Patriarchate's Library. I don't know if Mgr. Dumont sent his last volume: *Les Voies de l'Unite Chretienne*,<sup>35</sup> as we had decided; in the affirmative case I would be glad to see a substantial review appear, and I think that you alone could and ought to do it. You will meet with many of your thoughts. Even if the author sometimes speaks [in] a theological and Thomistic language, we must not condemn him lightly; speaks for this world (by the way, we were at "Istina" in Paris when the issue of "Orthodoxy" was received with the honorable article by Mr. T. Popescu<sup>36</sup> on the "Union of Churches"; but in the same issue, we were told attracted attention, it was an article written by Fr. Marcu<sup>37</sup> from Sibiu (I think I'm not mistaken) about "The truth and beauty of Orthodoxy" - the already crooked title. It was embarrassing to see the name of the general secretary of the Ecumenical Movement, Dr. Visser't Hooft<sup>38</sup>, known throughout the world as a Reformed and introduced by the author insistently as "Hooft the Anglican". We make a mockery of our intellectual and cultural frivolity. You know the price of accuracy and correctness of information in this[i]world. Please convey these to P. Gagi, along with my warm greetings.

Now I conclude, not before setting up the essential question for me of correspondence. Sometimes I get the grave and sad suspicion - that you are waiting for me to write to you in order to "just answer me". It would be a painful misunderstanding

---

<sup>35</sup> C. J. Dumont, *Les voies de l'unité chrétienne, doctrine et spiritualité*, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1954.

<sup>36</sup> Teodor M. Popescu (1893-1973), prominent Romanian theologian, imprisoned for political reasons at the beginning of the communist period. He was a professor at the University Theological Institute in Bucharest. For more information on his life and work, see also: Adina Pavel, *Teodor M. Popescu și meditațiile despre preoție*, Editura s. n., Botoșani, 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Grigorie T. Marcu (1911-1987), theologian, professor at the Theological Institute from Sibiu. Cf. <https://www.crestinortodox.ro/dictionarul-teologilor-romani/grigorie-marcu-84288.html>, accessed 22. 08. 2021.

<sup>38</sup> Willem Adolph Visser 't Hooft (1900-1985), German theologian, first general secretary of the Ecumenical Council of Churches (1948-1966). For more information on his life and work, see: A. Guittart, „A Bibliography of the Writings of Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft 1918-1970,” in J. Robert Nelson (ed.), *No Man Is Alien: Essays on the Unity of Mankind*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, p. 264-330; Robert C. Mackie and Charles C. West (eds.), *The Sufficiency of God: Essays on the Ecumenical Hope in Honor of W. A. Visser 't Hooft*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1963.

*The Indian correspondence of Father Andre Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuș reflected in the Securitate Archives*

and reversal of relations. I am alone here, and you are many there. I have a lot of epistolary obligations (from Mexico and Capetown to Paris and Chicago and you have only one correspondent abroad: me. If you each wrote me a letter a week (I'm not kidding; you, p. Danil, P. Stăniloae, P. Sofian, Codin, etc., etc. or Mr. Vasile, whom I always miss, it would be your turn every two months and I would be grateful. Brother Codin proclaimed my professorship in the letter received here and for which I thanked him before the Lord: "Correspondence is a means that in all ages has been an effective tool to maintain contact with friends" (end quote) .I agree and I would also add the new nuance that the letter can be a sign of life and its becoming: here for the correspondence between us, I would even dare to revive the question[a]: How do you feel about the prayer "The central element of our Communion? " and then please tell me what the Metropolitanate of Moldova is doing? What is Slatina, Rarau, doing, what else is going on in the Romanian Church: Fr. Anania could also write to me (what is happening with Fr. Mihai, but with Anton?). What's up with Antim, here I try to attach a few lines for other friends. I am writing to Titi separately and I ask your holiness to hand them to him. I began this letter on the day of the wonderful Transfiguration, and finished it the next day at 1:15 past midnight. Please do not expect me to be able to fulfill this effort soon. I hug everyone. Pray for me and please write to me. With deep love in the Lord, the Monk Andrei.

P. S. My address: Prof. Andrei Scrima  
International House  
Hindu University Benares 5 U. P. India

Send me the letters  
only by recommended plane

I think you'd better write to Lossky (he knows something about Heith). I haven't written yet, send him my regards. Its address is: V. Lossky – 6 St. Louis en L'Isle Paris 4 – 3.

Say hello to Metropolitan Firmilian.<sup>39</sup> I really miss him. Please let him know my way too. Maybe I'll write to him later. –

Post-Scriptum: Please forgive me Father Benedict. Here today, August 25, almost 20 days have passed since I finished the lines addressed to you and which you could have received in the meantime (but I wanted to send a sign in the same envelope, brothers and friends. Meanwhile I am grateful to God, I had a Christian and monastic celebration of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin). Here is what I would like to add. I don't know if you remember the name of Abbot Monchauia we first met around 1947 with n. 3 (if I'm not mistaken) of "Dieu Vivant". He has been in India for a long time and recently together with [a] French Breton Benedictine (an admirable race) founded a monastery for a monastic lifestyle, lived in the extreme Hindu forms (this Benedictine

---

<sup>39</sup> Firmilian Marin (1901-1972) was a Romanian theologian, elected Metropolitan of Oltenia. Cf. <https://ziarullumina.ro/documentar/mitropolitul-firmilian-marin-si-invatamantul-teologic-din-oltenia>, accessed 12. 08. 2021.

walks almost naked like local sannyassins, eats the Indian, took a Sanskrit name). He also wrote a book: "Ermites du Saccidaorcida", which begins with a word to Ave Schiron of Pateric. From them I heard the reflection, profoundly true, that India has not discovered its Christian vocation, probably also because it has not known Christian monasticism: rather, what India needs precisely is not monastic forms, but monasticism before Chalcedon, preserved especially in Orthodoxy. They would be happy to see an Orthodox monastery (and this today could only be Romanian) in India. Let us pray to the Lord and let his Will be done, and pray for Henri the hieromonk and Jules the abbot.

Secondly, I want to inform you that I received the article written in Paris about the Romanian Orthodox Church. It appeared in the Ecumenical hebdomadary "La Reforme" and is signed by the French Orthodox Professor Olivier Clement,<sup>40</sup> a close friend of Lossky (you can read his articles in "Mesager", he was once a disciple of Guenon). The article appeared without my knowledge and is a result of their meeting in Paris, at some of which Professor Clement was also present (I had asked him not to mention my name and at most my status as a monk). Entitled: "L'Eglise Orthodoxe Roumaine" au le miracle du Buisson Ardent", it's a happy title I find, inspired by the akathist P. Daniil, which I translated on the spot in one of the sessions. (They talk a bit excessively about P. Daniil and about our intellectuality, but it is inevitable when things could not be controlled by the one who knows the realities, I was far away). I am sending the article to the [Blessed] Patriarch. I asked P. Anania to show you also Br. Codin and maybe copy it.

Dear Father Benedict, please write to me once more not only to answer me, but to share with me those of your Holiness. Please greet P. Gheorghe, Prof. Elian<sup>41</sup> (how was his first school year?), Mrs. Alina and especially Gherasim.

With the same love,  
Andrei

ACNSAS, *Fond informativ*, dossier no. 0005468, vol. I, f. 353-364 r-v.

---

<sup>40</sup> Olivier Clement (1921-2009) was a French theologian converted to Orthodoxy from atheism. He taught at the Saint Serge Institute in Paris. Among his works translated abroad are: Olivier Clement, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*, New City Press, Hyde Park, 1996; Olivier Clement, *On Human Being: Spiritual Anthropology*, New City Press, Hyde Park, 2000; Olivier Clement, *You are Peter: An Orthodox Reflection on the Exercise of Papal Primacy*, New City Press, Hyde Park, 2003; Olivier Clement, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, Barnes & Noble Books, New York, 1976. Pentru mai multe informații cu privire la viața și activitatea lui, a se vedea și: <https://ziarillumina.ro/memoriament/un-vechi-prieten-al-bisericii-noastre>, accessed 21. 08. 2021.

<sup>41</sup> Alexandru Elian (1910-1998), was a historian and Byzantinologist, full member of the Romanian Academy. He taught at the University Degree Theological Institute in Bucharest during the communist period. Cf. <https://acad.ro/bdar/armembriLit.php?vidT=E>, accessed 21. 08. 2021.

# Marriage in the ancient peoples of the Orient. Brief overview of wedding rituals in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Israel

Ioan-Daniel Manolache<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract:

Marriage is an important event for people. Throughout history, depending on the historical period and the geographical area where it was celebrated, weddings have taken different forms, with each nation having certain peculiarities regarding marriage, but also certain common elements present in all the peoples around it. This study describes the wedding rituals of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt and Israel, and concludes with a brief comparison between these peoples, highlighting the main similarities and differences in their wedding rituals.

## Keywords

Marriage, Antiquity, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Israel

## I. Introduction

Along with birth and death, marriage has always been an important event for people. Since ancient times, it has been celebrated in the midst of the community with great pomp and joy. Historically, anthropologists say that the earliest wedding took place in Egypt, 4300 years before the birth of Christ<sup>2</sup>, and there are also the earliest documented marriage customs.

Whether in Egypt, Persia, Babylon or Israel, marriage marked the moment when a woman passed from her father's property, the *Pater Familias*, into the care of a new man, who was to welcome her into his home, feed her and protect her from danger, in return for her fidelity<sup>3</sup>. Following this act, the community publicly acknowledged that a

---

<sup>1</sup> Ioan-Daniel Manolache, PhD Candidate, Doctoral School „Dumitru Stăniloae”, University of Bucharest. Contact: ioandanielmanolache@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Octavian GAIVAS, „Originea obiceiurilor de nuntă”, in *Philologia*, no. 1-2 (2017), p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Octavian GAIVAS, „Originea obiceiurilor de nuntă”, p. 106.

new family had been established in society and that the young girl was no longer waiting for a man<sup>4</sup>.

In general, in ancient times, the wedding had several stages. As it was a commercial exchange, mediation between the two parties was often done by a third party, so that no one would be directly offended by a refusal. We find this practice in Egypt and Mesopotamia as well as in Israel, where we know that Abraham sent one of his servants to bring a bride to Isaac, his son (*Gen 24*).

Once the desired girl was found, an agreement was concluded between the two families, a more precise marriage contract, and as a sign of seriousness a guarantee was paid by the future husband, which was both a reward offered to *Pater Familias* for raising the girl until now, and a compensation for him, for the fact that from now on she would no longer help her old family in the household, but would move to a new house, for which she would also work. This act sealed the engagement of the two young people, giving the guarantee that, in the near future, they will establish a house together.

While the state often did not get involved in the marriages of ordinary people, as this was strictly a family matter, the situation was different for royal marriages, which were often political in nature. For example, in Egypt, Ramses II was to marry the daughter of the Hittite king Hattusilis to seal a peace treaty between the Egyptians and Hittites<sup>5</sup>, and in Israel we recall that King Herod married a Hasmonean woman in order to consolidate his leadership<sup>6</sup>.

In the Ancient East, marriage was not always simply a fruit of love, but often had a political or commercial character. Through this, women received social protection and men established a home and secured their power in the community, being a win-win for both parties.

## **II. Marriage in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Israel**

### ***a) Marriage in Mesopotamia***

Before describing the actual wedding in Mesopotamia, it should first be pointed out that there has never actually been a country called Mesopotamia in history, but rather this name has meant throughout antiquity a larger territory between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers<sup>7</sup>, inhabited by various peoples, including Sumerians, Akkadians, Chaldeans, Babylonians and Assyrians.

---

<sup>4</sup> Matthew J. PERRY, "State and Law", in: *A Cultural History of Marriage in Antiquity*, vol. 1, ed. Karen Klaiber Hersch, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, New York, 2020, p. 60.

<sup>5</sup> M.J. PERRY, "State and Law", p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> M.J. PERRY, "State and Law", p. 60.

<sup>7</sup> Hence the name of the region: μέσος = *between*, and ποταμός = *river*.

According to *the Code of Hammurabi*, known throughout Mesopotamia, the Babylonian family ideal was monogamy, but in order to support the birth of children and indirectly the social power of the family, the man could take a second wife, who would be subject to the first wife. In some cases, the number of wives could be even greater, with the proviso that they remained in the shadow of the official wife. Otherwise, according to *the Code of Hammurabi* (art. 145, 147)<sup>8</sup>, they could be sold to another man. At the same time, in Assyria, polygamy was common, with the proviso that the man had only one official wife, who wore a veil over her face, the rest of the women having the status of concubines, and their number varied according to the man's wishes, provided that he could support them all and provide them with the necessities of daily life<sup>9</sup>. In Sumer the situation was similar, and the woman who bore a child with the master of the house, even if she was a slave, became free<sup>10</sup>.

Women's virginity was important to the ancient Mesopotamians. If the bride was not a divorced woman or a widowed woman, the groom expected her to be a virgin, and if not, she could be punished by flogging by her husband, to whom she had not been honest. To maintain social order, there is even evidence that women caught in the act of sinning were thrown into the river<sup>11</sup>, which is not necessarily surprising given that fidelity was very important to Mesopotamian men. Fidelity was the foundation of the family, and marriage was a public sign that young men were committed to this way of life.

The wedding was a public family event attended by witnesses and witnessed by a wedding contract. This was absolutely obligatory and without it young people were not considered to be married, even if they lived together<sup>12</sup>. This contract was the clearest proof of the agreement between families and the consequences of the nuptial union.

It seems that in Babylon young men concluded a pre-nuptial contract called a *zubullu*, where they stipulated the conditions of their future marriage, certainly used in the time of Ur III<sup>13</sup>. The girl's father had absolute power over her and could even sell her

---

<sup>8</sup> See O. DRIMBA, *Istoria culturii si civilizatiei*, vol. 1, p. 90

<sup>9</sup> Isaac MENDELSON, "The Family in the Ancient Near East", in: *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 11, no. 2 (1948), p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> *Code of Hammurabi*, 146; See Ovidiu DRÎMBA, *Istoria culturii și civilizației*, vol. 1, Editura Saeculum I. O. and Editura Vestala, București, 2003, pp. 89-90.

<sup>11</sup> Men, however, enjoyed a certain amount of intimate freedom as long as they did not end up raping, incest or having relations with a married woman. Lars NELSON, "When the Mesopotamian Honeymoon Ends: The Code of Hammurabi's Assumptions About the Roles of Spouses and Problem-Solving Approach to Regulating Marriage", in *The John Marshall Law Review*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2013), p. 1073.

<sup>12</sup> M.J. PERRY, "State and Law", p. 64

<sup>13</sup> Samuel GREENGUS, "Old Babylonian Marriage Ceremonies and Rites", in: *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, vol. 20, 2 (1966), p. 59.

into slavery for money if he needed to, as the girl was his property. Given this status, the father conducted the negotiations with the girl's suitors and it was also he who chose his daughter's future husband.

Marriages were mostly between people of the same social level, with endogamy being preferred. In Babylon the family of the priests privileged and marriage was an attempt to preserve this status; this was affirmed by those who analysed marital contracts concluded at secular weddings in comparison with marital contracts concluded at priestly weddings<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, even among priestly families there were differentiations and it was very rare for girls from a simple priestly family to be married to boys from ruling priestly families.

In Babylon it was customary for young people to cohabit before marriage, and if the young people had children, they were to be listed in the marriage contract<sup>15</sup>. This contract in Babylon was called *Rikistum*<sup>16</sup>, in Assyria it was called *Risku*, and was not required to be in writing. It seems however that in the later period written form was preferred, as it was the easiest to prove in case of any misunderstandings. Thus quite a number of Mesopotamian nuptial contracts have survived to this day, which archaeologists have analysed over the ages, noting that the bridegrooms' inheritance and the bride price were the most important elements when the marriage was concluded; whether it was of the *Errebu* or *Terhatu* type.

*Terahu* marriage was the most common type of marriage, when the man took home the young woman he married. In contrast to this, in Mesopotamia there was also the *Errebu* / *Erratu* marriage, where the man stayed in the bride's house after the wedding with the girl's family and was in some way adopted by her.

Regardless of the form chosen, the marriage was preceded by the betrothal, which took place in the girl's home. The groom was obliged to prepare his sweetheart for the wedding, buy her special clothes and ornaments for the house, including food and drink, oils and incense<sup>17</sup>. In the town of Nuzi, the bride price was 30 silver<sup>18</sup>, but this could vary depending on the context. In any case, the bride price together with the wedding

---

<sup>14</sup> Bastian STILL, "The Social World of the Babylonian Priest", in *Culture and History of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 103, Brill, Leiden, 2019, pp. 27-63, apud Caroline WAERZEGGERS, "Changing Marriage Practices in Babylonia from the Late Assyrian to the Persian Period", in *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History*, no. 2 (2020), p. 105.

<sup>15</sup> Caroline WAERZEGGERS, "Changing Marriage Practices in Babylonia from the Late Assyrian to the Persian Period", p. 112.

<sup>16</sup> See Samuel GREENGUS, "The Old Babylonian Marriage Contract", in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 89, no. 3 (1969), pp. 505-532.

<sup>17</sup> See Mona EZZ ALI, "Marriage and Divorce in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Iraq (Mesopotamia): A comparative Study", in *International Journal of Heritage, Tourism and Hospitality*, vol. 14, No. 1 (2020), p. 120.

<sup>18</sup> I. MENDELSON, "The Family in the Ancient Near East", p. 26.



gifts was not to cost more than the dowry that the bride was to receive from her father, so that the new family would have a little starting help for the new family life, including money, jewellery and even items of furniture: bed, table and chair<sup>19</sup>.

As for the wedding itself, in Mesopotamia it was celebrated religiously, with the bride and groom going together to the Temple, where they pledged their love and sang hymns in honour of love. On the morning of the wedding, the bride was ritually bathed, and in Assyria she was anointed with perfumed oils after bathing<sup>20</sup>, as was the practice throughout Mesopotamia<sup>21</sup>. In particular, as part of this ritual, the groom poured wine on the girl's feet, showing everyone that from now on he would take care of the bride he had chosen<sup>22</sup>.

An important element of the Mesopotamian wedding was the nuptial procession<sup>23</sup>. Whether the bride moved into her husband's house or the man was received into the bride's house, the wedding procession consisted of family and friends, accompanying the young couple to their future home. Among the bridegroom's grooms, the most important place was occupied by *the groom's friend* (in Akkadian *susapinnu*, in Summerian *nigir*)<sup>24</sup>, who always sat next to the groom and had access to everything<sup>25</sup>.

The most awaited moment of the wedding was the party, called *Kirrum*, where people consumed cakes and beer<sup>26</sup>. Most often that night the bride and groom consummated their marriage; an act without which the wedding was considered invalid<sup>27</sup>. The groom's friend would bring food, milk and drink to the bridal chamber so

---

<sup>19</sup> M.J. PERRY, "State and Law", p. 65.

<sup>20</sup> S. GREENGUS, "Old Babylonian Marriage Ceremonies and Rites", p. 61.

<sup>21</sup> In Summer and Assyria in particular, the anointing of brides was practised. Samuel GREENGUS, "Old Babylonian Marriage Ceremonies and Rites", in: *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, vol. 20, 2 (1966), p. 72.

<sup>22</sup> Mona EZZ ALI, "Marriage and Divorce in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Iraq (Mesopotamia): A comparative Study", p. 120. An interesting point here is that the Code of Hammurabi forbade a man to leave his wife if she was ill. See Lars NELSON, "When the Mesopotamian Honeymoon Ends: The Code of Hammurabi's Assumptions About the Roles of Spouses and Problem-Solving Approach to Regulating Marriage", in *The John Marshall Law Review*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2013), p. 1082.

<sup>23</sup> M.L. SATLOW, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity*, p. 172.

<sup>24</sup> S. GREENGUS, "Old Babylonian Marriage Ceremonies and Rites", p. 68; Meir MALUL, "Susapinnu: The Mesopotamian Paranymp and His Role", in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Oct., 1989), pp. 241-278.

<sup>25</sup> Meir MALUL, "Susapinnu: The Mesopotamian Paranymp and His Role", pp. 254-247.

<sup>26</sup> S. GREENGUS, "Old Babylonian Marriage Ceremonies and Rites", p. 63.

<sup>27</sup> Lars NELSON, "When the Mesopotamian Honeymoon Ends: The Code of Hammurabi's Assumptions About the Roles of Spouses and Problem-Solving Approach to Regulating Marriage," in *The John Marshall Law Review*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2013), p. 1073; Meir MALUL, "Susapinnu: The Mesopotamian Paranymp and His Role", pp. 254-247.

that the newlyweds would not lack anything, resembling two kings on their wedding day. In this way the marriage fully achieved its purpose, giving the young people not just a home together, but also offspring, so that their name would live on in the community for as long as possible.

Finally, as far as marriage in Mesopotamia is concerned, we are left with the idea that it was a very important social event. The wedding was preceded by the betrothal, and on this occasion the groom (re)bought his bride with various gifts. Later, in the first phase, the wedding took place at the temple, where the bride and groom affirmed their love for each other and sang love hymns; the groom poured wine on the bride's feet to show publicly that he would take care of her from now on. Afterwards, the wedding continued at home, where the bride and groom would have a party in honour of the newlyweds, eating cakes and drinking beer. Meanwhile, the bride and groom retired to their private room, where they consummated their marriage, thus completing their nuptial union and hoping that through the birth of sons their name would live long in the world.

#### ***b) Marriage in Ancient Egypt***

Surprisingly or not, arranged marriages were rarely practiced in ancient Egypt, with young people generally free to choose whom they wanted to marry<sup>28</sup>. Moreover, in Egypt women were allowed to be temple priestesses and to hold public and even leadership positions in society, Cleopatra being a famous case in point<sup>29</sup>. Divorce was not accompanied by public opprobrium, and pre-marital relations and abortion were not legally regulated in any way<sup>30</sup>.

---

<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, in order to maintain political power, Egyptian royal families sometimes practised family marriages: brother-sister/father-daughter. See Russell MIDDLETON, "Brother-Sister and Father-Daughter Marriage in Ancient Egypt," in *American Sociological Review* Vol. 27, No. 5 (Oct., 1962), pp. 603-611. Apparently even Ramses II, the pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites in Egypt, married several of his daughters. See Panos D. BARDIS, "Marriage and Family Customs in Ancient Egypt: An Interdisciplinary Study: Part II", in *Social Science*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (1967), p. 106. Some authors believe, however, that the marriage of pharaohs to their daughters was only a ritual, not involving sexual relations, evidence that Akethanon did not even have grandchildren. See John FRANDSEN, *Incestuous and close-kin marriage in Ancient Egypt and Persia*, Museum Tusculanum Press and CNI Publications, 2009, p. 39.

<sup>29</sup> See O. DRIMBA, *Istoria culturii si civilizatiei*, pp. 174-177

<sup>30</sup> Joshua J. MARK, "Love, Sex, and Marriage in Ancient Egypt", 26. 09. 2016, article accessed online at <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/934/love-sex-and-marriage-in-ancient-egypt/>, on 06.06. 2022.

## Marriage in the ancient peoples of the Orient

The Egyptians had no special word for marriage, usually using the verb *meni*<sup>31</sup>, which means to anchor/found a house. Boys were married at around the age of 20 and girls at 12-13, not an exceptional event. Basically, unless it was an arranged marriage, young people could meet anywhere for the first time, in the market or on the street, and if they liked each other, they would just move in together and announce their families, without a special ceremony, sacred or profane<sup>32</sup>.

As in most Eastern countries, in Ancient Egypt, during the wedding, the two families concluded a nuptial contract, stipulating the goods that the young people were to receive from the family. For the ancient Egyptians, this dowry did not represent an actual



purchase price, but was rather a financial support for the family<sup>33</sup>. The agreement was important and very carefully written because in most cases, if a divorce was granted - which was accepted in Egypt but not encouraged - the woman would receive one third of the estate<sup>34</sup>, and in the case of a trial marriage - if after a year the marriage broke up because the two young people could not live together - then the entire dowry would revert to the girl and her family, with no further implications<sup>35</sup>. Precisely for this reason, because the marriage involved economic transfers between families, we specify that this nuptial contract had to be approved by the *Jati*, i.e. by the Pharaoh's representative<sup>36</sup>, in order to have some legal weight. It should also be noted that in order to keep wealth and

---

<sup>31</sup> On Egyptian marital vocabulary see Mona EZZ ALI, "Marriage and Divorce in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Iraq (Mesopotamia): A comparative Study", in *International Journal of Heritage, Tourism and Hospitality* Vol. 14, No. 1 (2020), p. 114.

<sup>32</sup> Mona EZZ ALI, "Marriage and Divorce in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Iraq", p. 117.

<sup>33</sup> Aurelia NEACȘU (alias GIDRO), *Condițiile de fond pentru încheierea căsătoriei în legislația română*, PhD thesis defended at the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, Faculty of Law, under coord. Prof. Univ. Dr. Teodor Bodoașcă, Sibiu, 2016, p. 22.

<sup>34</sup> Ph. D. Robert GARLAND, "Marriage in Ancient Egypt: Egyptian Family System", 6.07.2020, accessed online: <https://www.wondriumdaily.com/marriage-in-ancient-egypt-egyptian-family-system/>, on 07.06.2022.

<sup>35</sup> Aurelia NEACȘU (alias GIDRO), *Condițiile de fond pentru încheierea căsătoriei în legislația română*, p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> Octavian GAIVAS, „Originea obiceiurilor de nuntă”, in *Philologia*, no. 1-2 (2017), p. 106.

power in the family, the Egyptians practised endogamy, preferring marriage with close relatives to the detriment of strangers<sup>37</sup>.

**Fig. 1** - Egyptian marriage contract, Late Period, ca. 380-343 BC, now in the *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 35.4.1a, b. Public Domain, CC0<sup>38</sup>.

There are documents from the Late Period, from the time of the Ptolemies, which attest that in Egypt the bridegroom offered the bride on her wedding day a gift called *sep en sehemet*<sup>39</sup>. This moment was part of the Egyptian marital ritual, and was also present among neighbouring peoples.

Another marriage custom known in Egypt refers to engagement rings. These were generally woven from flowers grown in the Nile area, and their circular shape was very important to the Egyptians, signifying infinity. Young men wore them on the third finger of the left hand, believing that the vein running through this finger reached the heart<sup>40</sup>.

The pictures painted on the pyramids suggest that the Egyptians partied at important life events<sup>41</sup>, which leads us to believe that on the wedding day there must have been a family party or at least a festive meal, but we have not found any mention or concrete description of this subject, at least so far.

The fact remains that for the ancient Egyptians, marriage was a *rite of passage* through which a woman joined her chosen man, founding a new home together. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Egyptians used the wedding ring as part of this event; an element later found among the Greeks and Romans and still used today in the marriage ritual as a sign of infinite love. There is no evidence that the ancient Egyptians celebrated their wedding with a special religious event, as archaeologists have not found any inscriptions or paintings to this effect, but we do know that the bride and groom concluded a marriage contract, first verbal and then binding in written form, officially sealing their union, together with all the rights and obligations arising from the marriage, and even stipulating how the estate would be divided in the event of divorce.

### c) *Marriage in Israel*

As in Egypt and Mesopotamia, in Israel weddings were very often arranged by the parents of young people. This ritual was called *Shiddukhin* and we can see it in the Old Testament, for example in the case of Isaac, for whom Abraham sent one of his servants

---

<sup>37</sup> Mona EZZ ALI, "Marriage and Divorce in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Iraq (Mesopotamia): A comparative Study", p. 115.

<sup>38</sup> M.J. PERRY, "State and Law", p. 64.

<sup>39</sup> Gay ROBINS, *Woman in Ancient Egypt*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1993, p. 60.

<sup>40</sup> Octavian GAIVAS, „Originea obiceiurilor de nunță”, p. 107.

<sup>41</sup> Ilene SPRINGER, "Party Time in Ancient Egypt", accessed online at <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/partytime.htm>, on 11. 06. 2022.

to choose his bride. Other times young men chose their own future wives, as Jacob did when he fell in love with Rachel and eventually married her.

Once the bride-to-be was chosen, the wedding had two stages: *the betrothal* (*Exod* 21, 9; *Deut* 20, 7), when the man promised to marry the bride he had chosen, after which he returned home alone to prepare the wedding preparations. When everything was ready, the man would return for his beloved, as he had promised, and then the second stage, b) *the actual wedding*.

**Engagement** (יִדּוּשִׁין - *erushin* or כִּדּוּשִׁין - *kiddushin*)

There are no clear sources from the Second Temple period on the ritual of betrothal, but rabbinic literature recalls that the proposal of marriage, once accepted by the girl's family, was celebrated with a meal in the girl's home, attended by family members, and the "blessing of the bride and groom" was recited<sup>42</sup>. In the Babylonian Talmud, however, we find information that on the day of the betrothal, the girl's house was open and everyone in the community came to congratulate the new couple; this tradition is probably a parallel practice to the Palestinian one<sup>43</sup>.

In Israel, the engagement was based on the agreement between the two families that the young man would soon return for his beloved and take her home, establishing a new home with her. A covenant between the two families, called *Ketubbah*, was thus made, and as a sign of this agreement, the groom-to-be offered the bride-to-be a ring.

From the Old Testament we learn that if a woman sinned before the wedding, being betrothed, she could be stoned to death (*Deut* 22, 23-24), because her act was a stain on her father's honour and on the family's wealth, inasmuch as the girl was not only in the care of the master of the house, but also in his property<sup>44</sup>, having to be ransomed by her future husband for a special price called *mohar*<sup>45</sup>.

---

<sup>42</sup> M.L. SATLOW, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity*, p. 163. In the Palestinian tradition of the Jews, this blessing contained sexual allusions, and is tempered in the Babylonian tradition, where it is mentioned only that YHWH blessed the betrothal and the nuptial chamber.

<sup>43</sup> M.L. SATLOW, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity*, p. 164.

<sup>44</sup> On woman as property of man, see Diac. Dr. Cătălin VATAMANU, „«Un bărbat și-a luat femeie...» (Deut 22, 13). Semnificații teologice ale metaforei femeii ca proprietate”, în *Familia în societatea contemporană*, coord. Pr. Prof. dr. Viorel Sava and Pr. Lect. Dr. Ilie Melniciuc-Puică, Doxologia, Iași, 2011, pp. 475-231.

<sup>45</sup> Josephus Flavius says that a man who has slept with an un betrothed woman must pay his father 50 shekels for the damage done, and that a man who has slept with an betrothed girl may be put to death together with her, if he has consented, or alone if she has resisted, according to the law of Deuteronomy. See VEZI JOSEPH FLAVIUS, *Antichități Iudaice*, vol. 1, translated by Ion Acsan, Hasefer, București, 2000. The bride price - in the town of Nuzi, 30 silver coins (See I. MENDELSON, "The Family in the Ancient Near East", p. 26) together with the wedding gifts was not to cost more than the dowry the bride was to receive from her father, precisely so that the new

Redemption in the Old Testament was practiced both for slaves (*Deut* 7, 8) and for some relatives (*Exod* 6, 6; 15, 3)<sup>46</sup>, being an objective way for a man to receive someone new under the roof of his house, and in the case of marriage, the suitor had to negotiate this price<sup>47</sup> (*Exod* 22, 16; *3 Kg* 18, 25).

The *mohar* paid by the groom was intended both to prove his esteem for the chosen one and to balance the girl's family economically, since once she left the parental home, her family was left without a helper in the household<sup>48</sup>. In this sense, we see in the episode in which Jacob asked Rachel to marry him that his future father-in-law, Laban, asked him to work for him for seven years, in order to receive the girl he desired (*Gen* 29).

### Marriage proper (יִשׁוּבִין - *nissuin*)

Between engagement and marriage there was a period of time, sometimes shorter and sometimes longer. It seems that during this period the Galileans kept their virginity holy, in contrast to the Judeans, who began their intimate life immediately after betrothal; as the *Mishnah* and *Tosefta*<sup>49</sup> suggest.

With regard to the wedding, in the case of virgins and widows, it took place on Tuesday or Thursday, because the Sanhedrin met on those days, and in case of a problem it could be quickly referred<sup>50</sup>. Once the day was set, the first important moment was the *mikvah*, the bathing of the bride. She was ritually purified so that on the wedding day she herself would be a blameless gift to her husband. The young woman was then

---

family would have a help in their new life, including money, jewellery and including items of furniture, bed, table and chair. See Matthew J. PERRY, "State and Law", in *A Cultural History of Marriage in Antiquity*, vol. 1, ed. Karen Klaiber Hersch, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, New York, 2020, p. 65.

<sup>46</sup> COMISIA BIBILICĂ PONTIFICĂLĂ, *Poporul evreu și sfințele sale Scripturi în Biblia Creștină*, second edition, translated from Italian by Sebastian Lucaciu, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Romano-Catolice de București, București, 2020, p. 65.

<sup>47</sup> In Babylon she was called *Zubullu*. There are also documents from Egypt, from the Late Period, from the time of the Ptolemies, which attest that here the groom offered the bride a gift called *sep en sehemet*. See Gay ROBINS, *Woman in Ancient Egypt*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1993, p. 60.

<sup>48</sup> Pr.Dr.I.-L. RADU, „*Te vei logodi cu mine pe vecie*”. *Metafora căsătoriei lui Dumnezeu cu omul la Profetul Osea*, p. 37.

<sup>49</sup> Some authors justify this practice by saying that at the time of Bar Kokhba's revolt the Romans practised *Jus Primae Noctis against the virgins of Judea*; or, in order that their husband should be their first husband and not another, this custom would have been allowed and practised. M.L. SATLOW, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity*, p. 167. On the other hand, we know that the Jews valued virginity, including a blessing for virgins called *birkat betulim*.

<sup>50</sup> M.L. SATLOW, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity*, p. 169.

dressed in special clothes, anointed with perfumed oils and prepared for the celebration<sup>51</sup>.

After the bride had prepared to leave and spent the last hours in her parents' home, the wedding procession followed. The bride, together with her loved ones, family, friends and the groom, was to leave the house where she had grown up and make her way to the home of her new husband<sup>52</sup>. This ceremony was a much-loved moment in Israel. The bride and groom wore special wedding clothes and crowns on their heads, and the participants carried candles or candles in their hands along the way and blessed the young<sup>53</sup>; this procession often took place in the evening.

Once they were all in the groom's house, there was a big feast called a *seudat mitzvah*, with food and drink blessed by the master of the house. The wedding traditionally lasted seven days (*Gen* 29:27; *Jdg* 14:12) and there is evidence that this custom was also followed in the Second Temple period. During this feast people rejoiced, sang, recited love poems and some exegetes believe that small plays were even performed in honour of love, following the model of *the Song of Songs*<sup>54</sup>.

In general, in the Eastern world, women covered themselves in daily life with a veil, as we see even in the scene of the encounter between Isaac and Rebecca (*Gen* 26, 65), as a sign of humility and seriousness, in contrast to prostitutes, who often walked around unveiled. Thus, the wedding was the occasion for the wrapping of the bride, called *Badekin*, which the bridegroom himself took care of, so that Jacob's mistake, who married Leah, mistaking her for Rachel, would never be repeated.

As in Mesopotamia, in Israel an important character throughout the entire wedding ritual was the groom's friend (שׁוֹשׁוֹן – *shosh 'vin*). He would talk to the bride before the young people got along with each other, and on the wedding night he would prepare the bridal chamber, where the bride and groom would retire and begin their intimate life, this moment being central to Jewish thought, without which the wedding was not considered completely fulfilled.

Regarding the nuptial chamber, it is called חֻפּוּת (*chuppa<sup>h</sup>*). It is mentioned in the Old Testament by the prophet Joel (2:16), in the Psalms (18:5) and in the story of Tobit (7, 15-17), where we are told that the women prepared Sarah's bed on her wedding day. In this way, the two young people consummated their nuptial union by giving

---

<sup>51</sup> M.L. SATLOW, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity*, p. 171; Victor H. MATTHEWS, *Manners and Customs in the Bible*, Hendrickson, Peabody, 1988, p. 225.

<sup>52</sup> M.L. SATLOW, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity*, p. 170.

<sup>53</sup> Today, a set of seven blessings spoken over young people, known as *sheva brachot* or *birkot nissuin*, has been preserved.

<sup>54</sup> Mircea ELIADE, *Morfologia religiilor*, second edition, Jurnalul literar, București, 1993, pp. 54-56.

themselves completely to each other, thus remaining together forever, and through their children carrying on their names through time.

Finally, with regard to the ancient Jewish wedding we note that it was an important event for the whole community and celebrated as such. After the wedding had been prearranged, either by the young man's family or by the future bride and groom themselves, the young man was to redeem his bride and enter into a marriage contract with his beloved's family, giving her a ring as a token of his love. This was how the betrothal took place, which took place in the girl's house, and after a certain period of time, after the groom had prepared the girl's arrival in his house, he would return after her and claim her. Then the actual wedding, *nissuin*, would take place, and among the important ritual moments of the wedding are the bathing of the bride, the dressing of the bride and groom in beautiful clothes, the wedding procession, the wedding feast, the blessing of the bride and groom and, last but not least, the retreat of the couple into the bridal chamber, henceforth forming a new family in all aspects of life.

### **III. Instead of conclusions: similarities and differences in wedding rituals between Mesopotamians, Egyptians and Jews**

Beyond the fact that marriage has always been, for all the peoples of the world, the way in which young people established a family of their own, celebrating this event through various rituals<sup>55</sup>, examining marriage in the ancient oriental world, especially among the Mesopotamians, Egyptians and Hebrews, we have noticed that certain practices are common to all peoples, while others are unique, in that each people is different in some way. Thus, with regard to marital rituals, in what follows we will briefly present the main similarities and differences between the Mesopotamians, Egyptians and Jews.

#### **a) Similarities**

As far as similarities are concerned, we can say that in all the cases we have analysed, the wedding is part of the so-called *rites of passage*. In concrete terms, the bride-to-be was bought by her future husband, who paid a price for her, and then passed from her father's property to that of her new husband. Depending on the culture, this price had different names, but it was always laid down in the *marriage contract*, which we find present without exception among all peoples, first in verbal form and then necessarily in written form.

In principle, marriage was celebrated in two stages among all peoples. The first was the betrothal, which took place in the bride's home and focused on the groom's promise that he would soon take her home with him, and the second stage was the actual wedding, when the young woman actually moved into her new home. Exceptionally, we

---

<sup>55</sup> Ion CĂLIMAN, *Ceremonialul riturilor de trecere*, Excelsior Art, Timișoara, 2010, p. 94.



also find cases where the man stayed in the bride's home, the groom being adopted by the bride's family, but this was not usual.

Last but not least, with regard to similarities, we have noted that in all the cultures analysed the wedding was accompanied by a feast, and an important moment in the feast was the retreat of the bride and groom to the nuptial room and the consummation of the marriage; this marked the full union of the two young people, opening their relationship to eternity through the birth of offspring to carry on their names.

### **b) Differences**

In terms of differences, the Mesopotamians had the most developed ceremonial in terms of marriage ceremonies, singing love hymns in the presence of the gods and the community, as opposed to the Jews and Egyptians, who did not celebrate weddings in the temple, generally confining themselves to negotiation and betrothal, the wedding contract and the home feast.

While the Jews had a certain religious dimension to the wedding, with God being mentioned in the blessings pronounced by the master of the house over the bride and groom, in Egypt the wedding had exclusively social and commercial values.

Compared to the ancient Egyptians, the Jews have the ritual called *mikvah*, or the bathing of the bride, who is then dressed in special wedding clothes, just like her groom. Also, unusual compared to Egypt, in Israel and Mesopotamia a *wedding procession* was organised as part of the wedding, which took place between the bride's and groom's homes, attended by relatives, friends and acquaintances, and ended with a festive feast of food and drink. The *groom's friend* had an important place in the whole ritual, both in Israel and in Mesopotamia, but was completely absent from the Egyptian tradition.

A unique element in Egypt compared to the other two cultures analysed is the fact that here the marriage contract had to be ratified by *Jati*, the Pharaoh's representative, thus giving the marital agreement a solemn value. Beyond this, however, it seems that the Egyptian wedding was not something spectacular, but rather a natural event that every young man went through in order to establish a home and have a family.

Finally, whether we are talking about similarities or differences, about Egypt, Mesopotamia or Israel, we are left with the idea that marriage must certainly have been an important event in the ancient East, as evidenced by the ritual complexity of the wedding in each of the peoples analysed.

### **Bibliography**

1. \*\*\*, *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2013.
2. ALEXANDRESCO, Dimitrie, *Explicațiunea teoretică și practică a dreptului civil român*, vol. VIII, Part I, Atelierele Grafice Socec&Co., București, 1916.

3. ALLEN, Troy D., *The Ancient Egyptian Family: Kinship and Social Structure*, New York, 2009.
4. BABER, Ray Erwin, *Marriage and Family Life in Ancient Egypt*, în *Social Forces*, vol. 13, no. 3 (1935), pp. 409-414.
5. BARDIS, Panos D., "Marriage and Family Customs in Ancient Egypt: An Interdisciplinary Study: Part II", in *Social Science*, Vol. 42, Nr. 2 (1967), pp. 104-119.
6. CĂLIMAN, Ion, *Ceremonialul riturilor de trecere*, Editura Excelsior Art, Timișoara, 2010.
7. COMISIA BIBLICĂ PONTIFICALĂ, *Poporul evreu și sfințele sale Scripturi în Biblia Creștină*, second edition, translated by Sebastian Lucaciu, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Romano-Catolice de București, București, 2020.
8. DRIMBA, Ovidiu, *Istoria culturii și civilizației*, vol. I, editura Saeculum IO, București, 1997.
9. ELIADE, Mircea, *Morfologia religiilor*, second edition, Jurnalul literar, București, 1993.
10. EZZ ALI, Mona, "Marriage and Divorce in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Iraq (Mesopotamia): A comparative Study", in *International Journal of Heritage, Tourism and Hospitality* Vol. 14, no. 1 (2020), pp. 113-126.
11. FRANDSEN, John, *Incestuous and close-kin marriage in Ancient Egypt and Persia*, Museum Tusulanum Press and CNI Publications, 2009.
12. GAIVAS, Octavian, „Originea obiceiurilor de nuntă”, in *Philologia*, nr. 1-2 (2017), pp. 105-112.
13. GENNEP, Arnold Van, *Riturile de trecere*, Polirom, Iași, 1996.
14. GREENGUS, Samuel, "Old Babylonian Marriage Ceremonies and Rites", in: *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, vol. 20, 2 (1966), pp. 55-72.
15. GREENGUS, Samuel, "The Old Babylonian Marriage Contract", în: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 89, nr. 3 (1969), pp. 505-532.
16. JOSEPH FLAVIUS, *Antichități Iudaice*, vol. 1, translated by Ion Acsan, Hasefer, București, 2000.
17. LINGURARU (căș. Bodai), Ana-Maria, *Femeia în tradiția și cultura biblică*, coord. Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Petre Semen, Facultatea de Teologie Ortodoxă din Iași, Iași, 2019.
18. MALUL, Meir, "Susapinnu: The Mesopotamian Paronym and His Role", in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 32, Nr. 3 (Oct., 1989), pp. 241-278.
19. MENDELSON, Isaac, "The Family in the Ancient Near East", în: *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 11, nr. 2 (1948), pp. 24-40.
20. MIDDLETON, Russell, "Brother-Sister and Father-Daughter Marriage in Ancient Egypt", în *American Sociological Review* Vol. 27, nr. 5 (Oct., 1962), pp. 603-611.
21. NEACȘU (alias GIDRO), Aurelia, *Condițiile de fond pentru încheierea căsătoriei în legislația română*, PhD thesis defended at the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, Faculty of Law, under coord. Prof. Univ. Dr. Teodor Bodoașcă, Sibiu, 2016.
22. NELSON, Lars, "When the Mesopotamian Honeymoon Ends: The Code of Hammurabi's Assumptions About the Roles of Spouses and Problem-Solving Approach to

## *Marriage in the ancient peoples of the Orient*

Regulating Marriage”, in *The John Marshall Law Review*, vol. 46, no. 4 (2013) pp. 1056-1088.

23. PERRY, Matthew J., "State and Law", in: *A Cultural History of Marriage in Antiquity*, vol. 1, ed. Karen Klaiber Hersch, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, New York, 2020, pp. 59-76.

24. RADU, Pr. Dr. Ioan-Lucian, „*Te vei logodi cu mine pe vecie*”. *Metafora căsătoriei lui Dumnezeu cu omul la Profetul Osea*, Doxologia, Iași, 2020.

25. ROBINS, Gay, *Woman in Ancient Egypt*, Harvard University Press, Massachusett, 1993.

26. SATLOW, Michael L., *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, Oxford, 2001.

27. STILL, Bastian, “The Social World of the Babylonian Priest”, în *Culture and History of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 103, Brill, Leiden, 2019, pp. 27-63.

28. VATAMANU, Diac. Dr. Cătălin, „«Un bărbat și-a luat femeie...» (Deut 22, 13). Semnificații teologice ale metaforei femeii ca proprietate”, in *Familia în societatea contemporană*, coord. Pr. Prof. dr. Viorel Sava and Pr. Lect. Dr. Ilie Melniciuc-Puică, Doxologia, Iași, 2011, pp. 475-231.

29. WAERZEGGERS, Caroline, “Changing Marriage Practices in Babylonia from the Late Assyrian to the Persian Period”, in *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History*, no. 2 (2020), pp. 101–131.

### **Online Sources**

1. MARK, Joshua J., “Love, Sex, and Marriage in Ancient Mesopotamia”, 2014, <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/688/love-sex-and-marriage-in-ancient-mesopotamia/>.

2. GARLAND, Ph. D. Robert, “Marriage in Ancient Egypt: Egyptian Family System”, 2020, <https://www.wondriumdaily.com/marriage-in-ancient-egypt-egyptian-family-system/>.

3. SPRINGER, Ilene, “Party Time in Ancient Egypt”, <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/partytime.htm>.



**Abstract:**

**Keywords:**

*social media, Church, visual communication, multimedia, catechesis*

---

<sup>1</sup> Deacon Gheorghe Anghel is an assistant professor in the Department of Journalism and Communication Sciences, Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies - University of Bucharest. Email: gheorghe.anghel@fjsc.ro **Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary**

---

<sup>2</sup>Georges Lemopoulos, "Come, Our Light, and Illumine Our Darkness!: Reflections on Evangelism from an Orthodox Perspective," *International Review of Mission* 87, no. 346 (July 1998), 324.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973), 210.

---

<sup>4</sup> Anastasios Yannoulatos, *Mission in Christ's Way: An Orthodox Understanding of Mission* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Press, 2010), 113.

<sup>5</sup> Ion Bria, *The Liturgy After the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996), 9.

---

<sup>6</sup> Theodore Stylianopoulos, “The Gospel in the Parish: Discovering the Orthodox Evangelical Ethos” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 48, no 1-4 (2003): 183.

---

<sup>7</sup> Tomad Engelsviken, “Three Missiological Perspectives: What Testimony?” *International Review of Missions*; 95 (2006): 332.



---

<sup>8</sup> Tertullian, “Apology” Chapter 39, Paragraph 6 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume III*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 1995)

<sup>9</sup> Such as Gennadius Scholarius 15<sup>th</sup> century response to question on Christianity by Mehmed II.

<sup>10</sup> From the Orthodox Liturgy after the Catechumens are dismissed, before the Creed is recited and the gifts consecrated.

---

<sup>11</sup> Yannoulatos, *Mission*, 149-151.

<sup>12</sup> Yannoulatos, *Mission*, 113.

<sup>13</sup> Bosch, *Transforming*, 208.

---

<sup>14</sup> Bria, *Liturgy*, 9.

<sup>15</sup> Schmemmann, *Church*, 210.

---

<sup>16</sup> Bria, *Liturgy*, 31.





---

<sup>17</sup> Yannoulatos, *Mission*, 32.

<sup>18</sup> Stamoolis, *Mission*, 129.

---

<sup>19</sup> Hopko, *Speaking*, 94-95.

<sup>20</sup> Schmemmann, *Life*, 25.



# Traduire le religieux : La Littérature hagiographique analyse du processus traductologique d'un corpus spécialisé

Iuliana TIMOFTI<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract:

This study focuses on the analysis of the translation of religious discourse. More exactly, it addresses the hagiographic genre and the translation of a group of ten lives of saints, part of a Synaxarion in use at the Orthodox Monastery of Saint-Antoine-le-Grand, France. Among the typical challenges that working with religious discourse implies and that we encountered are the translation of proper names and toponyms, the correct identification of intertextual allusions, and the constant urge of using archaic alternatives for many terms/structures. The study also brought to light certain tendencies that the translator of religious texts can come across when translating into a language-culture where familiarity with this kind of literature is of a high degree, due to the interconnection of its culture with its Orthodox Christian spirituality

**Keywords:** *religious discourse, hagiography, synaxarion, translation analysis, Orthodoxy in France*

## 1. Préliminaires

Dérivé suffixé du substantif *hagiographe*, le terme *hagiographie* est d'origine grecque (*ἅγιος* « saint, sacré » et *γραφή* « ce qui est écrit »). Il indique donc, en premier lieu, les écritures qui traitent, de manière brève ou développée, des vies ou des œuvres de saints reconnus et acceptés en tant que tel par l'Eglise. Il peut également désigner l'étude de la littérature hagiographique et du culte des saints. Dans cette perspective, l'hagiographie est parfois appelée *hagiologie* (du grec *ἅγιος* « saint, sacré » et de *λόγος*, « science »).

---

<sup>1</sup> Școala Doctorală a Facultății de Teologie Ortodoxă, Universitatea „Al. I. Cuza” Iași, ti.iuliana@yahoo.com

Il serait également utile, pour notre démarche, de signaler la distinction entre un texte hagiographique – vie de saint et une biographie, relevant du discours scientifique. Ces deux types de discours peuvent très bien coexister, ne partageant que le sujet. Ce sont la manière d'en traiter et l'objectif qui les différencient. Autrement dit, au contraire d'une biographie, qui se soucie des rigueurs critiques de type historique ou géographique et se veut un document techniquement fiable à ceux qui s'intéressent aux données scientifiques exactes, le récit hagiographique se concentre plus sur la portée morale et spirituelle de la vie d'une personne, en mettant en avant sa sainteté. La vie, en tant que genre hagiographique, privilégie le contenu personnel et l'héritage mystique de celui proposé en tant que model, et s'intéresse moins au cadre spatio-temporel de sa vie. Pour cette raison, ce discours comprendra aussi de la description, du dialogue, parfois des éléments – à première vue – merveilleux, sans pour autant obliger que l'on juge de fictionnel.

Une des formes que prend la littérature hagiographique est *le synaxaire*, recueil de vies de saints. Il fait partie des livres liturgiques, employés jusqu'aujourd'hui dans l'Église Orthodoxe. On en fait la lecture lors du service des Matines ou pendant la Sainte Liturgie, avant de communier aux Saints Mystères, ce qui met en relief non seulement le caractère anamnétique<sup>2</sup> de la littérature hagiographique, mais aussi son caractère formatif.

## 2. Présentation du corpus traduit

Notre analyse portera sur la critique de la traduction des dix vies de saints de la spiritualité chrétienne, sélectionnées d'un synaxaire en usage au Monastère Saint-Antoine-le-Grand, France, fondé et dirigé spirituellement pendant des années par l'Archimandrite Placide Deseille<sup>3</sup> de bienheureuse mémoire (1926-2018). Ce synaxaire représente une version abrégée d'un grand ouvrage hagiographique du Père Macaire de Simonos-Petra<sup>4</sup> et a été publié aux Éditions du Monastère Saint-Antoine-Le-Grand, à

---

<sup>2</sup> La fait de se souvenir chaque année, cycliquement, des ancêtres-model et, en plus, de le faire pendant la célébration du culte, préserve dans la mémoire collective l'identité chrétienne de la communauté ecclésiastique et le caractère unitaire de la foi, tandis que la fonction profondément formatrice transforme un modèle humain périssable en modèle de comportement pérenne et reproductible.

<sup>3</sup> Français de souche, l'Archimandrite Placide Deseille est entré depuis l'adolescence dans l'Abbaye cistercienne de Bellefontaine. Après avoir servi pendant une autre dizaine d'années dans le rite byzantin de la même Église Catholique, il s'est converti à l'Orthodoxie en 1977 au Monastère de Simonos-Petra, au Mont Athos, Grèce. Grand érudit et coordonateur de la Collection Sources Chrétiennes, il est considéré comme un des théologiens orthodoxes les plus importants et repère de l'Orthodoxie française.

<sup>4</sup> Lui aussi Français de souche, le Hieromoine Macaire vit depuis des dizaines d'année au Mont Athos, au Monastère de Simonos-Petra. Intellectuel aux études en Théologie Orthodoxe, il

*Traduire le religieux : La Littérature hagiographique analyse du processus traductologique d'un corpus spécialisé*

Saint-Laurent-en-Royans, en 1996, sous le nom de *Synaxaire du Monastère Saint-Antoine-le-Grand*.

Notre corpus comprend donc dix textes traitant des vies de saints, à savoir celles des *Saint Grégoire le Théologien* (25 janvier), *Saint Parthénios, évêque de Lampsaque* (7 février), *Sainte Marie l'Égyptienne* (1<sup>er</sup> avril), *Sainte Théodora de Thessalonique* (5 avril / 29 août), *Saint Onuphre l'Égyptien* (12 juin), *Saint Prophète Elisée* (14 juin), *Saint Méthode, évêque d'Olympe* (20 juin), *Saint André, évêque de Crète* (4 juillet), *Sainte Olympias la Diaconesse* (25 juillet) et *Saint grand-martyr Pantéléimon* (27 juillet), ordonnées chronologiquement, selon la date de leur fête au long de l'année liturgique. Selon l'époque dans laquelle ils ont vécu, l'ordre change un peu et l'on a : Saint Prophète Elisée (+ vers -800), Saint grand-martyr Pantéléimon (+305), Saint Méthode, évêque d'Olympe (+312), Saint Grégoire le Théologien (+390), Saint Parthénios, évêque de Lampsaque (+ fin du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle), Saint Onuphre l'Égyptien (+ vers 400), Sainte Olympias la Diaconesse (+408), Sainte Marie l'Égyptienne (+522), Saint André, évêque de Crète (+740), Sainte Théodora de Thessalonique (+892).

D'après le contexte dont ils appartiennent, notre groupe compte une figure historique de l'Ancien Testament et neuf autres appartenant à la période inaugurée par le Nouveau Testament, ayant vécu après la mort et la Résurrection de Jésus. Plus de la moitié d'entre eux remonte au IV<sup>e</sup> et au V<sup>e</sup> siècle (6/10), tandis que les autres aux siècles suivants (i. e. VI<sup>e</sup>, VIII<sup>e</sup> et XI<sup>e</sup>), ce qui nous indique des textes portant sur des saints de l'héritage commun à deux grandes Églises chrétiennes, Orthodoxe et Catholique, d'avant leur séparation officielle par la Grande Schisme (1054), et, par conséquent, célébrés par les deux, même si parfois pendant des jours différents<sup>5</sup>.

Du point de vue de la qualité dans laquelle la tradition les a conservés dans l'histoire et la mémoire de l'Église, notre groupe intègre un prophète, deux martyrs, quatre évêques, deux ermites, une diaconesse et une moniale. Cela compterait onze personnes si une d'entre eux (Saint Méthode, évêque d'Olympe) n'était pas et évêque, et martyr en même temps (puisqu'il fut décapité).

Ces textes, tout comme les autres du synaxaire mentionné, varient du point de vue de la longueur : le plus généreux est celui de Sainte Marie l'Égyptienne (874 mots), tandis que le plus court porte sur Saint Parthénios, évêque de Lampsaque (231 mots). Ce

---

est l'auteur, parmi d'autres, des deux ouvrages de référence: *Mystagogie du Grand Carême. Essai de théologie du temps liturgique* (Apostolia 2018) et *Le Synaxaire. Vies des saints de l'Église orthodoxe* (1ère édition : 1987-1996, 6 vol.).

<sup>5</sup> A voir le cas de Sainte Théodora de Thessalonique, fêtée en Occident le 5 avril et en Orient le 29 août. Ce qui représente un fait intéressant est le choix de la communauté monastique de Saint-Antoine-le-Grand de fêter la bienheureuse Théodora de Thessalonique au jour de la tradition catholique (5 avril) et non pas au jour de la tradition orthodoxe (29 août), une très belle manière de adaptation de l'Orthodoxie à la culture française, plus proche – par l'histoire – de l'Église catholique.

fait peut être dû au degré de popularité dont le saint jouit parmi les chrétiens (autrement dit à la familiarisation des ceux-ci avec le saint), ce qui détermine le nombre de ressources bio- et bibliographiques.

L'analyse de la traduction de ces dix vies choisies portera sur trois directions : tout d'abord sur les difficultés et les défis rencontrés au fil des textes, puis sur les tendances ressenties et sur les exigences du texte auxquelles on cède au long du processus de traduction et, finalement, sur la présentation critique de quelques résultats ponctuels que nous jugeons de réussis dans le cadre d'une traduction religieuse de nuance hagiographique.

### 2.1. *Difficultés et défis de la traduction*

Un des premiers défis que le texte d'expression religieuse, surtout celui de genre hagiographique, pose est le traitement du **nom propre**. Chaque saint / sainte est, à l'origine, un personnage historique, citoyen ou membre d'un peuple quelconque, du milieu duquel il reçoit son nom. Caractéristique donc culturelle, ce nom devient au fil de temps, par la sanctification de la vie de son porteur, par son inscription à la communauté des amis célestes de Dieu et par sa reconnaissance en tant que saint par le corps de l'Eglise, universel. Autrement dit, il perd son caractère local et entre dans l'héritage commun de tous les Eglises orthodoxes sœurs. Cela enlève – au cas des textes hagiographiques au moins – l'apparente difficulté de répondre à la question classique : faut-il ou pas traduire les noms propres ? Que l'on les traduise ou pas, cela reste au choix du traducteur et du *skopos* (REISS&VERMEER 2010 : 89-90) de la traduction, mais, en vertu de cette universalité, la pratique diachronique propose de les traduire – garantie d'une identification facile et d'une bonne réception. Il s'agit d'une telle pratique surtout au cas des discours religieux de longue tradition, tel que le roumain, dont l'histoire diffère de celui d'expression française, plus récent. Puisque le plus souvent on privilégie l'uniformité et l'inscription dans la tradition, le public cible roumain des textes religieux s'attend à ce que les noms présentent leur variante roumaine, avec laquelle il a été longtemps habitué. Le public cible français, en revanche, ne serait pas trop étonné à rencontrer des formes gardant leur spécifique orthographique original, puisqu'ils relèvent toujours du nouveau pour lui.

Par conséquent, étant donnée la direction de traduction (du français vers le roumain), nous avons rendu chaque fois la version roumaine consacrée pour les noms de saints : Grégoire (le Théologien) – *Grigorie (Teologul)*; Parthénios (évêque de Lampsaque) – *Partenie (episcopul Lampsacului)*<sup>6</sup>; Onuphre l'Egyptien – *Onufrie*

---

<sup>6</sup> A voir la différence du traitement de ce nom en français et en roumain : en français il garde son spécifique grec (Παρθένιος), en roumain il est naturalisé.

*Traduire le religieux : La Littérature hagiographique analyse du processus traductologique d'un corpus spécialisé*

(*Egipteanul*)<sup>7</sup>, Méthode (évêque d'Olympe) – *Metodie (episcopul Patarelor)*, Olympias (la Diaconesse) – *Olimpiada (diaconița)*, etc.

Dans la même situation se trouvent tous les autres noms propres rencontrés au long des textes, appartenant, le plus souvent, aux empereurs sous le règne desquels se sont passés les événements décrits. Nous les avons traduits chaque fois que l'on avait trouvé leurs homologues roumains, sauf pour un seul, *Philipikkos*, que l'on a gardé tel quel, tout comme dans d'autres textes et études d'histoire en roumain qui, n'ayant pas trouvé de version roumaine pour lui, l'ont consacré de cette manière.

**Les toponymes**, eux-aussi, peuvent poser des problèmes, surtout s'il agit des variantes anciennes, inusitées de nos jours. C'est le cas de deux noms de villes : *Chalcis, en Syrie* et *Brochtoi, sur la côte asiatique de Bosphor*. *Chalcis* reste entouré par incertitude. La vie du saint Méthode du synaxaire du Monastère Saint-Antoine-le-Grand localise le décès de l'évêque en une ville syrienne qui porte de nos jours le nom de Qinnasrin, mais il existe également d'autres versions biographiques (surtout en ligne), qui prend cette ville pour une autre *Chalcis* (*Χαλκίς*, en grec moderne *Χαλκίδα / Chalkida*), de l'île grecque d'Eubée. Notre choix a été de le garder tel qu'elle est identifiée dans le texte d'origine, créditant ainsi sa source primaire : le grand Synaxaire du Père Macaire. *Brochtoi*, de l'autre côté, qui désigne le lieu du monastère dont l'higoumène a recueilli le corps de la bienheureuse Olympias, abandonné aux eaux, apparaît dans une des versions biographiques comme le nom d'un quartier périphérique de Constantinople, mais qui aujourd'hui ne peut plus être localisé. Les traductions roumaines de ce nom varient de *Vrohti* (Viața Sfintei Cuvioasei Olimpiada) à *Brohti* (Sfânta Diaconița Olimpiada), de *Briktoi* (Olimpiada diaconița) à *Brochtoi* (IOAN GURĂ DE AUR 2008 : 112).

Non loin de la problématique des noms se tiennent **les références** et **les allusions**, formes d'intertextualité. Dans les textes hagiographiques on trouve souvent des références aux Ecritures bibliques, sur lesquelles se fondent finalement les conduites des saints, évoqués comme modèles. Ici, de nombreuses références apparaissent dans la vie du prophète Elisée, le seul personnage vétérotestamentaire de notre corpus. Leur rôle est de compléter et sous-tendre le récit, vu que l'Ancien Testament est la source principale de données biographiques pour ce prophète. Les autres textes ne présentent pas de références, mais plutôt des allusions de nature biblique. C'est le cas des vies de Marie l'Egyptienne et d'André, évêque de Crète. Dans la première biographie, l'intertextualité est signalée par l'écriture en italique d'une structure empruntée au livre d'Ézéchiel, chapitre 33, verset 11 : « (...) Dieu, qui ne désire rien de plus que le pécheur *revienne à Lui et vive* ». Dans la deuxième, on rencontre deux types d'allusions : une marquée

---

<sup>7</sup> Ici les choses sont différentes : même en français le nom subit traduction, ce qui atteste le caractère malléable de la langue et l'ouverture de la culture française aux nouveautés de la spiritualité orthodoxe.

comme la précédente (« S'étant fait *tout à tous* à l'imitation du Christ », allusion à la première épître aux Corinthiens, chapitre 9, verset 22) et une deuxième aucunement signalée, donc plus difficile à repérer : « Mais, la lampe ne pouvant restée cachée sous le boisseau, il fut ordonné diacre (...) ».

Ce sont ces aspects qui font la beauté et le spécifique du discours religieux qui, non pas respectés, agrandissent le risque d'une mauvaise réception auprès du public cible. Autrement dit, le traducteur n'a pas le droit de rendre littéralement des fragments / structures qui existent déjà dans des versions consacrées du point de vue confessionnel et qu'il est censé connaître. Il doit juste les reproduire, qu'il s'agisse de la Bible ou des ouvrages des Pères de l'Eglise (DUMAS 2014 : 18). C'est aussi le cas de la deuxième allusion de la vie de saint André : une toute autre traduction qui n'employait les termes *făclie, a pune, obroc*<sup>8</sup> annulerait sa mission initiale : celle de suggérer et déclencher dans l'esprit des lecteurs des connaissances préalables (DUMAS 2014 : 18). Dans notre cas il s'agit de l'idée qu'il n'est pas normal qu'un talent ou don soit gaspillé par manque d'emploi, présente dans trois des quatre Evangiles néotestamentaires : à Mathieu (5, 15), à Marc (4, 21) et à Luc (11, 33).

A l'analyse se prête aussi **la méthodologie des références**. Lorsqu'on cite un extrait de la Bible, la référence est habituellement incluse entre parenthèses à la fin de la citation, qu'il s'agisse d'une citation courte ou d'une citation longue. Elle commence toujours par l'abréviation du nom du livre biblique cité, suivi du chapitre et des versets, séparés par une virgule et cela est la forme dans laquelle on les voit faites dans la vie du prophète Elisée et aussi la manière dont elles se font normalement en roumain aussi. Toutefois, vu que le genre de discours religieux auquel on a affaire est le synaxaire, dont le public cible se veut le plus varié et le plus large possible, et, donc, général, nous avons opté pour rendre les noms de livres bibliques en entière. Dans une perspective pédagogique aussi, au lieu de *3 R 19, 21* on a choisi de rendre la version longue, *3 Regi 19, 21*, pour que le lecteur aille et trouve sans trop d'ennui le fragment évoqué. En faveur de cette décision vient aussi la plus grande familiarité traditionnelle et culturelle du public orthodoxe roumain avec les livres du Nouveau Testament qu'avec ceux de l'Ancien Testament, en vertu du fondement néotestamentaire de la foi chrétienne.

Dans la traduction de ces dix vies de saints on s'est heurté aussi à **des pertes de nuance**. Voyons, en guise d'exemple, comment la décision de saint Onuphre, de partir et vivre en solitude, est exposé dans le texte : « Comme il entendait sans cesse vanter les anachorètes, émules du prophète Élie et de saint Jean Baptiste, il décida de quitter le monastère *pour s'enfoncer dans le désert*. » En essayant de traduire cette dernière expression, nous avons eu de mal à rendre en roumain l'idée de distance qu'Onuphre a parcouru pour trouver un bon lieu de combat, loin des yeux du monde, tout comme celle

---

<sup>8</sup> „Nici nu aprind făclie și o pun sub obroc, ci în sfeșnic, și luminează tuturor celor din casă.” (Mathieu 5, 15).

d'irrévocabilité de sa décision. Cependant, sachant que perdre quelque part suppose parfois gagner ailleurs, nous avons pu trouver une solution mise en miroir antithétique avec une structure précédente : « Auzind mereu grăindu-se laude despre pustnici ca următori ai profetului Ilie și ai Sfântului Ioan Botezătorul, a hotărât să părăsească mănăstirea și, ieșind, să intre în pustie ». Notre choix pour l'ajout d'un gérondif nous inscrit dans le spécifique du discours religieux où, surtout dans les textes bibliques, le prédicat est accompagné d'un gérondif explicatif<sup>9</sup>.

Un autre cas où nous nous sommes confrontés à une perte de nuance sémantique est la structure « dangereux rival » de « Mais les prêtres païens pressaient l'empereur de mettre à mort ce dangereux rival » (vie de saint Pantéléimon). La traduction proposée – « potrivnicul lor » - échappe à l'idée de *dangereux*. Cependant, toute chose qui s'oppose à une autre représente un péril potentiel qui trouble l'équilibre primordial de la situation. En plus, bien que n'exprimant de manière explicite *le dangereux*, le terme *potrivnic* nous semble tout à fait approprié dans un texte hagiographique vu sa récurrence dans le roumain religieux.

Toujours dans la catégorie des défis siègent **les correspondances terminologiques**. Principale caractéristique qui individualise le discours religieux en français, il est de même importance en roumain. Les catégories de termes que nous avons rencontrés au long de la traduction relèvent principalement du liturgique, du dogmatique, d'historique et du spirituel. Par exemple, dans une sous-catégorie du liturgique entre les termes suivants, avec leur équivalences : *ordonner* – *a hirotoni* (conférer une fonction sacerdotale par imposition des mains), parfois en paire synonymique avec le verbe *consacrer* (utilisé d'habitude pour dénommer la sanctification d'une église ou des Saints Dons) (DUMAS 2010 : 5) – à voir la vie de saint Parthénios ; *Grand Carême* – *Postul Mare*, *Grand Jeudi* – *Joia mare*, sainte Communion / Eucharistie – *Sfânta Împărtășanie* / Euharistie, *communier* – *a se împărtăși* (vie de sainte Marie l'Égyptienne) ou bien *grandes complies* – *denii*, *Grand Canon* – *Canonul Mare (al Sfântului Andrei Criteanul)*, *tropaire* – *tropar*, *mélode* – *melod* (vie de Saint André, archevêque de Crète).

Bien que faisant partie d'un synaxaire qui se veut non pas un genre simpliste, mais accessible à un public le plus large possible, notre corpus comprend aussi des termes et phrases de théologie dogmatique, mis en parallèle avec des termes philosophiques : *amour des réalités intelligibles* – *iubire contemplativă* versus *amour des corps* – *iubire*

---

<sup>9</sup> Voyons, en guise d'exemple, deux structures : « Și ieșind Iisus din templu, S-a dus și s-au apropiat de el ucenicii Lui, ca să-I arate clădirile templului. » (Mathieu 24, 1) ou « Și plecând, vorbeau unii cu alții zicând: Omul acesta n-a făcut nimic vrednic de moarte sau de lanțuri. » (Actes 26, 31), etc.

*trupească*<sup>10</sup> (vie de saint Méthode, évêque d'Olympe); (*définition*) *monothélite* – *monotelită*, *les deux volontés de Christ* – *cele două voințe ale lui Hristos*, *le culte des saintes Images* – *cultul sfințelor icoane* (vie de Saint André, archevêque de Crète), *arianisme* – *arianism*, *Concile Œcuménique* – *Sinod Ecumenic* (vie de saint Grégoire le Théologien), etc.

Sous le domaine général de la spiritualité se rassemblent les termes indiquant les dons du Saint Esprit d'après lesquels se différencient les saints (par exemple : *anargyre* – *doctor fără de arginți*, *myroblite* – *izvorător (-oare) de mir*, *prophète* – *profet* dans les vie de saint Pantéléimon, de sainte Théodora de Thessalonique et du prophète Elisée), d'autres utilisés toujours pour délimiter les catégories des saints, comme *vénérable* – *cuvios (-oasă)*, *martyr* – *mucenic*, *hiéromartyr* – *sfințit mucenic*, *bienheureuse* – *fericită*; les termes renvoyant à la vie monastique ou érémitique (*cellule* – *chilie*, *higoumène* – *stareț*, *solitaire* – *pustnic*, *ermite* / *anachorète* – *sihastru* dans les vie de sainte Théodora et saint Onuphre l'Egyptien), les dénominations cléricales telles que *évêque*, *archevêque*, *diacre* ou *diaconesse* ou bien d'autres termes d'autres diverses sous-catégories : *homélie* – *omilie*, *ange gardien* – *înger păzitor*, etc.

## 2.2. Exigences ponctuelles du hagiographique et tendances traductologiques

Dans ce qui suit nous allons individualiser d'autres exigences du discours religieux auxquelles nous nous sommes conformés au cours du traitement traductologique de ces dix vies. Nous allons également faire le résumé des tendances (plus ou moins subjectives) ressenties face à une traduction de texte hagiographique.

Les *exigences spécifiques* au discours religieux peuvent aussi être rangées sous le nom de *contraintes de figement culturel* (DUMAS 2014 : 20). Donc, elles ne tiennent pas seulement du discours religieux, mais d'un type particulier de discours religieux, en fonction de la culture dans laquelle il se déploie, dans notre cas le roumain.

Ainsi, parmi les exigences spécifiques du roumain religieux se trouve l'emploi d'un **vocabulaire** « légèrement **archaïque**, utilisé de manière traditionnelle dans les écrits religieux orthodoxes » (DUMAS 2014 : 20). Cela nous oblige nous aussi, en conséquence, de privilégier les termes patinés. Voyons, en guise d'exemple, quelques-unes des nos propositions : *victoire définitive de l'Orthodoxie* – *izbânda pentru totdeauna a Ortodoxiei* au lieu de *victorie* (vie de saint Grégoire le Théologien); *mariage* – *însoțire* au lieu de *căsătorie* (vie de sainte Olympias la Diaconesse). Un autre exemple nous offre la vie de sainte Marie l'Egyptienne. Au moment de sa prière vers la Mère de Dieu, pour qu'elle puisse entrer dans l'Eglise du Tombeau de Christ, Marie lui

---

<sup>10</sup> D'autres paires possibles : *inteligibilă/ sensibilă*, de *cele nevăzute/ de cele văzute*, de *cele nepieritoare/ de cele pieritoare*, *contemplativă/ pasională*, de *realitățile inteligibile/ de corpuri* (n.n.).



dit : « je Te **promets** de renoncer au monde et aux plaisirs, et de suivre le chemin de salut ». A la place du quotidien *promit* nous avons opté pour *făgăduiesc*, qui contribue de manière plus appropriée à l'atmosphère intime et délicate, quoique tendue, de la prière. Il en est de même pour le début de du texte sur le martyr Pantéléimon, qui décrit sa formation intellectuelle : « Il fit des *études de médecine* (...) ». La structure avec laquelle nous avons équivalu ces *études* est, en fait, très récurrente dans les textes hagiographique : « *A învățat meșteșugul doctoricesc* (...) », et ne pas l'employer aurait en vérité été une occasion perdue de se raccorder au spécifique du discours religieux roumain.

Une autre exigence propre au discours roumain à laquelle nous avons cédé ont été les explicitations sans lesquelles la variante roumaine aurait paru étrange ou, au moins, un peu ambiguë. Voyons la vie de sainte Olympias la Diaconesse. On nous dit qu'elle était d'une « famille de la haute aristocratie ». Traduite littéralement (ou presque), cette expression n'aurait plus fait partie du paysage hagiographique roumain ; c'est pour cela que l'on a opté pour « famille înstărită și nobilă », qui récupère de manière satisfaisante, même si augmentée au niveau quantitative, le sens pointu par le texte d'origine. Il en est de même pour la phrase de la vie de saint André, archevêque de Crète, où on lit : « En 712, saint André, sous la pression des autorités et affaibli par la maladie, souscrivit à la définition monothélite du synode hérétique, réuni par l'hérétique Phillipikos ». Sans modifier rien d'essentiel, on a juste ajouté le mot *împăratul* afin que le public puisse comprendre de quel type de personnage il est affaire dans ce fragment : « În 712, sub presiunea autorităților și slăbit de boală, Sfântul Andrei subscris definiției monotelite a sinodului eretic, convocat de ereticul *împărat* Phillipikos ».

Toujours dans la catégorie des explicitations entrent également les ajouts lexicaux qui parachèvent des structures supposées être dans l'horizon d'attente des lecteurs roumains. La vie de saint Pantéléimon présente les plus nombreux exemples. Voyons-en juste un : « Quelque temps plus tard, on amena chez le sénateur un aveugle qui supplia Pantéléimon de le guérir, car il avait dilapidé tous ses biens auprès des autres médecins » où la structure « il avait dilapidé tous ses biens » devient « își cheltuiuse **fără folos** toată averea ». On a ajouté *fără folos* pour deux raisons : tout d'abord pour la nuance de « gaspillage » qui s'en dégage, puis parce que l'on a ici affaire également à une allusion au fragment évangélique de *la femme hémorragique* qui, ayant « beaucoup souffert du fait de nombreux médecins » et « dépensé tout son avoir **sans aucun profit**, mais allait plutôt de mal en pis » (Marc 5, 26), se fait guérir par Jésus. Tout comme elle obtient sa guérison ne Lui touchant que le bord de son vêtement, aussi simplement le reçoit cet aveugle de la part de Pantéléimon.

Allons maintenant vers les tendances dont on a fait preuve pendant le traitement traductologique de notre corpus. Si l'on vient d'analyser les explicitations, notons aussi une autre catégorie d'ajouts, cette-fois plutôt subjectifs, ayant pour but de fournir certaines informations supposées comme utiles et bienvenues pour le lecteur. Prenons

pour exemple l'opération effectuée sur le texte de la vie de saint Grégoire le Théologien, où, après avoir mentionné les noms de ses parents, on a rajouté leur date de fête, s'agissant en fait de deux autres saints de l'Eglise Orthodoxe : saint Grégoire l'Ancien, fête le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier, et sainte Nona, fêtée le 5 août.

Une autre tendance qui s'était manifestée a été celle de **reprendre certaines structures**, ou mots, ou noms propres, afin de nous assurer de la clarté du message. A la fin de la vie de Marie l'Égyptienne nous avons repris et réécrit la date à laquelle s'y fait référence, pour que le lecteur ou l'auditeur ne perde pas la cohérence du paragraphe qui est en train de commencer par un effort supplémentaire. Ainsi, la phrase « En plus de la fête de ce jour, les saints Pères ont décidé de commémorer solennellement sainte Marie l'Égyptienne le cinquième dimanche du Grand Carême... » devient « În afară de această dată (**1 aprilie**), Sfinții Părinți ai Bisericii au hotărât să o prăznuiască pe Sfânta Maria Egipteanca și în a cincea duminică din Postul Mare... ».

Dans d'autres endroits, nous avons senti le besoin de moduler la phrase, de la réorganiser ou même la reformuler. Et on l'a fait soit pour le même amour de la clarté, soit parce que les canons discursifs du roumain le demandaient. Ne nous arrêtons que sur un exemple : dans la vie de la bienheureuse Olympias, on rencontre une phrase assez étrange, si on suit sa logique : « Vêtu de vêtements sans apprêt, le corps allégé par les veilles et les prières, le cœur apaisé et l'esprit étranger à toute curiosité mondaine, sa charité s'étendait sur tous, dignes et indignes ». On a l'impression de ne lui pas trouver le sujet grammatical. C'est donc pour cela que nous avons procédé à sa réorganisation : « Cu haine modestă și trup subțiat de privegheri și rugăciuni, cu inimă liniștită și minte străină de orice lucru lumesc, Olimpiada împărțea tuturor milostenie, și celor vrednici, și celor nevrednici », faisant du sujet logique (i.e. Olympias) le sujet grammatical aussi.

Pour des mêmes raisons on a procédé aussi à des transformations de classe morphologique, faisant ainsi usage du procédé de la transposition. Par exemple, à la fin de la vie de saint Méthode, en parlant sur la mort de l'évêque, mise d'une certaine manière en opposition avec son mode de vie, le texte s'achève de cette manière : « **Après avoir beaucoup lutté** pour la vérité, saint Méthode fut décapité à Chalchis, en Syrie (...) ». Puisqu'une traduction littérale n'est pas possible et qu'en roumain la récurrence de l'adverbe quantitatif *beaucoup* (*mult*) à côté du verbe *lutter* (*a lupta*) n'est pas si élevée, nous avons reformulé cette dernière phrase en changeant l'infinitif passé avec un nom : « **După o neobosită și îndelungată luptă** pentru apărarea adevărului, Sfântul Metodiul a mucenicit prin tăierea capului la Halchis , în Siria (...) », qui récupère mieux l'idée de l'effort de longue durée ponctuellement y comprise.

### 2.3. Solutions heureuses

Rendant compte des procédés les plus diverses, les exemples que nous allons analyser dans cette partie de notre étude se distinguent par le fait d'être des structures/situations représentatives pour le discours religieux.

Dans **la vie de sainte Théodora de Thessalonique** prédomine le paysage monacal et son répertoire lexical correspondent. On aura, en conséquence, des structures telles : « lui montra une obéissance parfaite », rendue en roumain par « i se supuse întru ascultare desăvârșită », ou « les deux moniales observèrent rigoureusement l'ordre de ne pas se parler » - « cele două monahii s-au supus cu activie ascultării de a nu-și adresa niciun cuvânt », ou bien, au moment de la description de l'apparence de la bienheureuse Théodora juste après son repos, « son visage ridé », traduit par « chipul ei brăzdat de riduri ».

**La vie de saint Onuphre l'Egyptien** privilégie, elle aussi, le moment où l'âme de l'homme rejoint finalement son Epoux tellement désiré – le Christ : « Puis la voix du Christ se fit entendre au milieu d'un concert angélique, *invitant l'âme de son serviteur à gagner la béatitude* » devient en roumain « Apoi glasul lui Hristos, împreună cu un cor de îngeri, s-a făcut auzit, *chemând întru bunățțile veșnice pe sluga Sa* ». Il s'agit ici d'une traduction par équivalence résultant en une expression roumaine consacrée pour nommer – de manière descriptive – la béatitude dans laquelle l'âme fidèle au Christ entre à la fin de son séjour terrestre, comme promis.

**Du prophète Elisée** se dit que, « *trionphant de son attachement à la terre, prit une paire de bœufs et l'immola* ». Une des solutions naturelles, s'inscrivant dans le répertoire lexical de la lutte contre le mal et toutes ses formes, est l'emploi du verbe *a birui*, suivi d'un autre équivalent naturel – *alipirea*, qui souligne de manière très intense l'abandon à une passion. Secondé par le substantif *inima*, qui est le centre existentiel de l'homme, ce nom parachève la phrase roumaine par laquelle on traduit l'originel français : « *Biruind alipirea inimii sale de cele lumești, Elisei a luat o pereche de boi* ».

Un premier exemple d'une traduction réussite de **la vie de saint Méthode** vise une locution prépositionnelle, rendu en roumain par une seule préposition, très employé dans le discours religieux (mais philosophique aussi : NOICA 1998 : 218-221) en tant que synonyme soit de *pentru*, soit de *în*, et préférée pour sa plus grande charge sémantique et sa capacité de connoter. Ainsi, « un grand zèle à l'égard de la vérité évangélique » devient « o mare râvnă *întru* apărarea adevărului Evangheliei ». La biographie spirituelle de l'évêque Méthode continue dans la même note – dogmatique et philosophique – et nous met face à face avec deux notions exploitées avant par les penseurs grecs, reprises et enrichies après par les Pères de l'Eglise, y compris Méthode. Donc, « prétendait l'élever de *l'amour des corps à l'amour des réalités intelligibles* » trouve sa correspondance dans « *pretindea că acesta poate fi ridicat de la nivelul iubirii trupești la cel al iubirii contemplative* ».

Sur l'union mystérieuse de l'âme humain avec son Créateur on parle dans des termes maximales, c'est pour cela que l'on a choisi de traduire l'adverbe *véritablement* par une variante roumaine qui jouisse de concrétude et de persuasion, justement par l'infirmité de son contraire : *nemincinos*. Ainsi, « un mariage spirituel qui accomplit *véritablement* ce Grand Mystère de l'union de l'âme avec son Epoux » se transforme en

« o nuntă duhovnicească care împlinește *nemincinos* această Mare Taină a unirii sufletului cu Mirele Ceresc ». Et cette âme ne saurait se montrer plus digne d'un tel Epoux si elle ne tenait le cœur « *tout tendu* vers le Seigneur », c'est-à-dire « *pe deplin tinzând* spre Domnul » (changement par transposition).

### 3. Conclusions

A la fin de l'analyse critique de la traduction de ce corpus religieux, qui relève du discours hagiographique, on peut tout d'abord conclure que, pour traduire du religieux, indépendamment de la langue-culture source et de la langue-culture cible, il faut connaître et respecter son spécificité, tout en maîtrisant ses particularités.

Ensuite, les textes hagiographiques portent tous, en général, sur la même histoire, mais sous diverses formes que chaque protagoniste leurs confère. Il s'agit donc toujours de la quête personnelle de l'homme pour la vérité, pour une vie authentique, en dépendance avec sa relation avec Dieu. Du point de vue théologique, on y parle d'un éternel essai et d'un effort perpétue d'union avec Dieu, d'après le modèle enseigné et vécu par Jésus-Christ, Dieu et homme en même temps. En vertu de cette réalité et aussi de l'appartenance de ces dix textes au même recueil, nous nous sommes aussi concentrés à ne pas traduire de manière autonome chaque vie, mais, en respectant sa logique particulière et son *épos*, à l'intégrer dans un ensemble, soit-il le *micros*, i.e. la petite collection que forme notre corpus, soit-il le *macros*, i.e. le synaxaire d'origine, comptant plus de 1000 récits biographiques. Simultanément, nous avons eu en vue aussi de les inscrire dans un plus grand corpus, représenté par tous les formes de discours religieux en roumain. A titre d'exemple, nous avons insisté sur un lexique légèrement archaïque, que privilégie d'emblée le discours religieux d'expression roumaine ; les inversions et même les répétitions à titre éclaircissant n'ont pas été oubliées ; la terminologie a été respectée et utilisée de la même manière au cours de dix textes, si possible, sans varier de nuance ou de forme synonymique.

Puisqu'on a eu à travailler une traduction du français vers le roumain, et non pas inversement, le traitement des noms ne nous a pas posé presque aucun problème. Aisément identifiables, en vertu d'une plus longue tradition, respectivement d'une plus large reconnaissance auprès du public familiarisé depuis des siècles avec la spiritualité orthodoxe, les variantes françaises ont immédiatement trouvé leurs équivalents roumains au cas de saints. Les toponymes, eux aussi, dans leur majorité, ont attiré naturellement leurs correspondants. Un tout petit ennui nous a provoqué deux noms d'empereurs et deux toponymes, un peu plus difficile à identifier, traité de manière différente, selon d'autres variantes synoptiques des vies disponibles à consulter.

L'intertextualité a représenté, pour nous aussi, un défi sous deux formes : soit des références explicitées, soit de allusions. C'est pour une telle particularité, s'inscrivant dans le concept de *figement culturel* (DUMAS 2014 : 17), que le traducteur doit être

préparé lors de l'activité traduisante en matière du religieux, afin de jouir d'une bonne réception auprès du public cible.

Un dernier grand enjeu peut être localisé au niveau de la concrétude historique que peuvent – de principe – réclamer les récits biographiques. Mais les vies de saints, ne serait-ce que pour leurs protagonistes-mêmes – ne se soumettent pas au critère de l'exactitude savante, puisque le hagiographique se propose une finalité spirituelle plutôt que scientifique et critique. Il a pour but d'entretenir, transmettre en forme actualisée (dans le cadre de l'Église) une information spirituelle à fonction mystagogique : d'initier l'homme au mystère de la vie en Christ d'après maints et divers exemples personnels.

En ce qui nous concerne, en tant que traducteur d'un corpus de textes religieux et hagiographiques, on a remarqué une tendance générale et constante à approcher le processus traductologique de manière plutôt cibliste, se souciant plus de la bonne réception du texte par ses lecteurs ou auditeurs que de garder jusqu'au bout le caractère plutôt crypté du texte d'origine. En conséquence, on a ressenti le besoin d'explicitier certaines choses estimées à ne pas être bien connues ou compréhensibles par le public-cible, comme, par exemple, des dates de fêtes de certains saints mentionnés au second plan du récit ou des noms entourés d'aucune autre explication. Vu l'impossibilité d'un appareil paratextuel pour un tel type de texte (qui inclurait des notes de bas de page ou des glossaires terminologiques ou onomastiques finales), nous avons choisis d'ajouter ponctuellement des explications ou précisions supplémentaires au cours du texte.

Au moment de relecture et d'autocritique des solutions qu'il se propose au cours de la traduction, le traducteur « lit également pour les autres (...) qui lui sont contemporains, qui se trouvent ancrés dans le même espace géographico-historique et qui partagent, socialement, la même culture » (DUMAS 2014 : 97). Nous nous identifions pleinement cette perspective, nous avons aussi traduit gardant dans l'esprit le personnage collectif des jeunes – moins ou plus âgés que nous, soit dans leur statut d'élèves, soit d'amis de même âge – en s'efforçant de rendre en roumain un produit qui puisse leur plaire et être accessible, à la fois, et qui porte fruit dans leur univers spirituel et intellectuel – vu notre expérience et engagement dans des activités de développement culturel et spirituel des jeunes dès leurs premières années d'études jusqu'à présent.

Il est donc fondamental que le traducteur religieux prenne conscience de l'acte de traduire en soi et de la responsabilité des actions et décisions prises, puisqu'il agit à la fois sur l'esprit et sur l'âme du lecteur. Par la tâche à laquelle il s'engage, le traducteur devient « médiateur entre deux espaces culturels (et confessionnels)... dans un domaine des plus complexes, celui de la spiritualité » (DUMAS 2014 : 124).

## **BIBLIOGRAFIE**

\*\*\*, *Biblia*, publiée avec la bénédiction de Sa Béatitude Daniel, Patriarche de l'Église Orthodoxe Roumaine, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2015

Sfântul Ioan Gură de Aur, *Scrisori din exil. Despre deprimare, suferință și providență. Către Olimpiada și cei rămași credincioși*, volum îngrijit de Ioan I. Ică jr., Sibiu, Deisis, 2008

Dumas, Felicia, *Dicționar bilingv de termeni religioși ortodocși : Francez- Român*, Iași, Doxologia, 2010

Dumas, Felicia, *Le religieux : aspects traductologiques*, Craiova, Universitaria, 2014

Humboldt, Wilhelm, *Sur le caractère national des langues et autres écrits sur le langage*, Paris, Points Seuil, 2000 [1828 I<sup>ere</sup> édition], traduction française et édition bilingue

Noica, Constantin, *Devenirea întru ființă. Scrisori despre logica lui Hermes*, București Humanitas, 1998

Reiss, Katharina, Vermeer, Hans J., *Towards a General Theory of Translational Action: Skopos Theory Explained*, Translated from the German by Christiane Nord English reviewed by Marina Dudenhöfer, London&New York, Routledge, 2014

Vinay, Jean-Paul, Darbelnet, Jean, *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*, Paris, Didier, 1958

« Viața Sfintei Cuvioase Olimpiada », Doxologia, <http://www.doxologia.ro/viata-sfant/viata-sfintei-cuvioase-olimpiada>, consulté le 31 mai 2022

« Sfânta Diaconiță Olimpiada », Mărturie Athonită/ Chilia Buna Vestire, <https://marturieathonita.ro/sfanta-diaconita-olimpiada/>, consulté le 31 mai 2022

« Olimpiada diaconița », Orthodox Wiki, [https://ro.orthodoxwiki.org/Olimpiada\\_diaconi%C8%9Ba](https://ro.orthodoxwiki.org/Olimpiada_diaconi%C8%9Ba), consulté le 31 mai 2022

# PATRISTICA

## PATRISTICS

### Omiliile pascale LXXIX și LXXXI ale Sfântului Petru Chrysologul

Asist. Dr. Dragoș Boicu<sup>1</sup>

#### **Abstract:**

Among the approximately 180 homilies of St. Peter Chrysologus, a group of 12 sermons [LXXIII-LXXXIV] is dedicated to the Lord's Resurrection, representing one of the most important collections on this subject of a Christian author of the "golden age" of patristic literature. From these 12 Pascal homilies we render in Romanian translation the sermons based on Luke's Gospel, chapter 24 (LXXIX and LXXXI).

#### **Keywords:**

Pascal homily, Peter Chrysologus, Ravenna, Latin liturgical tradition, Christ's Resurrection, Luke 24

#### I

Cu alt prilej<sup>2</sup> menționam că, între cele circa 180 de omilii ale Sfântului Petru Chrysologul (†450), există un grupaj de 12 predici [LXXIII-LXXXIV] dedicat praznicului Învierii, și care reprezintă una dintre cele mai importante colecții pe această temă a unui autor creștin din „epoca de aur” a literaturii patristice.

Dacă am încerca să stabilim o relație între aceste 12 piese omiletice și cele 11 pericope ale Învierii lecturate până astăzi la Utrenia Duminicilor nu vom reuși întrucât

---

<sup>1</sup> Dragoș Boicu, Asistent la Facultatea de Teologie „Andrei Șaguna” din cadrul Universității „Lucian Blaga” din Sibiu. E-mail: dragos.boicu@ulbsibiu.ro.

<sup>2</sup> Dragoș Boicu, „Omiliile pascale LXXIII, LXXIV, LXXV, LXXVI, LXXVII, LXXX ale Sfântului Petru Chrysologul”, în *RT*, nr. 2/2020, p. 184-205, idem „Omiliile pascale LXXXII și LXXXIII ale Sfântului Petru Chrysologul”, în *RT*, nr. 2/2021, p. 140-149.

șase dintre cuvântările pascale (LXXIII, LXXIV, LXXV, LXXVI, LXXVII, LXXX) sunt construite în jurul capitolului 28 al Evangheliei de la Matei. De asemenea, am observat din împărțirea lecturilor că episcopul Raveniei are un plan destul de sistematic de abordare omiletică a Evangheliilor Învierii, dar și că o parte din tâlcuirile sale la aceste pericope pascale s-au pierdut.

În cele ce urmează ne vom concentra asupra omiliilor în care este tâlcuit capitolul 24 din Evanghelia după Luca. În mod clar există o continuitate între cele două piese păstrate există o relație de succesiune fiind rostite de Sfântul Petru Chrysologul la rând în câteva zile sau câteva duminici consecutive. Trebuie evidențiat, din nou, faptul că textele episcopului de Ravenna sunt adaptate capacității creștinilor de a se concentra sau de a urmări întreaga cuvântare și, uneori este foarte posibil ca tâlcuirile să se încheie destul abrupt, anunțând continuarea temei la o dată ulterioară.

Ca și în cazul omiliilor pascale la Matei sau Marcu, Sfântul Petru își propune de la bun început abordarea în serii consecutive a capitolelor dedicate Învierii, iar dovezile interne oferite de exegezele la pericopele lucanice indică existența a cel puțin trei segmente de-a lungul cărora este tâlcuit ultimul capitol al acestei Evanghelii. Dar în colecțiile care păstrează opera omiletică a Sfântului Petru Chrysologul mai găsim doar două astfel de piese:

Sermo LXXIX	Lc 24, 1-13
Sermo LXXXI	Lc 24, 36-41

Amintisem și cu alt prilej că prima tâlcuire lucanică din ciclul pascal (LXXIX, §1) indică faptul că în Săptămâna Luminată episcopul Raveniei parcurgea împreună cu comunitatea toate textele pascale în ordine: mai întâi pericopele despre Înviere de la Matei, apoi de la Marcu și apoi Luca, încheind cel mai probabil cu Ioan<sup>3</sup>.

Dacă urmărim cele 2 piese păstrate care tâlcuiesc pericopele evanghelice de la Luca (LXXIX, LXXXI), putem sesiza câteva direcții exegetice pe care episcopul Raveniei le explorează în cuvântările sale.

### *Sermo LXXIX*

Sucesiunea de pericope evanghelice lecturate de-a lungul Săptămânii Luminată are menirea de a aprofunda semnificațiile evenimentului, oferind posibilitatea de a înțelege că învierea tuturor oamenilor se va face analog [in formam] Învierii Mântuitorului (§1). După ce subliniază unicitatea zilei Învierii, Sfântul Petru insistă

---

<sup>3</sup> Franco Sottocornola, *L'anno liturgico nei sermoni di Pietro Crisologo: ricerca storico-critica sulla liturgia d Ravenna antica*, Centro studi e ricerche sulla antica provincia ecclesiastica ravennate, 1973, p. 87



## *Omiliile pascale LXXIX și LXXXI ale Sfântului Petru Chrysologul*

asupra curajului dovedit de femeile mironosițe, care sunt înzestrate prin natura lor cu o sensibilitate mult mai mare, o dispoziție sufletească ce a făcut-o pe Eva mai vulnerabilă în fața tentației, dar care acum devine atitudinea adecvată a misiunii ce aduce vestirea credinței ca „să compenseze ceea ce s-a pierdut prin ascultarea înșelăciunii” (§2). Nu este deloc întâmplător că mironosițele sunt primii martori ai Învierii, episcopul invocând o „ordine mistică”, indicând o creștere în intensitatea misiunii și a mărturisirii lui Hristos, apostolii urmând să „îi aducă lui Hristos victoria și triumful, biruindu-l pe diavol și înfrângându-i pe vrăjmași” (§3). Ezitarea apostolilor de a crede vestirii aduse de mironosițe nu trebuie înțeleasă ca un semn de slăbiciune, ci ca o dovadă a prudenței și a înțelepciunii, care nu se înflăcărează fără discernământ (§4). Mai mult decât atât, șovăirea și frica cu care luptă ucenicii nu ar trebui să ne mire dacă am avea în vedere chinul spiritual de a concilia miracolele săvârșite cu suferința îndurată de Hristos, ci ar trebui să fim preocupați de a ajunge noi înșine la cunoașterea Sa (§5). Omilia se încheie cu promisiunea de continua în următoarea predică (proximo sermone) tâlcuirea acestui capitol al Evangheliei de la Luca (§6).

### *Sermo LXXXI*

Salutarea Mântuitorului „*Pace vouă!*” nu este deloc una convențională, dat fiind conflictul general în care se zbate lumea, lipsită de liniște și armonie (§1), dar și zbuciumul lăuntric cu care se confruntă ucenicii, ale căror suflete sunt zdrobite de felurite gânduri, fiind prinși între credință și îndoială, între speranță și deznădejde (§2). Prin urmare salutarea însoțită de încredințarea „Eu sunt” au menirea de a le întări sufletele și de a le alunga orice teamă (§3). Cu toate acestea, apostolii rămân pe mai departe înfricoșați, temându-se că au în față o nălucă, sau că visează, iar miracolul intrării prin ușile încuiate sporește și mai mult frământările gândurilor deși de față nu era aparența unui corp omenesc, ci un trup real plin de puterea dumnezeirii. (§4) Pentru a-i încredința de realitatea prezenței Sale, Mântuitorul îi îndeamnă pe discipoli să-i cerceteze rănila, până la redeschiderea cicatricilor dacă acest lucru ar fi necesar pentru a-i convinge (§5). Predicatorul insistă asupra firescului Învierii Mântuitorului care readusese la viață pe atâția morți, prin urmare apostolii nu ar fi trebuit să se îndoiască de faptul că Săvârșitorul unor astfel de minuni nu poate să facă una și pentru Sine, sculându-se din morți după trei zile (§6). Pe jumătate convinși de cuvintele lui Hristos, ucenicii ezită să creadă deplin de teamă ca ceea ce experimentează să nu fie o iluzie. Petru Chrysologul subliniază că această zăbovire sau îndoială nu este o lucrare a necredinței, ci mai degrabă a iubirii care tânjește cu nădejde după cele dorite. Însă din pricina limitelor naturii, neînțelegând miracolul, omul se teme să piardă semnul suprafiresc de la Dumnezeu și de aceea ezită să creadă că acel lucru se petrece aievea (§7).

Scurt și la obiect, Sfântul Petru Chysologul reușește în aceste două predici să facă o prezentare a arătărilor Mântuitorului așa cum sunt ele descrise de Sfântul Evanghelist Luca (24, 1-13, 36-41). Deși nu este străin de profunzimea pe care o putem intui în spatele unor metafore lapidare, episcopul Ravennei avansează rapid prin textul Scripturii fără a stăruii și a dezvolta imagini sau alegorii alambicate. Spre deosebire de tâlcuirile la Matei și Marcu, aceste omilii insistă mai mult asupra proceselor lăuntrice care însoțesc actul credinței, ilustrând complexitatea fenomenului prin câteva introspecții foarte reușite.

Ediția critică a acestor texte i-o datorăm tot lui Alejandro Olivar, care le-a editat alături de celelalte omilii ale Sfântului Petru Chysologul în prestigioasă colecție *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*<sup>4</sup>. Ar mai trebui precizat că omiliile LXXXII și LXXXIII împreună cu celelalte predici la Înviere s-au bucurat de traduceri integrale sau parțiale în germană<sup>5</sup>, engleză<sup>6</sup>, italiană<sup>7</sup> și franceză<sup>8</sup>.

## II

### *Omilia a LXXIX-a – A șasea despre Înviere*

1. După ce am parcurs deja în grabă pericopele de la Matei și Marcu despre Învierea Domului, să aflăm acum ce relatează fericitul Luca despre aceasta. *În prima zi după sâmbătă, foarte de dimineață, au venit ele la mormânt, aducând miresmele pe care le pregătiseră* (Lc 24, 1). Am spus adesea că cele ce s-au întâmplat la Învierea lui Hristos s-au petrecut ca pildă a învierii noastre. Iată de ce evangheliștii expun înșiruirea faptelor lui Hristos printr-un cuvânt mai degrabă tainic decât inedit. *În prima zi*, spune, *după sâmbăta*. Bine zice *în prima zi* pentru că ziua învierii nu cunoaște o altă [zi]<sup>9</sup>, maica

---

<sup>4</sup> Peter Chrysologus, *Collectio Sermonum*, edit. Alejandro Olivar, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, vol. 24, 24A, 24B. Turnhout, Brepols, 1975.

<sup>5</sup> *Des heiligen Petrus Chrysologus Erzbischofs von Ravenna ausgewählte Predigten*, aus dem Lateinischen übers. von G. Böhmer. (Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, 1. Reihe, Band 43) München, 1923.

<sup>6</sup> St. Peter Chrysologus, *Selected Sermons*, Volume 3, Translated by William B. Palardy, St. John's Seminary School of Theology, Brighton, Massachusetts, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 2005.

<sup>7</sup> *Opere di San Pietro Crisologo. Sermoni / 2* [63-124], edit. Gabriele Banterle, Biblioteca Ambrosiana/Citta Nuova Editrice, Milano / Roma, 1997, p. 94-167.

<sup>8</sup> Pierre Chysologue, *Le signe des signes. Sermons sur la Passion et la Résurrection*. Introduction, traduction, notes et index par Marie Steffann (Les Pères dans la foi, 96), Migne, Paris, 2007, 179 p.

<sup>9</sup> Una poate fi înțeleasă atât ca numeral ordinal, dar și ca adjectiv ce exprimă unicitatea și caracterul excepțional

luminii veșnice ignoră timpul nopții, ziua perpetuă strălucește continuu, lumina celor ce înviază nu poate muri, lumina care șterge noaptea nu știe să se stingă.

2. *Au venit ele la mormânt, aducând miresele pe care le pregătiseră. Și au găsit piatra răsturnată de pe mormânt. Și intrând în mormânt, nu au găsit trupul lui Iisus.* (Lc 24, 1-3) Ce vom spune despre faptul că înainte au fugit de la mormânt<sup>10</sup>, iar acum se întorc îndrăznețe la groapă, se întorc cutezătoare la înmormântarea cea înfricoșătoare, iau cu asalt, încrezătoare, tristețea mormântului și, negăsindu-l pe Domnul, Îl caută cu perseverență și insistă mai stăruitor, nu se sperie că mormântului i se adaugă noaptea, care naște bezna și sporește frica? Fraților, femeia [a fost] cauza răului, sursa păcatului, calea morții, pricina mormântului, poarta iadului, deplina pricină a jeluirii. Pentru aceasta se nasc în lacrimi, sunt supuse chinurilor, sunt robite gemetelor și atât de tari în plâns pe cât sunt de neputincioase în cele tari; și pe cât de nepregătite sunt pentru ostenele, pe atât sunt de pregătite pentru lacrimi. De aceea, ele biruiesc armele cu lacrimile, înduplecă împărățiile prin plânsete, înfrâng prin jeluiri toată forța bărbaților. Deci, nu e de mirare dacă femeile sunt văzute mai înclinate decât apostolii spre lacrimi, spre înmormântare, spre mormânt, spre cinstirea trupului Domnului: femeia aleargă prima spre lacrimi de vreme ce s-a grăbit cea dintâi spre cădere; cea care a mers întâia spre moarte merge la mormânt mai înaintea [apostolilor]; cea care a fost mijlocitoarea morții devine acum vestitoare a învierii, și cea care a dat bărbatului vestea unei astfel de nimiciri aduce ea însăși bărbaților vestirea mării mântuirii, ca vestea credinței să compenseze ceea ce s-a pierdut prin urmarea înșelăciunii<sup>11</sup>.

3. Aceasta nu e o ordine greșită, ci mistică, nici apostolii nu sunt puși după femei, ci sunt păstrați pentru cele mai de seamă. Femeile au primit ascultarea lui Hristos, apostolii au primit pătimirile lui Hristos, acelea aduc mirurile, aceștia suferințele<sup>12</sup>, acelea intră în mormânt, aceștia în temniță, acelea se grăbesc spre ascultare, aceștia au zburat spre lanțuri, acelea varsă uleiul, aceștia își varsă sângele, acelea se uimesc de moarte, aceștia primesc morțile. Și ce să mai spunem multe? Acelea stau în casă, aceștia se îndreaptă spre ascuțiș, ca oșteni devotați arată credința în fața celor potrivnice, putere în fața trudirilor, răbdare în fața nedreptăților, moarte în fața pericolelor, suportare în fața rănilor, devotament în fața pedepselor, perseverență în fața sfășierii măruntaielor. Deci femeile îi aduc lui Hristos lacrimi, iar apostolii îi aduc lui Hristos victoria și triumful, biruindu-l pe diavol și înfrângându-i pe vrăjmași.

4. Nimeni să nu învinuiască cu severitate că apostolii fie nu au crezut când femeile au vestit că Domnul a înviat, fie precum sunt relatate (evenimentele), au considerat cele auzite un delir. Profund se îndoiește cel ce și mai profund a crezut. Nu poate fi înșelat cel ce nu e grabnic spre auzire. Cel ce după o experiență este aflat încă nebăgător de seamă

---

<sup>10</sup> Se referă la momentul îngropării cf. Lc 23, 55-56.

<sup>11</sup> Perfidiae auditu – lit. prin ascultarea înșelăciunii.

<sup>12</sup> Flagella – lit. Biciurile.

se dovedește de-a dreptul leneș. Ostașul neinstruit aleargă spre tăiș când nu cunoaște motivul luptei, nesocotește puterea vrăjmașilor. Este propriu experienței, nu slăbiciunii, faptul că soldatul încercat avansează încet. Astfel Adam cel neexperimentat a căzut grabnic, întrucât grabnic a crezut, și întrucât a dat ascultare femeii cu ușurință, s-a înrobit pe sine și pe urmașii săi celui mai rău vrăjmaș. Iar Petru ca un veteran nu o ascultă cu ușurință pe femeie, crede încet când femeile vestesc și cugetă ca un veteran, nu se grăbește ca un copil. În cele din urmă, când doi dintre ucenici care după Înviere s-au învrednicit să-L aibă pe Hristos tovarăș de drum, întorcându-se au anunțat că L-au văzut pe Domnul, apostolii nu consideră delir ceea ce aud, ci (un act demn de) partea bărbătească, (ei) dau ascultare, închid gura, deschid ochii, largesc inimile și încredințează simțurilor cele ce sunt zise astfel ca, după agitația ezitării, să bea mai cu sete din fluviul credinței pe care limba colegilor o vărsa.

5. Precum cupele reci sting arșița setei astfel și auzirea (unei vești) mai fericite răcorește mintea după suferințe. Fraților, cine poate înțelege motivul nașterii Domnului? Cine reușește să socotească importanța Învierii Domnului? Cine merită să aprecieze rânduiala învierii lui Hristos? Nu va reuși să gândească, să cuprindă, să socotească, să înțeleagă aceasta, dacă nu va primi de la Domnul Însuși. [Să priceapă] că Ziditorul lucrurilor create se naște din femeie<sup>13</sup>, că Stăpânul lumii e văzut în servitute omenească, că Păstorul tuturor are nevoie de hrană, că Judecătorul cerului e interogată de judecători păcătoși, că e condamnat Cel ce a dezlegat toate, că e pedepsită Viața lumii, că e dat morții Cel ce ridică pe cei morți, că e închis în mormânt Cel ce cuprinde toate, că Dumnezeu celor cerești e aflat în iad: deci cel ce poate înțelege aceasta să nu se mire judecând mai adânc ezitățile, tremurăturile, fricile, fugile, ascunzișurile apostolilor. Deci, fraților, noi, care nu credem până în acest punct, să nu ne mirăm că apostolii se îndoiesc, că primesc această încredințare târzie, ci să ne rugăm, fraților, ca să merităm să cunoaștem cu privire la acestea atât cât va da Acela care îngăduie ca omul să cunoască cele dumnezeiești.

6. Cu ajutorul lui Dumnezeu vom afla în următoarea predică cele ce au urmat, ce a mai rămas din conținutul pericopei.

### *Omilia a LXXXI-a – A opta despre Înviere*

1. Pe când Iudeea cea rebelă se silea să poarte război cu Creatorul său și își ridică mâinile nelegiuite spreuciderea Ziditorului său, pacea s-a îndepărtat de pe pământ, armonia lucrurilor s-a risipit, astfel s-a distrus legământul dintre elemente ca întreaga lume să fie readusă la vechiul haos. De fapt [haosul] alungă ziua cu noaptea, pune stăpânire pe lumină cu întunericul, smulge cerul din lume, face pământul să se cutremure, amestecă morții cu viii, încurcă cele din iad cu cele cerești și, risipind

---

<sup>13</sup> Femeieo creatur partu – lit. este creat prin nașterea din femeie.

ordinea, nu lasă în făpturi absolut nimic pașnic, absolut nimic armonios. De aceea, când Hristos s-a întors din cele de jos, ca să redea pacea lucrurilor, exclamă: *Pace vouă!*

2. Spune (evangelistul): *Și pe când vorbeau ei acestea, El a stat în mijlocul lor și le-a zis: Pace vouă!* (Lc 24, 36) Bine a adăugat *vouă*, pentru că pământul a stat deja tare [după ce se cutremurase]<sup>14</sup>, ziua s-a reîntors, soarele și-a reluat cursul și rânduiala lumii își avea deja restituită ordinea sa. Iar ucenicilor le-a rămas totuși lupta, iar conflictul credinței cu necredința îi zdrobea pe ei cumplit. Astfel, tulburarea pătimirilor nu a lovit pământul precum (lovise) inimile ucenicilor și de aceea răvășea tăios sufletele lor prin lupta înverșunată dintre încredere și îndoială. Stăruiau în noianul gândurilor din mințile lor și oricât de viguroase (le-ar fi fost) trupurile, ele erau frânte de năvălirile disperării și ale nădejzii. Mințile și simțirile apostolilor erau purtate între numeroasele minuni ale semnelor lui Hristos și multitudinea pătimirilor Lui, între însemnele dumnezeirii și slăbiciunea cărnii, între vătămarile morții și darurile vieții. Acum duhul lor era înălțat la cer, acum sufletul lor era trântit la pământ și, izbucnind o astfel de furtună, nu puteau găsi în cele mai dinlăuntru ale lor niciun port al liniștirii, niciun refugiu al păcii. Văzând aceasta Hristos Cel ce cercetează inimile, Care poruncește vânturilor, stăpânește asupra furtunilor și preschimbă vijelia doar cu porunca, îndată îi întărește pe ei cu pacea Sa, zicând:

3. *Pace vouă!* (Lc 24, 36) *Eu sunt. Nu vă temeți* (Mc 6, 50). Eu sunt cel răstignit, mort și îngropat. Eu sunt Dumnezeu prin Mine Însumi, (făcut) om pentru voi. Eu sunt, nu duh în chipul cărnii, ci Adevărul Însuși în carne. *Eu sunt.* Eu sunt Cel viu dintre morți, sunt Cel ceresc (întors) din cele de jos, Eu sunt Cel de Care a fugit moartea, (de Care) cele din adânc au tremurat, (pe Care) iadul, spăimântându-se, L-a mărturisit [că este] Dumnezeu. *Nu vă temeți* pentru că tu, Petre, ai negat, pentru că tu, Ioane, ai fugit, pentru că voi toți m-ați părăsit, întrucât voi ați judecat în privința Mea toate cugetele necredincioase și nu ați crezut până acum, deși M-ați văzut pe Mine. *Nu vă temeți.* *Eu sunt*, cel care v-am chemat pe voi prin har, v-am ales cu îngăduință, v-am întărit în evlavie, v-am purtat cu iubire, și vă primesc acum doar din bunătate pentru că tatăl nu caută să vadă greșelile când îl primește pe fiu, nici dragostea când le redobândește pe ale sale.

4. Zice (evangelistul): *Iar ei, înspăimântându-se și înfricoșându-se, credeau că văd duh* (Lc 24, 37). De ce? Pentru că Domnul a intrat prin ușile încuiate. Deci, ucenicii năucii de somnul suferinței îi confereau lui Hristos limita omenească, nu puterea divină<sup>15</sup>. *Credeau că văd duh.* De fapt, duhul omului trece prin ceea ce e închis în pânțele, pătrunde dincolo de zidurile lui ca să intre în corpul închis, închis [la rândul său] într-un corp; așa și când sufletul ajunge la sfârșitul vieții, când iese din dulcea împreună-

---

<sup>14</sup> Mt 27, 51.

<sup>15</sup> Non quod potest divina virtus, sed quod natura recipit humana – nu ceea ce poate puterea divină, ci ceea ce primește natura umană.

locuire cu trupul, nu e ținut de încuietorile caselor, nici de obstacolele lumești. Firea cerească nu știe să fie închisă în închisorile pământești, precum e spus: *Duhul nu știi de unde vine, nici încotro se duce (In 3, 8)*. Deci după Înviere ucenicii nu credeau că Cel ce intrase prin ușile încuiate purta trup real<sup>16</sup> bănuind că s-a întors doar suflul în chipul cărnii, ca imaginile corporale care obișnuiesc să apară celor ce dorm. Zice: *credeau că văd duh*.

Prin urmare, precum am zis, frământările gândurilor nu erau domolite în ucenici; nu erau domolite, ci frământările gândurilor sporeau mai mult și tot mai mult și tulburările minților creșteau chiar prin cele văzute și neliniștea întregii îndoieli se năștea de acolo de unde credința învierii era sădită.

Ceea ce venise, era real: ceea ce intrase prin ușile încuiate nu făcea obiectul credinței, nu ținea de credință, ci ținea de putere; nu era ceva [aparent] omenesc, era chiar un om, ca să fie un trup adevărat în puterea dumnezeirii, nu o apariție goală a cărnii, aducând ofensă Învierii. Prin urmare pentru a pune capăt [cugetelor] ce se nășteau din acest conflict al gândurilor, Hristos a răspuns:

5. *De ce sunteți tulburați și pentru ce se ridică astfel de gânduri în inima voastră? (Lc 24, 38)* Bine (zice) *se ridică*, în loc de *se coboară*, deoarece cugetele omenești, trase în jos de povara cărnii, încearcă să-i înalțe (pe apostoli) la înălțimea tainei lui Dumnezeu, și sunt frânte în inșeși eforturile lor, se doboară și sunt puse la pământ, dacă nu le-ar ajuta Cel ce dă omului să cugete cele dumnezeiești. *De ce sunteți tulburați și pentru ce se ridică astfel de gânduri în inima voastră? Vedeți mâinile Mele și picioarele (Lc 24, 38-39)*. *Vedeți* înseamnă *treziți-vă*. De ce? Pentru că ceea ce vedeți nu e vis. *Vedeți mâinile Mele și picioarele* pentru că deocamdată, fiindu-vă ochii îngreuiți, nu puteți încă vedea capul. Priviți rănilor de vreme ce nu vedeți lucrarea lui Dumnezeu. Luați aminte la urmele lăsate de vrăjmași de vreme ce încă nu cercetați semnele lui Dumnezeu. *Pipăiți*, pentru ca mâna să aducă credința de vreme ce ochiul astfel văzând este orbit. Ochiul nu vede, dar atingerea vede: degetele voastre să intre în urmele cuielor, mâinile voastre să cerceteze adâncul răni. Deschideți găurile mâinilor, scormoniți coasta, redeschideți rănilor, întrucât nu pot să le refuz ucenicilor pentru [a ajunge la] credință, ceea ce nu le-am refuzat cruzilor vrăjmași la pătimire. *Pipăiți, pipăiți și ajungeți până la oase, iscoditori amarnici*<sup>17</sup> *ce sunteți, ca măcar oasele să confirme realitatea cărnii și măcar rănilor cicatrizate să dea mărturie că Eu Însumi sunt*.

6. De ce, mă rog, nu credeți că Eu am înviat, Cel ce sub ochii voștri am ridicat nenumărați morți? Oare nu cumva puterea Mea care i-a ajutat pe alții m-a abandonat pe Mine potrivit aceluia glas, care m-a ofensat pe cruce și îmi cerea zicând: *Oh! Oh! Pe alții i-a mântuit, iar pe Sine nu poate să Se mântuiască! [...] Să Se coboare acum de pe cruce, și vom crede în El (Mt 27,42)*. Și ce e mai mare: a coborî de pe cruce smulgând

---

<sup>16</sup> Soliditatem corporis – lit. densitate/materialitate a corpului.

<sup>17</sup> Inquisitores ardui – lit. anchetatori dificili.

cuiete sau a urca de la iad călcând moartea? Iată M-am izbăvit pe Mine Însuși și am urcat la cele de sus rupând lanțurile iadului și nici măcar la voi nu am aflat credință în dumnezeirea mea. Sau cumva moartea de trei zile neagă credibilitatea credinței? Oare nu glasul Meu l-a chemat în prezența voastră din cele de jos pe Lazăr cel mort de patru zile, care deja mirosea? (Oare nu) porunca Mea l-a readus la viață? Și dacă robul s-a ridicat după patru zile, de ce nu ar învia Stăpânul după trei zile?

7. *Iar ei încă nu credeau de bucurie (Lc 24, 41)*. Bucuriile făgăduite de-abia sunt crezute chiar și când sunt primite, cele dorite aduc uimire când se împlinesc. De aceea apostolii sunt uimiți de învierea lui Hristos [petrecută] mai iute decât au sperat, iar faptul că ei cred mai încet nu este propriu necredinței, ci iubirii. Cei ce cercetează în asemenea chip nu neagă credința, ci o examinează și se îndreaptă încă și mai adânc, tânjind ca ceea ce privesc să fie adevărat, iar nu fals. Fraților, nu teama necredinței, ci măreția evenimentului i-a făcut pe ucenici înceți [în convingerea] față de aceste lucruri, uluiți de astfel de lucruri. Nu este necredință, ci lucrarea miracolului singular faptul că nu văd cele văzute, că nu știu cele știute, ca nu cred cele crezute. Fraților, în fața miracolelor e prea necoaptă<sup>18</sup> natura noastră, care nu poate cuprinde cele mature, nici nu e în stare să simtă cele perfecte dacă nu va crește prin Dumnezeu. Prin urmare, Dumnezeu însuși ne îngăduie să pricepem și să simțim cu ajutorul Lui ceea ce noi nu putem prin (puterea) noastră.

---

<sup>18</sup> Infans – lit. copilărească, nearticulată, imatură.