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REVELATION, INSPIRATION AND SCRIPTURE

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EDITORIAL

FR. IOAN CHIRILĂ

Revelation, Inspiration and Scripture

REVELATION, INSPIRATION AND SCRIPTURE

I am striving to enter into the sphere of interrogations proper to the historical-critical method and, as I am advancing into the informal comprehension of the constitutive structures, I ask myself: where is faith? Is it possible to ignore faith when speaking about a text meant to accomplish a re-connection? In order to be able to answer this interrogation, I have studied the literature on the religions of the Book to see how things are being understood there. I was not at all surprised to notice that they are not trying to demonstrate the revealed content, either of the Thora or of the Quran, but only of the Holy Scripture, the Christian Scripture. Are we weaker? Are we more vulnerable to the temptations of self-sufficiency of the human logic? I do not wish to answer; I only wish to underline the fact that we often answer through a reversed paradigm, through a paradigm buried in an eternal captivity of immanence.

I believe it is enough to see what Moshe Idel says about the text of the Scripture, in one of his latest extended works on the Cabala: "God is encountered rather in the sacred texts than in the sacred places... the sacred text has its own dynamic and creates one as well. Of it we believe that it contains the divine will... the divine voice contained in the text is reactivated by the human voice through study and prayer. From the religious point of view, the idealization of the canonical text has shaped the Jewish society, but has also created a vision of the content of Scriptures according to which they include un-human and un-historical areas: in other words, the human and divine spheres (Idel 2004, 22-3). The Bible is a text which, due to its elliptic style and to the diversity of subjects, incites to extensive interpretation more than other antique texts", but a hermeneutics of trust is necessary for its interpretation (Idel 2004, 42).

I choose a single passage from the Quran, where it is said that the text contains a "truth accessible to all", namely the dogma of the unique God, just like the Shema Israel (Dt 6:4), which can "found a trialectic unitary hermeneutic vision, between the transcendence of God, His Revelation (the Word) and His Creation"



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(Oubrou 2006, 105). In this passage we can also distinguish between the sphere of human and divine, as coexistent parts of the same text, coexistence which claims the *koinonia* of creation for the achievement of resemblance.

LaCocque and Ricoeur wrote in the same register, when they were stating that in the case of historical-critical exegesis, “the confirmation through history is always perceived only as a partial fulfillment. It is necessary to maintain the text in a living relation with a living community. The text, if separated from a living community, is brought back to a state of corpse sent for autopsy (LaCocque and Ricoeur 2002, 7). In the end, the text exists thanks to the community, in order to be used by the community, in order to shape the community through the anticipated events which become paradigmatic through the prophetic interpretation (LaCocque and Ricoeur 2002, 8). Revelation, which has as a purpose the continuously renewed birth of the soul, is proper to the present, while Redemption is proper to the future under the sign of the future eternity of the Kingdom (LaCocque and Ricoeur 2002, 141).

These last ideas belong to Rosenzweig, and they seem so close to the Christian statements! “The Holy Scripture is not an exclusively human product, it is a divine-human reality which is so complex, that it can be understood only in analogy to the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God” (Florovski 2005, 8-9). “The Scripture taken as a whole was a creation of the community... the Scriptures are inspired, they are the Word of God revealed not as a consequence of man's virtues, but for his sake... they are the history of salvation/ redemption” (Florovski 2005, 20-7). We can add to all of this the words of John Breck regarding the authentic interpretation of the Holy Scripture which, in his view, “results from the interaction between faith, love and prayer. These are gifts or fruits of the Holy Spirit offered to the biblical exegete. They are able to turn exegesis from a rational analysis into a veritable theology: a living testimony of the life-giving God” (Breck 2003, 52).

The Scripture is the medium of continuous manifestation of Revelation within creation. The canonical aspect is the fruit of the nomosic reorientation of man, of the community, but it is a relative aspect in reference to the manifest divine transcendence that the human being, through the Holy Spirit, grasps and becomes synergic with it in order to taste the unspoken meanings in which the word has no longer an instrumental function, but becomes subject to eternal doxology.

This synergic act is the actual act of inspiration. The Spirit of God illuminates the mind of the one chosen to put into words His Revelation, so that it will contain and

express, by intelligible human structures, the eternal communitarian and communion dynamic of the Trinity. The distinction between Revelation and Inspiration can thus be noticed: revelation is a direct act of the Divinity manifested within creation, an act with an obvious universal character, while inspiration is a pedagogical encounter of man with God. From this divine kenosis, man understands the eternal contents of creation and of the divine, intuitively their synergy and expresses their teleological contents as an eternal call of God, addressed to the creation in view of its eternal existence. Even the act of inspiration cannot be exhaustively explained into human words or explanations, it is part of the personal *theoria* of the writer and of the mysterious breath of the Spirit. That is why the Scripture remains a wonderful thing, one which fulfills as a communion of the eternal word and from this perspective, it is susceptible not only to a historical or philological approach, but these must be completed by the hermeneutics of trust and the illumination of faith.

This is why we are proposing in this issue an approach of the unity of the Holy Scripture and of its cultic dimension (Fr. Ioan Chirila, *The Holy Scripture and the Holy Liturgy or about the organic relation between the Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition*), its understanding as a source of the knowledge of God (Hierom. Simeon Pintea, *The Holy Scripture, source of theognosia*), an approach of the Scripture from the Prayer (Stelian Pasca-Tusa, *The Psalteryon – Revelation of the well-received prayer*), because from all of these comes the true knowledge, the reciprocal knowledge, a knowledge resulted from incarnation and not from information.

Apart from these themes, we are introducing some aspects of Jewish and patristic tradition (Paula Bud, *Foi et repos des repères exegetiques et theologiques a Nb 14, Ps 94, He 3*), Archaeology (Adriana Rotar, *An introduction on the Qumran archaeology in the light of Roland de Vaux's research*) and the traditional book reviews. We are hoping this will be a veritable word banquet.

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ORTHODOX EXEGESIS

FR. IOAN CHIRILĂ

*The Holy Scripture and the Holy Liturgy or about
the organic relation of the Holy Scripture to the
Holy Tradition*

Hierom. ȘTEFAN (SIMEON) PINTEA

The Holy Scripture – source of the Theognosis

STELIAN PAȘA-TUȘA

*The Psalteryion – revelation of the well received
prayer*

PAULA BUD

*Foi et repos des repères exegetiques et theologiques
à Nb 14, Ps 95, He 3*

ADRIANA ROTAR

*An introduction to the Qumran archaeology in
the light of Roland de Vaux's research*

THE HOLY SCRIPTURE AND THE HOLY LITURGY OR ABOUT THE ORGANIC RELATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE TO THE HOLY TRADITION

Abstract

The main purpose of the paper is to offer a perspective on the Liturgy conceived as being concerned not only with physis/matter/history, but also with a spiritual growth and enrichment of the entire human being, of the man rooted in eternity, and one of these roots in eternity of the modern/postmodern man is (or should become again) the Revelation. Throughout this research, the concept is understood as involving both the Holy Scripture and the Holy Tradition. Secondly, the paper will emphasize the fact that there is an unbreakable relation between the Holy Scripture and the Holy Liturgy through the work of the Holy Spirit, while trying to resume the biblical sources for the text of the Eastern Christian Liturgy.



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Keywords

biblical sources, liturgy, canonicity, unity, Christological lecture

Father Stăniloae stated very clearly the fact that "every Holy Liturgy brings us closer to the Kingdom of the Holy Trinity, which is going to last forever", and if we speak about getting closer, we imply that it has already been installed, or at least introduced as teleological announcement of the whole creation. But I would not appeal too much to the logical-discursive structures, because the Liturgy is not only concerned with physis/matter/history, but with a spiritual growth and enrichment of the entire human being, of the man rooted in heaven (Popescu 2001), in eternity. One of these roots in eternity of the modern/postmodern man is (or should become again) the Revelation, and I am using this generous concept because it involves both the Holy Scripture and the Holy Tradition, so the man rooted in heaven is the man with the "living memory" (not with a depositum-like memory), not as a historical accumulation, but as an accumulation of hermeneutical, historical and meta-historical meanings (Ricoeur 1995) which, for us,

mean more than exegesis, they mean mistagogy (St. Maximus the Confessor 2000), and the Eastern mistagogy is always a liturgical mistagogy (Nellas 2002), a practical event, not a theory.

So we can observe that the Holy Scripture is a means (Yannaras 2007, 9-12; 48) of re-grafting us in eternity. According to this deductive logic we would be tempted to say that the second means of rooting us into eternity is the Holy Liturgy. In this respect, I would confine myself to introduce a single argument of hymnographical/ prayer type: “make us worthy to partake of your heavenly and awesome Mysteries in the eternal day of your Kingdom” (Vintilescu 1972), text which determined liturgists to speak about a pre-tasting of eternity even during this historical existence, and “standing in the Church of your greatness, it seems to me as if I was in heaven, Holy Mother of God” (Ceaslov 1993, 73). But there is no need to get into the captivating and depersonalized game of contemporary logical-philosophical demonstration, which imposes itself as an imperative without being given/offered like in the case of the liturgical experience of God. It is enough to state again a clear evidence, that is the fact that “there is an unbreakable relation between the Holy Scripture and the Holy Liturgy through the work of the Holy Spirit: by means of the Holy Liturgy, the Scripture becomes “a Holy Scripture for continuous study” (Anania 2007, 8) in view of incarnating the Word. I shall speak about this act of realizing the “entheosic” aspect of the Liturgy while trying to resume the biblical sources for the text of the Eastern Christian Liturgy. In this way we can conclude, not as a theoretic act, but as the object of our faith, the fact that the Holy Liturgy is a place of our personal conceiving into the Word, a theme too large and too beautiful to be exhausted in a synthetic expression; this is why I shall only confine myself by saying that it has a very important place in/for the logosic articulation of the world.

The Holy Scripture – the living, continuous, eternal word of God

Saint Maximus the Confessor was convinced that “just as man is mortal according to what is seen and immortal according to what is unseen, it is just as such with the Holy Scripture, the letter passes, but the spirit hidden within never ceases to be.” (St. Maximus the Confessor 2000, 15) But today, in our immediate contemporaneity, we encounter the following aspect: more and more the Scriptures are approached exclusively from the perspective of scientific epistems specific to the humanities area and thus we are ever increasingly ignoring their revealed content, their relevance for Christian life

and implicitly their anastasic testimony. That is why we come to phenomena like the one generated by the Da Vinci Code, by Juda's Gospel, the Jerusalemite sarcophagus etc.; faced with these phenomena, we theologians must formulate the confession of our Christian faith. But the greatest confessor in this case is the treasury of the Holy Tradition, the patristic thesaurus meant to be an argument to the possibility of incarnating the Word and also to be a model of living and testimony.

For this reason I would like to reiterate briefly the patristic way of approaching the Scripture and I consider necessary to focus our attention towards their holy enthusiasm, in which the Holy Fathers compare the Scripture to a spring of living waters, to a source of wisdom (St. Gregory of Nazianz PG 37, 692), treasure (St. John Chrysostom PG 59, 97), precious stones (St. John Chrysostom PG 59, 32), protection against sin (St. John Chrysostom PG 55, 453) and, finally, the entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven (St. John Chrysostom PG 56, 69). How beautiful that is, what a wonderful way has God revealed to us!

I shall insert here those elements from the patristic discourse which testify the constant preoccupation of the Holy Fathers for the identification and assuming/incarnating the spiritual meaning of the Holy Scripture. And I am taking a first example from Saint Basil the Great, to whom the importance of the Scripture lies in the fact that its entire content is "written for the strengthening and salvation of our souls" (St. Basil the Great 1968, 483). Similarly, for Saint John Chrysostom, the illustrious representative of the Antioch exegetical school, everything that is written in the holy books: "narratives, phrases, words, small particles or even letters are important only then when they serve the author in expressing the truths revealed to him by God for our salvation" (St. John Chrysostom PG 53, 198). Or if salvation is one of the Holy Scripture's purposes, as the Fathers state, then everything contained in it will not have to suffer under the burden of time. The Scripture really is a letter of divine love addressed to man, but a living, continuous and eternal one. It addresses not a human hypostasis or a generation placed at a certain point on the history axis, but it addresses the entire humanity, from all times and places, because those contained in the Holy Scripture are not simple words, they are "words of the Holy Spirit" (St. John Chrysostom PG 54, 514), words of the divine grace who determined the author to write (St. John Chrysostom PG 39, 17-18), words of God spoken through the prophets, "the prophets are the mouth of God" (St. John Chrysostom PG 56, 110). Saint Maximus had a similar opinion, showing that the Scripture, through its spiritual

meaning, transcends the restrictive limits of the Cartesian: “As far as the letter retires, the spirit progresses. And as far as the shadows of the temporal service disappear, the truth of faith comes to light whole and bright, through which and for which it is and was written and it is called Scripture”. From this conviction results the Fathers' insistence on the idea that “every religious teaching found in the holy books, no matter of the person that actually wrote them down, belongs to God, who is the main author of the Holy Scripture” (St. John Chrysostom PG 53, 65), idea which contemporary approaches seem to forget when analyzing and interpreting the text of the Scripture from a predominantly historical perspective. And here I would insert another idea from Saint Maximus the Confessor: the meaning of the Scripture, this living word of God, reveals to man only at the same time with the knowledge of God, through the Spirit (St. Maximus the Confessor 1983, 158), at the moment when the soul is liberated from all “material mist”, or this cleansing that opens the soul for encountering the Spirit is more evidently accomplished in the Holy Liturgy (Louth 1999).

The realization of a continuum of the word in the liturgy – about the sources / biblical foundations of the liturgy's text

This year is dedicated to St. Basil the Great, overwhelming personality with an oeuvre that could be rightfully considered an extended commentary of the Holy Scripture (Neaga 1979: 133-45). These two elements seem sufficient to justify my option; I have chosen the text of the Holy Liturgy which bears his name in order to argue the possibility/ necessity of realizing the continuum, the perennial aspect of the Word in the Liturgy.

Before entering effectively in the analysis and concise presentation of biblical foundations that constitute the basis of this liturgical text, I would like to introduce here only a few landmarks regarding St Basil's way of placing himself in regard to the text of the Holy Scripture. As we have already seen, for him, the entire Scripture is “written for the strengthening and salvation of our souls” (St. Basil the Great 1968, 483); for this reason, he recommends incessantly to his faithful to meditate and study thoroughly the words of the Holy Scripture, through which we can reach the knowledge of God, His resemblance and obtain salvation. His interpretative discourse evidently shows that St. Basil regards the Scripture as a unitary reality, the essential element which determines this unity is, for him, the Christocentric character of the Holy Scripture, evident from the first pages to the last revelation.

Another aspect regards the inspired character of the Scripture. St. Basil considers that, by cooperating with the Holy Spirit, both the hagiographer and the one who approaches wholeheartedly the Scripture become “a dwelling place of the Spirit's thoughts” (St. Basil the Great 1968, 253). I have introduced this type of language because it clearly shows that St. Basil perceived the text of the Scripture in its dynamic dimension, he read it without interruption not only for identifying historical information, but for incarnating it, and towards this ideal he tirelessly encouraged his faithful. I would add a last coordinate of St. Basil's exegesis, that of its ecclesial character: the interpretation is always made in a liturgical environment (Basarab 1979, 299), because the Church is the place of authentic incarnation / living of the Scripture. Only interpreted in this environment, the Holy Scripture truly is “spiritual light” and “mysterious wisdom” (St. Basil the Great PG 29,9A). And this is the explanation of the abundance of biblical texture in his liturgical creations.

I have opted for an analysis of the liturgical anaphora; I shall very briefly insert the biblical expressions introduced by St. Basil in the two prayer-texts. The first one introduces addressing formulas whose scriptural origin can be easily identified: Lord, thou [art] God (Acts 4:24), Father (Lk 23:34) the Almighty (Rev 1:8), thou [art] the God, [even] thou alone (Is 37:16) Lord, thou [art] God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is (Acts 4:24), who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens (Heb 8:1), behold the depths (3 Children 1:31), God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth (2Tm 2:25); God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 15:6) or simply Father (1Pt 1:17), the only true God (Jn 17:3) through Him the Holy Spirit was manifested (Jn 14:26) who is the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:17) and source of holiness (Jn 7:37-39). Christ is our hope (1 Tm 1:1), the great God (Tb 3:16), the image of Your lovingkindness (Ws 7:26) and the One who reveals in Himself the Father (Jn 14:9).

The doxological content of prayer invokes new scriptural passages when it calls God unseen (Col 1:15) unchangeable (Jas 1:17), living Word (Heb 4:12), life (Jn 14:6) true Light (Jn 1:9), sanctification (1 Cor 1:30) and also when it states the impossibility of man to show forth all thy praise (Ps 9:14), tell of all Your wonderful deeds (Ps 70:18) at all times (Ps 33:1).

In what way relates man and the entire creation, both seen and unseen, with God? All things are subject to You (Sir 35:17), giving You eternal glorification (Jdg 15:14), serving You all together (Rev 7:15), You are praised by the angels (Pr. of Man. 1:15),

Round about You stand the Seraphim, one with six wings and the other with six wings; with two they cover their faces; with two they cover their feet; with two they fly, crying out to one another with unceasing voices and ever resounding praises... Holy, Holy, Holy (Is 6:2-3). An appropriate attitude of the human being standing before God is synthesized in expressions taken from the book of Psalms: praise You, hymn You (Ps 91:1), bless You, worship You (Ps: 62:5), to stand before Him with broken and a contrite heart (Ps 50:18).

The prayer before the anamnetical moment could be considered a synthesis of the salvation history, beginning with the creation of man according to the image and resemblance of God and to the salvation from death through the work of Christ. The prayer's text begins with a series of doxological formulas: there are no bounds to the majesty of Your holiness (Ps 144:3,5), You are holy in all Your works (Tb 3:2). Then follow the fundamental landmarks of salvation history, the first one is the moment when God has made man by taking dust from the earth (Gn 2:7), honoring him with His own image (Gn 1:27) placing him in a garden of delight (Gn 2:8, 15), promising him eternal life and the enjoyment of everlasting blessings in the observance of His commandments (Gn 2:16-17). But when he disobeyed You (Gn 3:11), he was led astray by the deception of the serpent (Gn 3:13), becoming subject to death through his own transgressions (Rom 6:23), he was expelled from paradise into this world (Gn 3:24) in Your righteous judgment (Ps 118:75) returning him to the earth from which he was taken (Gn 3:19).

The punishment of man's sin is followed by the annunciation of salvation through a second birth (Tb 3:5), because the sins of man do not overwhelm the infinite compassion of God: You did not forever reject Your creature whom You made (Ps 102:14), nor did You forget the work of Your hands (Is 64:7), because of Your tender compassion, You visited him in various ways (Is 4:31). Preparations for the incarnation of the Son were made through the prophets (Heb 1:1), You gave us the law to help us (Ps 18:8), You appointed angels as guardians (Heb 1:14). At the fullness of time (Gal 4:4), You spoke to us through Your Son Himself, through whom You created the ages (Heb 1:2), He, being the splendor of Your glory and the image of Your being, upholding all things by the word of His power (Heb 1:3) thought it not robbery to be equal with You... He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, conforming to the body of our lowliness (Phil 2:6-7), But, being God before all ages (Jn 1:1-2) He appeared on earth and lived with humankind (1 Tim 3:16) Becoming incarnate from a holy Virgin (Mt 1:25).

The work of the Son of God is presented in a detailed manner: that He might change

us in the likeness of the image of His glory (Phil 3:21), Your only begotten Son, who is in Your bosom, God and Father (Jn 1:18) born of a woman, the holy Theotokos and ever virgin Mary; born under the law (Gal 4:4) to condemn sin in His flesh (Eph 2:15) so that those who died in Adam may be brought to life in Him (1 Cor 15:22), He lived in this world, and gave us precepts of salvation (Jn 3:17), Releasing us from the delusions of idolatry (1 Tim 1:9), He acquired us for Himself, as His chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1 Pt 2:9), Having cleansed us by water (Eph 5:25). The work of the Saviour culminates in the death, Resurrection and Ascension to heavens: He gave Himself as ransom to death (Eph 5:2), descending into Hades through the cross, that He might fill all things with Himself (1 Pt 3:18- 19), He loosed the bonds of death (1 Cor 15:25-26), He rose on the third day (1 Cor 15:4), having opened a path for all flesh to the resurrection from the dead (1 Cor 15:20) since it was not possible that the Author of life would be dominated by corruption (Acts 2:27), Ascending into heaven, He sat at the right hand of Your majesty on high (Heb 1:3) He will come to render to each according to His works (Rom 2:6). The final of the prayer evokes the voluntarily death of Christ (Jn 18:4) Who left us remembers of His Passion (Lk 22:19), thus introducing the anamnetical moment (1 Cor 11:23-24).

I have chosen this kind of presentation in order to easily observe the natural way in which St. Basil introduces in the formulation of the anaphora this succession of expressions alternatively selected from the Old and New Testament. For me, this is nothing else than the forte argument for an understanding of the Holy Scripture as a unitary reality, due to the conviction of the Fathers that “both in the Old and New Testament spoke the One and the same Spirit” (St. John Chrysostom PG 51, 282). However, in the case of the two prayers, we have the possibility to observe the fact that the liturgical act makes us contemporary, subjects of this wonderful salvation history, offering us the possibility of distinguishing in the profane history the eschatological orientation of the created world / existence.

On the importance and role of the biblical readings in the Holy Liturgy speaks Saint Nicolas Cabasilas. His interpretations regarding the presence and signification of scriptural readings in the Liturgy are explicit; they testify the organic liaison existent between the revealed Word and the Holy Liturgy. Saint Nicolas Cabasilas clearly states what is the place and signification of the biblical elements introduced in the liturgical ritual: they purify the heart from that “material mist” mentioned by Saint Maximus: “The readings from the Holy Scripture, which teach us both the loving kindness of

God to man and His justice and judgment, give birth not only to our love but also to our fear of Him, thus making us more zealous in fulfilling His commandments” (Cabasilas 2004, 2). But Saint Nicolas Cabasilas considers that these chants and readings from the Holy Scripture which were introduced in the ritual of the Holy Liturgy fulfill a double role, being “divine Scriptures and divinely inspired words, they sanctify those who read and chant them; but as they were chosen and arranged in a certain manner, they figure the coming and earthly living of Christ” (Cabasilas 2004, 24). The Gospel announces Christ, but also impersonates Him (Cabasilas 2004, 29). Thus, “there is nothing stopping them (readings and chants from the Holy Scriptures) from doing both, on the one hand sanctifying the faithful, on the other symbolizing Christ's iconomy” (Cabasilas 2004, 24).

The importance of the Gospel reading is overwhelming: the doxology that both precedes and succeeds it is lifted up by the faithful as ones aware of the fact that “the Holy Gospel impersonates Christ and if we have found Christ, we have it all.” (Cabasilas 2004, 32)

For Saint Nicholas Cabasilas, all the scriptural readings have a preparative role in view of the culminant moment, they “prepare and purify us before the great sanctification of the Holy Mysteries” (Cabasilas 2004, 32). And the final of the liturgical ritual is enriched with „words selected from the Holy Scripture”: “Be the name of the Lord blessed...” and the others (Ps 112:2; Dan 2:20), followed by “a doxological and thanksgiving psalm”: “I will extol the Lord at all times” (Ps 33:1) (Cabasilas 2004, 78).

Through the reading from the epistles, Saint Maximus considers that “we acknowledge our duties to fulfill”, “we learn the laws of divine combats following which we will enter victorious in the Kingdom of Christ” (St. Maximus the Confessor 2000, 18). Moreover, the reading of the Holy Gospel “shows, in particular to those who are striving, the sufferance to be endured for the word. After this, the Word of contemplation and knowledge descending from the Heavens, like a Bishop puts aside all bodily thoughts and orients their sight towards spiritual issues.”

The three times chant of divine holiness by the faithful figures the union and equal dignity we will have in the life to come with spiritual powers. In that state, in a thought with celestial powers, the nature of man will be taught to praise and sanctify through three sanctifications the One tri-hypostatical divinity (St. Maximus the Confessor 2000, 19). The all holy calling of the Heavenly Father is the symbol of genuine adoption which will be given to us through the gift and grace of the

Holy Spirit.” (St. Maximus the Confessor 2000, 21)

On canonicity and organicity of the Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition

The first criteria of the Church – In her quality of infallible authority – for selecting canonical writings was that of writings that speak/ reveal God in His Word, so not in the creations or speculations of human logic, but the epiphanic/ theophanic works of the Word before incarnation (in the prophetic discourse), in the incarnation and in His mystical Body, perceived as theandric medium of continuous elevation towards the Kingdom of God. Actually, when trying to determine a chronological landmark for the beginning of collecting canonical writings, we meet the words that God spoke to Moses: to be an eternal sign of the Alliance (Ex 17:14), of the eternal relation between God and His people, between God and His creation. From this perspective, we can say that a canonical book / writing has an obvious dialogical aspect, it is not a “*demonstratio fidei*”, but a “*revelatio fidei*”. And I believe that in this manner I have given a minimal answer to the question of excluding the Gnostic literature (St. Athanasius of Alexandria 1988, 67) and its determinations from the canonical area. In fact, faith is not a demonstration, but a transfiguration, and this formula can introduce an explanation regarding the long way of accepting the Revelation (Apocalypse) between canonical writings, and not only.

Gradually and diversely revealing Himself, God marked the history with His interventions, sealing it eternally and orienting it towards its natural thelos. But the periods of this revealing are in fact the periods of the spiritual ethnogenesis of Israel. The meaning of history is the communion of men and of creation with God, this meaning is dynamically and exemplarily revealing from the old Israel to the new. The speech of God to Israel has not remained without testimonies. Accomplishing through encounters, promises, discoveries and alliances, this word / dialogue constituted itself in a dynamic frame of truth and life. This frame of meeting and the first testimony of relations between God and Israel is the Holy Tradition. Inside the Holy Tradition different reports have appeared, strictly catalogued by the Church, according to the fidelity to the truth / Christ, in three categories: canonical, explanative and apocryphal books. Born inside Tradition, as an incarnation of the Word, the Holy Scripture cannot and must not be taken out of its context.

The Scripture and the Tradition, signs of God's love for Israel, are not two distinct realities, but are reciprocally involved one in another, having functions/ roles not one

towards the other, but both towards the truth/ Christ. In this way, they do not have autonomy outside the Church, because the truth is the word permanently addressed to the Church by God, on / about God in Christ, on Himself. The Holy Scripture constitutes the essence of Tradition, and the latter is its development, and we can see the effective means of incarnation of the word. And if we speak of Tradition, we must consider the following three periods of development: until 34 AD – Jewish Tradition; between 34 and 90 AD – Jewish and Judeo-Christian Tradition, and after 90 AD, a clear distinction will be made between the two traditions, Jewish and Christian.

Concerning the extension of the canon, it is given by Christ's Scripture. But, in the announcing of Christ, the transparency of the truth itself, as unique transcendental reality, makes His exposition not nominal, but categorical, a fact that leaves place for discussions.

I would remark nonetheless the fundamental criteria which can determine the canonicity: Christ / the eternal truth of Deus revelatus. The common thesis according to which the Tradition completes the Scripture at an informational level forgets precisely this common reference to the truth, to the transcendence itself of the incarnated Truth. The Church chose, from the multitude of writings, those who had as direct object the knowledge of God from the acts of Revelation, and not those that led to His knowledge from the acts of demonstration or different esoteric Gnostic formulas or derived from the above. The following question will rise: then why the Orient chooses as secondary the anaginoscomena writings and introduces them in the Scripture? Because these ones show the axiological consistencies of mundane history and the fact that the divine Providence manifests concretely in it in order to reveal it as medium of salvation.

The unity of the Scripture, breaking the captivity in the field of clichés, as conclusion of reaffirming its revealed dimension, but also of the quoting style in the patristic theological discourse and unification in the liturgical prayer

Right from the start, I have considered appropriate to introduce a quotation from St. Maximus the Confessor which I consider a good expression of the Scripture's unity: "The Holy Scripture, regarded as a whole, is like a man who has the Old Testament as body and the New one as soul, spirit and mind; or the literary history of the entire Holy Scripture, the old and the new, and the meaning of those written and the purpose towards which tends this meaning, soul." (St. Maximus the Confessor 2000, 15) In consequence, there is an organic relation between the two Testaments, and the

patristic discourse proves it thoroughly. I have seen this in St Basil's legerity to use alternatively Old and New Testament texts in the text of his Liturgy, like from a unique source of spiritual richness.

The two Testaments are in perfect accord, considers St. John Chrysostom, and, in support of this statement, he invokes texts selected both from the Old and New Testaments, like Jeremiah 31:31-33 or Matthew 5:21, actually the entire corpus known as the Sermon on the Mount offers us the key of understanding of the veritable meaning of the Law, and Jeremiah speaks of a new Alliance, its original aspect being, from a formal point of view, "the carnal flags of their hearts". We have to put an accent on the fact that "the old Law regards towards the fruits of sin. The New Testament follows the destruction of the roots of sin. Regarding the same sin, the old Law convicts its effects, while the new Law strives against its naissance (Moisescu 2003, 46). Thus, we can say that the New Testament fulfills the lacks of the Old one, perfecting it and better formulating its teachings revealed in the past (St. John Chrysostom PG 57, 241). For revealing the unitary and concordant aspect of the two components of the Scripture, I consider extremely important the chrysostomic observation that "God, in His great wisdom, reveals dogmatic truths, promulgates moral laws, according to His addressee's capability of understanding them. And if He would have given the two Alliances in the same time, for the same people, living a similar life, there would have not been any formal difference between them (St. John Chrysostom PG 51, 283). But in all cases, the divine teaching, gradually revealed to man, must not be judged in comparison with the eternally identical perfection of God, but with the gradual development of the human race and its intellect" (St. John Chrysostom PG 54, 582).

This is the reason why I cannot confine myself to the historical-critical method. For me, this method offers the possibility of identifying the subjective/ objective element which made that an act of revelation (incomprehensible by his object) be limited by the capacity of understanding of the readers. This interpretation offers me the level of historical stasis and does not make sufficiently evident the dynamic aspect of it, its capacity of transcending a historical period and addressing another. I repeat, I do not despise this method, but I rather hear in mind the words of Saint Symeon the New Theologian on those who seek to shock. I use it, but I do not idolatrize it.

Comparing the two laws in what concerns the contents, Saint John Chrysostom finds the Old Testament inferior to the New Testament; of course, this is not due to God, but due to the people to which these laws were addressed. But from the possibility of

comparing them one another, we can deduce their common origin and their partaking in the same family, because the notion of superior or inferior refers to objects belonging to the same genre. Therefore, he concludes by saying that the Law of the Old Testament was a type, a figure of the New Testament, shadow which disappeared simultaneously with the apparition of the Sun of Justice, because the shadow hides when the sun rises. And now, in the shining of the Sun, the work of the Holy Spirit on human beings is more powerful, the gifts offered by God are greater and the reward of the faithful is greater, too. Thus, interpretations given to some old testamentary passages allow the intuition of a conviction that the Fathers of the Church had, namely that these ones were not only addressed to Jews, and that they rather have a prophetic character, addressing the entire humanity.

Another element which determines the unity of the Scripture is its christocentric character, that is why I have chosen to introduce here several patristic hermeneutical landmarks which state the necessity of applying a Christological lecture to the Old Testament.

Patristic landmarks for the re-cognition of the necessity of a Christological lecture of the Old Testament

For the Holy Fathers, the Christocentric character of the Holy Scripture is a means for unity which, evident from the first pages to the final revelation, makes that the Holy Scripture in its entire, both Old and New Testaments, is regarded as a unitary reality. Two levels are identifiable in the Old Testament: one relates events from the history of the chosen people in a literal sense, and a higher level, typological, which announces Christ and essential events from the history of salvation. Thus, the Old and New Testament represent a unitary testimony of the salvation history. Their relation is one from promise to fulfillment, there is an interior, organic unity between them, and the orthodox exegete, just like the Fathers of the Church, interprets the Old Testament in the light of Christ (Breck 2003, 64).

Thus, Christ Himself is the “hermeneutical principle” or the principle of interpretation, because He reveals the true meaning of all inspired Scriptures (Breck 2003, 24). But the principles and hermeneutical presuppositions used by the patristic authors in their essay to interpret the Scripture and to explain the “Christological” signification of the Old Testament suppose a spiritual perspective, called *theoria*, an inspired vision or contemplation of the revealed Truth through the divine power,

given by the Holy Spirit both to the patristic authors and to the exegetes that followed (Breck 2003, 57-8).

A distinction is required here between the different meanings of the Scripture. The Antiochian understood the literal meaning, through an allusion to the “intention of the biblical author”, in other words, “the message which the writer himself understands by the inspiring work of the Holy Spirit and tries to transmit it to the readers”. The spiritual sense, on the other side, refers to the spoken Word of God to the written testimony, in each moment, in every generation in the life of the Church. Nonetheless, for the Antiochian Fathers, the spiritual sense is anchored in the historical events. Transcending the literal sense, the *sensus plenior* updates in every historical event the salvation value of the work of God: in the middle of Israel, and in the highest degree, in the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Breck 2003, 58).

Father John Breck identifies eight principles or presuppositions which would define the patristic interpretation of the Holy Scripture, and I introduce in this conclusive part a few landmarks which I consider essential in any exegetical demarche which we can and must assume nowadays: 1) the last referent of the expression “Word of God” is the Person of the Logos; 2) the Holy Scripture must be understood in a Trinitarian perspective; 3) the testimony of the Scripture must be reinterpreted in each new generation in the life of the Church, under the inspirational guidance of the Holy Spirit; 4) The Word of God serves the plan of God for the salvation of the world, and its interpretation is ecclesial; 5) In the relation of the Bible to the Tradition, as empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Scripture is the canon which determines the veritable Tradition. 6) The Relation between the Old and the New Testament is one from promise to accomplishment / fulfillment. Therefore, the Old Testament must be interpreted from a typological point of view. 7) The Scripture is integrally and uniformly inspired by the Holy Spirit, therefore it can be interpreted in virtue of the exegetical reciprocity, and finally, 8) in order to correctly interpret the Scriptures and to understand the depths of its truth, the exegete must interpret it from the inside, conforming his existence to the teachings of the Holy Scripture (Breck 2003, 69-70).

And this is, maybe, the fundamental principle without which any scientific demarche, no matter how documented, risks to remain outside the sphere of the salvation word transmitted by God to His creature: “Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered...” (Ex 17:14).

Appendix 1

Theological prayer in the Holy Anaphora of Saint Basil the Great Liturgy

Master, Lord, God (Acts 4:24), worshipful Father (Lk 23:34) almighty (Rev 1:8), it is truly just and right to the majesty of Your holiness to praise You, to hymn You (Ps 92:1), to bless You (Ps 63:4), to worship You, to give thanks to You, to glorify You, the only true God (Isa 37:16), and to offer to You this our spiritual worship with a contrite heart and a humble spirit (Ps 51:17). For You have given us to know Your truth (2 Tm 2:25). Who is worthy to praise Your mighty acts (Isa 44:7)? Or to make known all Your praises (Ps 9:14)? Or tell of all Your wonderful deeds (Ps 71:17) at all times (Ps 34:1)? Master of all things, Lord of heaven and earth, and of every creature visible and invisible (Acts 4:24), You are seated upon the throne of glory (Heb 8:1) and behold the depths (3 Children 1:31). You are without beginning (1 Jn 1:1), invisible (Col 1:15), incomprehensible, beyond words (Wis 13:6), unchangeable (Jas 1:17). You are the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 15:6), who is the great God (Tob 3:16) and Savior (Jdg 1:25) of our hope (1 Tm 1:1), the image of Your goodness (Wis 7:26), the true seal of revealing in Himself You (Jn 14:9), the Father (1 Pt 1:17). He is the living Word (Heb 4:12), the true God (Jn 17:3), eternal wisdom (Eph 3:10), life (Col 3:3), sanctification (1 Cor 1:30), power (Rm 1:4), and the true light (Jn 1:9). Through Him the Holy Spirit was manifested (Jn 14:26), the spirit of truth (Jn 14:17) the gift of Sonship (Rom 8:23), the pledge of our future inheritance (Eph 1:14), the first fruits of eternal blessings, the life giving power, the source of sanctification (Jn 7:37-39) through whom every rational and spiritual creature is made capable of worshiping You (Sir 35:17) and giving You eternal glorification, for all things are subject to You. For You are praised by the angels (Manasseh 1:15), archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities, authorities, powers (Col 1:16), and the many eyed Cherubim (Ez 10:12). Round about You stand the Seraphim, one with six wings and the other with six wings; with two they cover their faces; with two they cover their feet; with two they fly, crying out to one another with unceasing voices and ever resounding praises... (Isa 6:2-3).

Appendix 2

Christological prayer in the Holy Anaphora of Saint Basil the Great Liturgy

Together with these blessed powers, loving Master we sinners also cry out and say: Truly You are holy and most holy, and there are no bounds to the majesty of Your holiness (Ps 145:2-4). You are holy in all Your works (Rom 3:4), for with righteousness and true judgment You have ordered all things for us (3 Children 1:3). For having made man by taking dust from the earth (Gn 2:7), and having honored him with Your own image, O God (Gn 1:27), You placed him in a garden of delight (Gn 2, 8, 15), promising him eternal life and the enjoyment of everlasting blessings in the observance of Your commandments (Gn 2:16-17). But when he disobeyed You (Gn 3:11), the true God who had created him, and was led astray by the deception of the serpent (Gn 3:13) becoming subject to death through his own transgressions (Rm 6:23), You, O God, in Your righteous judgment (Ps 119:75), expelled him from paradise into this world (Gn 3:24), returning him to the earth from which he was taken (Gn 3:19), yet providing for him the salvation of regeneration in Your Christ (Titus 3:5). For You did not forever reject Your creature whom You made (Ps 103:14), O Good One, nor did You forget the work of Your hands (Is 64:7), but because of Your tender compassion, You visited him in various ways (Isa 4:31); You sent forth prophets (Heb 1:1); You performed mighty works by Your saints who in every generation have pleased You. You spoke to us by the mouth of Your servants the prophets, announcing to us the salvation which was to come (Is 49:6); You gave us the law to help us (Ps 19:7); You appointed angels as guardians (Heb 1:14). And when the fullness of time had come (Gal 4:4), You spoke to us through Your Son Himself, through whom You created the ages (Heb 1:2). He, being the splendor of Your glory and the image of Your being, upholding all things by the word of His power (Heb 1:3), thought it not robbery to be equal with You, God and Father (Phil 2:6-7). But, being God before all ages (Jn 1:1-2), He appeared on earth and lived with humankind (1 Tm 3:16). Becoming incarnate from a holy Virgin (Mt 1:25), He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, conforming to the body of our lowliness, that He might change us in the likeness of the image of His glory (Phil 3:21). For, since through man sin came into the world and through sin death (Rm 5:12), it pleased Your only begotten Son, who is in Your bosom (Jn 1:18), God and Father (Rom 5:6), born of a woman, the holy Theotokos and ever virgin Mary; born under the law (Gal 4:4), to condemn sin in His flesh (Eph 2:15), so that those who died in Adam

may be brought to life in Him (1 Cor 15:22), Your Christ. He lived in this world, and gave us precepts of salvation (Jn 3:17). Releasing us from the delusions of idolatry (1 Tm 1:9), He guided us to the sure knowledge of You (In 1:18), the true God and Father. He acquired us for Himself, as His chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1 Pt 2:9). Having cleansed us by water (Eph 5:25) and sanctified us with the Holy Spirit, He gave Himself as ransom to death (Eph 5:2) in which we were held captive (Eph 2:15), sold under sin. Descending into Hades through the cross, that He might fill all things with Himself (1 Pt 3:18-19), He loosed the bonds of death (1 Cor 15:25-26). He rose on the third day (1 Cor 15:4), having opened a path for all flesh to the resurrection from the dead (Phil 3:10-11), since it was not possible that the Author of life would be dominated by corruption (Acts 2:27). So He became the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Cor 15:20), the first born of the dead (Rev 1:5), that He might be Himself the first in all things (Heb 2:12). Ascending into heaven, He sat at the right hand of Your majesty on high (Heb 1:3) and He will come to render to each according to His works (Rom 2:6). As memorials of His saving passion, He has left us these gifts (Lk 22:19) which we have set forth before You according to His commands. For when He was about to go forth to His voluntary, ever memorable, and life-giving death (Jn 18:4), on the night on which He was delivered up for the life of the world, He took bread in His holy and pure hands, and presenting it to You, God and Father, and offering thanks, blessing, sanctifying, and breaking it... (1 Cor 11:23-24).

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THE HOLY SCRIPTURE – SOURCE OF THE THEOGNOSIS

Abstract

In his commentary on the Philokalia, Theoklitos of the Dionysiou Monastery while explaining the Chapters about knowledge of Saint Diadochus of Photicaea, talks about three types of Vision, of ‘contemplation’ of God: the natural, the supernatural and the ecstasy. The Holy Scripture and its experience have a very important role in the so-called contemplation, vision or knowledge of God – Theognosis. But this knowledge cannot be limited to the terms which define the theognosis, it’s not only an epistemological knowledge. God’s knowledge is the work of the Holy Spirit within us, which can be accomplished during and through prayer; in the Orthodox Church the word of the Scripture is always read and interpreted within a liturgical and doxological frame, the Scripture being the true source of all the worship forms.



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Keywords

Scripture, Theognosis, knowledge, Philokalia, Revelation

The Holy Scripture – the revealed word of God

The Divine Revelation – the foundation of the knowledge of God

The Orthodox Theology defines the Divine Revelation as God's action of revealing Him-self to His creation, first through the Old Testament's prophets, where He reveals Himself by word, signs and things, then as Person, through His Son, as the Mystery of His will, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:2-3). So, the aim of the Revelation is God's revelation as Person, the uncovering of His will about world, especially about the man, “the crown of creation”, in order to allow man to know His will, but also to know Him as a personal Being open to dialogue with His Word, especially with the humans.

In the Revelation, God is known as through a personal relation. The Revelation is always performed in relation to someone; it consists in a historical sequence of

meetings. Therefore, the Revelation is, in its integrity, a history; it is the historical reality from creation to the second coming of the Lord (Lossky 2006, 34). So, the revelation is a “Theo-cosmic” relationship wherein God reveals Himself to the world that He created, in which we are also included. But the paradox of this relationship is that, even if God reveals Himself to His creation, He reveals Himself as being a transcendent God. Therefore, in the immanence of His revelation, God appears as a transcendent Being. But His transcendence cannot be absolute, because God is a Personal Being and, more than that, a Tri-Personal Being. Having this transcendent dimension, the Person is opened to dialogue, but then, this dialogue makes the Person to be cognoscible (St. Maximus the Confessor 2008, 130).

Thereby, this God, the Emperor of the ages, unspoiled and unseen, hidden, unknown and incomprehensible according to His Essence (Col 1:15; 1 Tm 1:17; Jn 1:18), in His love for mankind revealed Himself and spoke to them “at many times and in various ways” (Heb 1:1), wishing “all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tm 2:4).

The created world, especially the man, “crown of creation” (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1998, 20-21), had since their beginning a precise rationality. God created them with a single mind which can be seen in the axiological acknowledgment of creation, when God Himself “saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Gn 1:31). Through those words of Scripture, it is said not only that, in the beginning, the entire creation was not corrupted by evil’s blemishes whose roots are not in God, but also the fact that the entire creation was settled in a dynamic deification, which should be accomplished through man, who, in his dichotomy unifies inside him the two worlds: the material world, represented by the entire cosmos, and the spiritual one. He could perform this due to the fact that it is a rational Being and he could decipher the rationalities of the creation. This is the knowledge provided to mankind by the act of creation “in God’s image, after God’s likeness” (Gn 1:26). In order to allow the world to accomplish its aim, to fulfil its rationality, the transcendent God, in His Being, turns towards His creation as Person and reveals His will and His plans concerning the world. The man, created “in God’s image, after His likeness” is capable to receive this revelation. If the original sin overshadows God’s image in man and, through that, pervert men’s knowledge capacity, God, through His great mercy and His infinite love towards the created world, restores, through the Revelation men’s knowledge power and, through that, the primary rationality of the creation, “for God so loved the world

that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). So, God reveals Himself, due to His love for mankind, in order to allow the man to know His will and His plans regarding world and man (Popescu 2005, 42).

In order to allow the man to arrive to knowledge, there were two movements: the descent of God to His creation by the act of Revelation and the ascension of man, and, through man, the ascension of the entire created universe to God through knowledge. And because the Revelation reaches its high-point in the incarnation of the Son of God, the Second Person of The Holy Trinity, and His coming into the world, which revealed us the sense of the man-kind existence “the descent of the divine Person of Christ makes possible the ascension of man in the Holy Spirit” (St. Irenaios PG 7, 1120; St. Athanasios the Great PG 25, 192b; Lossky 1998, 91). Therefore, through the Revelation of the Incarnated Son, God Himself is present in a personal way in the midst of men who, through God, became “participants to the divine nature” (2 Pt 1:4). So, Christ, The Incarnated Son and The Word of God, is the end and the perfection of the Revelation.

God's revelation is the foundation of God's Knowledge. Without it, man would not be able to get in communion with God, Who would remain forever transcendent and hidden for men. Only through revelation, God reveals Himself in a personal way and He reveals His will and His plans concerning the world and man. But man could not know God if he wouldn't be gifted with the capacity of knowing by the very act of creation. That is why we often find in the writings of the Fathers the expression that man is a rational being because he was created in God's image (Nellas 2002, 62). In this sense, Saint Athanasios the Great said: “God did not create man the way He made the voiceless animals, but He made him in His image, giving him the power of His Word, therefore being an image of the Word and being logical, to dwell in the joy”. And, in another place: “It would be enough for them the grace of being in God-Word's image to know Him” (St. Athanasios the Great 1987, 92, 105).

We shall not speak here about the different types of revelation, or about the way in which it was given during history, because these are not the aims of the present study; but we have to say that the Church, both of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, which inaugurates the Kingdom of God, which will come and, at the same time, is already present through grace in the heart of creation, where the man acquires God's likeness, intends to keep and to communicate the truth of God's revelation.

The Holy Scripture, the preserver of the revealed Word of God

The Christian Orthodox doctrine considers that God's Revelation to man is included in The Holy Scripture and The Holy Tradition. In the Orthodox Church, the Holy Scripture is considered to be the God's Revelation par excellence, being the revealed word of God, transmitted through the holy writers to the mankind. It was written under the inspiration of The Holy Spirit and it occupies "a unique and absolute position between the other forms of Revelation", The Holy Scripture representing the primary source for the faith of the Church (Bria 1970, 395).

The Holy Scripture contains God's revealed word and many aspects concerning God's knowledge, things useful for our salvation, as Saint Epiphanius of Salamis (PG 33, 66) claims.

If the dynamism of God's knowledge corresponds to the eternal life, as the Saviour says: "this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (Jn 17:3), then the knowledge of the Holy Scripture appears to be of great importance for the entire humanity, because it includes the Revealed Word of God. This word was given step by step to mankind in order to prepare man for receiving the Incarnated Word, wherein culminates and accomplishes the entire revelation. So, as Saint John Chrysostom affirms, the Scripture "is the solemn letter of God, sent on earth" (Sf. Ioan Gură de Aur 2002, 616).

Initially, the Divine Revelation was transmitted by spoken tradition. Then, under the in-spiration of The Holy Spirit, a part of the Tradition was recorded in The Holy Scripture. But The Holy Scripture is not only a book in which it's written what God did in order to prepare the Incarnation and through the Incarnation of His Son, but also is a book which tells us what the Incarnated and Resurrected Son of God does and will do for us until the end of the ages, in order to guide us to Resurrection. The Scriptures describe not only the action of God's descending to us through Incarnation, but also the beginning of our way to entheosis (Stăniloae 2003, 54). So, the Holy Scripture has a specially authority because it includes God's Revelation, the word addressed by Him to mankind for its salvation.

That active word of God reveals the sense of the created world, especially the sense of man, and accepting it, man can get to know the will of God, to know God on a personal level, God Who pours His abundance of the divine life upon those who believe and receive (Mk 16:15) His word. There is no doubt regarding the divine content of The Holy Scripture. The divine authority of the Old Testament was accepted first by Jesus

Christ, Who said: “the Scripture cannot be broken” (Jn 10:35). The Old Testament is necessary because it is an integral part of the Revelation, announcing through content the salvation brought by Lord Jesus Christ. That is why, the lack of knowing the Scripture might have severe consequences; Jesus Christ shows this by saying: “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God” (Mt 22:29). Then, the authority of the Old Testament is recognized then by the writers of The New Testament, who show that the Old Testament is revealed by God, is the word of God which is accomplished through Christ; “this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets” (Acts 3:18).

If The Old Testament comprises the revealed word of God, through which He prepares man and the world for the salvation brought by His Incarnated Son, then the New Testament is the accomplishment of this word in the human-divine person of Jesus Christ.

The Christocentricity of the Holy Scripture: Christ – The Incarnated Word as Pathway to knowledge of the Holy Trinity

Saint John, the Evangelist, begins his Gospel with the annunciation of The Incarnated Logos: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (Jn 1:1,14). Actually, the aim of the entire New Testament is to present the Divine-Human Person of The Incarnated Word, Who opens for us the access to the divine life which irradiates from the heart of The Holy Trinity; this is possible through our trust in Him and by His knowledge: “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (Jn 20:31). “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (Jn 17:3).

The authors of The New Testament are constructing their writings on The Person of Jesus Christ, writing about This Life-giving Word, through whom we enter in communion with the Father. Their word is the true testimony concerning Jesus Christ, because they are writing from their vivid experience that they had with their Teacher, an experience lived near the Life-giving Word, an word transmitted to all those who were called into the eternal life: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and

testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ” (1 Jn 1:1-3).

The Incarnation of our Lord is the center, the sense and the aim of the world and this is stated throughout the Scripture, because “The mystery of Word’s Incarnation contains inside it the meaning of all things and types from Scripture and the wisdom of all seen and unseen creatures” (St. Maximus the Confessor 1999, 66). So, The Old Testament is accomplished in Jesus Christ. The entire Old Testament was oriented towards Christ: “The prophets were His disciples in spirit and they were waiting for Him as their Lord” (St. Ignatios 1979, 167). Also, the prophets “had announced the Gospel, they hoped for Christ and expected Him, they were rescued trusting Him, remaining in the unity of Jesus Christ as saints who should be admired and loved; they accepted the testimony of Jesus Christ and they were admitted in the gospel of our common hope” (St. Ignatios 1979, 179).

So, The Old Testament appears as a “leader to Christ” (Gal 3:24), because it predicts His coming in the world and the salvation that He brings with Him. The words of The Scripture are the imminent occasion of entering in interrelation with the authentic Person of Christ, through the work of The Holy Spirit, not only through their written form, but also through the knowledge of their content. “In the same way as the words of Torah and of the prophets, which precedes His Incarnation, and lead the souls towards Christ – said St. Maximus the Confessor – In the same way The Incarnated Word of God, ascended in glory, made Himself the predecessor of His spiritual coming, leading the souls by His own words, while accepting His illuminating and divine coming” (St. Maximus the Confessor 1999, 177).

The Christocentricity of the Holy Scripture is confessed by Lord Himself through the words: “You diligently study the Scriptures. These are the Scriptures that testify about me” (Jn 5:39). The Old Testament has an important messianic character, its Christocentricity having its roots in the Law of Moses: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Lk 24:27). So, the Incarnated Word takes the central idea of The Holy Scripture, the whole Revelation being focused on Him and The Scripture, which is explained by Him. Jesus Christ is The One Who gives authority to Scriptures, because the actual Christians, while reading The Bible are searching for Him. The words of Scripture reveal

Christ as the Incarnated God, wherein the man touched the complete perfection, Christ representing the model, the aim and the access way for each human being: “I am the way and the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6). That is why the knowledge and the experience of His words, or their “incarnation” in the lives of those who believe in Him will bring their salvation.

The knowing of Scripture in the Church – way of the knowledge of God

The Church and the Scripture

The Church is “The Body of Christ”, “the pillar and the foundation of truth”. In Church, the life of The Holy Trinity is extended through The Holy Spirit into all the ones who believe and confess the true faith in the resurrected Christ, Who sits at the right hand of God and Father, therefore elevating the human nature at the highest level of divinization and perfection. He brought the complete revelation about God because He is the end and the top of any revelation, because only in Christ God was present through humans.

God's presence is getting permanent and actualized until the end of world in the Church, through the Holy Spirit, Who makes it present in an intimate way to those who believe, until the end of the ages. In Jesus Christ, The Incarnated Word and Son, God Himself spoke to the humans using human words. But His words have transforming powers for all those who are listening and are accomplishing them, because there are not simple human words, but words which are emerging from the hypostatical and all-powerful Word of Father. His words are impregnated with the creative and accomplishing presence of Word, Who, in the Divine- Human Person of Jesus Christ, expresses Himself for the salvation of each person (St. Athanasios the Great 1987).

Therefore, the truth which resides in the Church, which is the extension of Jesus Christ until the end of ages, the Word-Christ, through His Person, but also through His words, is present, alive and working till the end of time. The Church formed, since its beginnings, a unity with the revelation under its two forms (The Holy Tradition and The Holy Scripture), the Church having a primacy of time and function. The Church preceded the first writings of the New Testament, as the Judaic community took priority of the Old Testament books.

The Church has come into existence before the apparition of the New Testament books, the faithful using the spoken homilies, the vivid Tradition. In this Tradition, they

distinguished the word of God in order to be able to preach by word of mouth the Gospel of Christ. After that, by practical needs, the writings of New Testament had grown. These writings had authority, but the Church was the one who, by its divine structure and function decided which ones of the multitude of existing books are canonical, inspired, authentic and worth to present the faith and to explain it to its members. The Church, the one that recognized and proclaimed the authority of canonical writings, present them to its congregation as the word of God concerning the faith, the moral life and God's knowledge (Basarab 1980, 237).

So, the Church, the ship in which the believers are travelling towards salvation and eternal life in communion with God, and the knowledge of the Holy Trinity, held during history the designation of interpreting the words of The Scripture for everyone's understanding and to offer to all the believers the possibility to accede to God's words in order to know the Holy Trinity's Persons, for salvation and for their divinization through grace.

The Knowing of God through the Holy Scripture in Church

We saw above what was the role of the Church in accepting the Canon of the Holy Scripture and we have shown that the Church is the absolute keeper of the Bible, and also, its authorized interpreter. The Bible is explained in order to transmit the knowledge of God to the members of the Church, the biblical exegesis being made in order to form the mystical body of Christ. This is the reason which made Saint Cyril of Jerusalem to explained those who were preparing for the baptism, in his Catechesis, saying: "The Scriptures of The Old and The New Testament are teaching us the doctrines of faith. One is The God of the two Testaments, the One who told us about Christ before, in The Old Testament, showing us in the New Testament, the One Who guided us through Law and Prophets to Christ... Read the Divine Scriptures!" (St. Cyril of Jerusalem 2003, 66)

The Holy Scripture was welcomed by Church since its beginning, in its cult. In the center of the ancient Christian worship, where the Word of God spoke, read and preached, and in the Divine Eucharist. The Word was then explained in the homilies, in order to allow all the believers to access the knowledge of God through it. That is why the Holy Scripture became the main source of the homilies during the golden age of Christianity. After the Saint Apostles and their apprentices, the carriers of the divine revelation were the Fathers of the Church. They are the receivers and the keepers of the divine revelation, but they had also transmitted forward this revelation, in its genuine

form (Popa 1970, 431).

In this work of transmitting the Revelation, the Church Fathers added another work, of the same importance: the exegesis, namely to explain and to understand the Revelation from the Holy Scripture, aiming to make it more accessible and, by that, to ensure its wider circulation of it and a progress in God's knowledge (Belu 1959, 549-50). The contemporary man has access to all kind of information. Through these means he can arrive to knowledge. But the knowledge of the truth comes only through God's knowledge. That is why he should benefit by having access to the Bible and by listening and reading the words of the eternal life; the Saviour says: "whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life (Jn 5:24).

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THE PSALTYRION – REVELATION OF THE WELL RECEIVED PRAYER

Abstract

In this study we are proposing to reveal the Psalms as a model for prayers welcomed by God and pleasing to Him. Therefore, we will try to argue the above-mentioned through substantially biblical arguments, starting from the internal structure of Psalms, reaching at the way that Psalms were received by the first Christian communities. Then we will mention and analyze the testimony of the Church Fathers about the way that Psalms were assumed into individual and community prayer program. To distinguish the impact that Psalms had (and are still having) into liturgical life, we will expose their position inside of all Orthodox rituals. Before ending this demarche, we will mention the opinion of the Church Fathers regarding Psalm Book as well as the manner they argue it's frequent use by Christians.



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Introduction

When God reveals Himself to us and He share us His generous gifts, thankfulness surges into our souls. Naturally, we are trying to offer thanks to God so that our words and feelings will be truly welcomed and well received. Is it enough to simply thank God, or should we use a distinct way of addressing Him? We often think that there is no proper way to express our feelings. So, we are maidenly asking God how to pray. If we were one of Christ apostles, we would have had a straight answer from Him. But we are not... so what should we do? How to find such a complex answer without a proper help? So, we should have a competent guide. What could be more appropriate for this if not the one that guided humanity towards Christ?

Thereupon, we should turn to the Old Law to find an answer to our request. The souls of the people who cried for God's name will teach us how to pray, where to search for Him and how to thank Him. The Psalteryon is the book of the Old Testament that

best expresses human needs, sufferings and hopes. In this respect, Nicolae Iorga said: „It is the incomparable writing whose royal brightness serves as vestment for every humble feeling that is not capable of expressing itself through words. There are one hundred and fifty confessions, prayers, hymns and lamentations that reveal the human soul observing itself and searching for the Holy Powers with a humble and frightful enthusiasm.” (Iorga 1925, 375)

From ancient times, the Book of Psalms has had a special place in Jewish and Christian spiritual life. Psalms, the prayer par excellence (Abrudan 1985, 460), had been common in the synagogue worship (Negoiță 1940, 87), and later Christians made use of them either as distinct prayers of the early Christian worship, or as a model for Christological psalms (Nikolakopoulos 2008, 149-50, 155-7). The latter have been created because the coordinates of Jewish-Christian life changed. As time passed by, the Psalteryion became an important part of private worship. Clergymen (Basarab 2005, 164-5), hermits and laymen took up the inner world of psalms, and gave them a special place in daily prayer.

In this study, we will try to identify and analyses the reasons of including psalms in the category of the prayer that God accepts and agrees with. For this purpose, we will use examples from the Holy Scripture and Patristic reflections.

Psalms – famous Old Testament prayers

The revealed content of the Psalteryion is the main reason of accepting it as a collection of prayers. In God's care, the authors of psalms wrote down their thoughts and feelings, which belonged to different stages of spiritual perfection; they were offered to people as models for their own spiritual life. There is not the same thing for the faithful if he uses his own words or the words of the Holy Scripture. The later are coming from God and they carry inside the mark of the Holy Spirit (Abrudan 1985, 455), so they guide man better through word towards the communion with the divine Word. After a careful analysis of the internal structure of Psalms we will see that through them God is teaching us how to pray, so it would be easy for us to learn the main coordinates of a well-received prayer. In the following part of the study, we will try to emphasize the necessary elements and stages of such a prayer; we will offer the most relevant examples:

The recipient must be a known God. When the psalmist prays to God, he has to be sure that God really exists. Even if he hasn't met Him personally or hasn't felt His presence in the depth of his heart, he must have a good reference point. For Jewish

people, the true God was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Consequently, the mere fact of mentioning the name of one of the three patriarchs was enough for proving God's existence ("O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob" – Ps 84:9). Once this aspect was clarified, there was a need of confessing one's faith in this God and accepting Him as a personal God („I said unto the LORD, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD" – Ps 140:6).

Prayers must begin with blessing and worship ("Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications" – Ps 28:8). This is by no means questionable flattery since God does not need the psalmist's praise. However, it is decent for him to behave nobly. That is why it is necessary for the psalmist to express words of gratitude and consideration towards the Supreme Master before making a request ("Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me" – Ps 66:15, 19).

The psalmist remembers God's endless goodness in order to be sure that his prayer is heard. For this reason, many psalms praise God's merciful acts ("For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that calls upon thee. Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works" – Ps 86:4,7). His goodness is not conditioned by psalmist's acts and the chosen people's history testifies it. Many times God helped the Jews because of covenant between Him and the three patriarchs or because His love towards Moses, David or ones He appreciated. "Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless, he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry: And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies." – Ps 106:43-45).

There is a great connection between the psalmist's particular prayer and the communal prayer. The temple was the place where God was present without any doubt. On this account, the raised up hands towards the house of worship indicate a direct relation with The One Whose glory dwells between the Cherubims' wings ("Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle" – Ps 28:2). Gestures that are connected to the communal prayer are very often introduced in psalms. For example, prayer is compared with incense that rises up to the spiritual altar above the sky; moreover, the fact of praying itself is considered an evening sacrifice ("Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" – Ps 141:2).

The prayer time is characterized by rhythm and regularity. At a certain moment, the psalmist says he worships God seven times a day (Ps. 119, 164). Therefore, praying is made “in an acceptable time” (Ps 69:15): it begins in the morning (“My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up” – Ps 5:1), it continues during the day and night (“O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee: Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;” – Ps 88:1-2) and it ends at midnight (“At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments” – Ps 119:62).

The most common form of prayer is addressing God in times of suffering (“Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness” – Ps 143:1). It was a normal thing for the psalmist to ask for God's help when he couldn't find escape. Usually, he cries out desperately in the horrid moments when the seen or unseen enemy takes him on (“Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication. Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise; Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me. My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me” – Ps 55:1-5). God answers prayer at once, and this gives hope to the psalmist that no matter what his suffering is, he will find salvation (“Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer” – Ps 4:1).

The psalmist does not hide his spiritual thoughts when praying, but he confesses sincerely. The consequence of direct confession is relief (“I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they prevail laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living” – Ps 142:1-5). This confession also shows the psalmist's familiarity with God and his complete trust.

The psalmist calls on God for His mercy, since he is conscious of his humble state (“O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have

mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long? Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake. The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer” – Ps 7:1-4.9). The psalmist asks God for mercy, being conscious of his unrighteous deeds. Even if at times he is morally good, the petition emphasizes God's reward for righteousness (“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me” – Ps 66:15-19).

Humbleness is the main characteristic of the psalmist's prayer. But for understanding and assuming the nothingness of his being, he wouldn't be appreciated by God (“I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I” – Ps 142:5-6). This may be the reason why the psalmist makes so many references to the weakness and ephemerality of the human being.

Psalmist's prayer comes from the pure heart, from the unsly mind (“Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer that goeth not out of feigned lips” – Ps 17:1). It is accompanied by fast (“But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom” – Ps 35:12) and by body suffering (“Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily. For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as a hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin” – Ps 102:3-6).

Patience combined with the hope of salvation is the culmination of psalmist's prayer. His similar personal or communal experiences give him the certainty that he will be saved from trouble (“I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings” – Ps 40:1-2).

The above-mentioned aspects show how natural praying should be made. To begin with, it is important how one relates to God. Then, His glorification and long-lasting humbleness should not be forgotten. By considering these, the psalmist is saved by God's mercy. Therefore, it is easy to understand why psalms made such a great impact

on posterity. They were integrated in corporate and private prayers, and consequently, they were taken up as revealed prayers of soteriological content.

The neo-testamentary reception of psalms

The first proof of taking up psalms can be found in the New Testament. There are many verses (1 Cor 14:26; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16-17 and Jas 5:13) that describe the place psalms had in the Judeo-Christian rite. They had become a fundamental part of the first liturgical forms. According to some exegetes, the psalms mentioned in the Epistles of Saint Paul and in the universal Epistle of Saint James, are not from the Old Testament. They are Christian psalms that were composed following the model and the structure of the Psalms of David. Quoting Max Herzog von Sachsen, the Orthodox theologian Konstantin Nikolakopoulos says: "It is not absolutely necessary and without doubt to identify the religious songs of the Early Church called by Saint Paul psalms, with the Old Testament psalms of David. Not only Saint Paul himself, but also the hymnography and the hymnology of that time offer solid information about the new Christian psalms. These are in connection with the psalms of David." (Nikolakopoulos 2008, 141)

Professor's Nikolakopoulos opinion is plausible but we should not lose sight of the role that the Psalms of David had in the Early Church's life. If we analyse attentively the New Testament old-testamentary quotes (literal or paraphrased), we will notice that the authors inspired by the Holy Spirit were familiar with those psalms. Almost half (116) of the quotes (283) belonged to the Book of Psalms (Abrudan 1985, 469). We can conclude that the addressees of the new-testamentary writings knew and understood the psalms; psalms had been assimilated because of the communal and private prayers.

Therefore, the Old Testamentary legacy of David was used during the liturgical services of the Early Church, since Christians consider David a prophet and a man in Christ. Davidian psalms represent a bridge between the promises of God and their fulfilment; they are seen as Bible prophecies with Christological connotations. In Christianity, the Christologic/ typologic Old Testament's interpretation, strongly related to the relieving of many Old Testament texts into the Christian rite constitutes an irreplaceable *topos*.

At the same time, it is known that early Christians enlarged the cultic material: they created new religious songs destined to liturgical services. After God's incarnation, although the Old Testamentary psalms were not abolished, it was necessary to fill *the liturgical need* of early Christians, in order to express the soteriological dimension.

A great number of Christological psalms were created during the New Testament's writing period; psalm verses are occasionally, but concretely mentioned by hagiographic writers (Nikolakopoulos 1996, 154-6).

Patristic mentioning concerning the Psalteryion use in the communal and private prayers of the early Christian period

After the definite split between the Church and the Synagogue, psalms continued to be part of Christian ritual and were used more intensively than before. Apologist Tertullian wrote that during his time (2nd century BC) Christian communities made use of psalms as basic structures of the rite. During a Sunday service, he underlines the following: "While the Scriptures are read and psalms are sung, sermons are delivered and prayers offered, she saw and heard mysteries." (Tertulian 1981, 271)

Apostolic Constitutions, a 3rd century Christian document, presents the same practices: "The reader standing on a height in the middle shall read the Books of Moses and Jesus son of Nave, and of the Judges and Kings, and of Chronicles, after these, those of Job and Solomon and the sixteen Prophets. The lessons having been read by two [readers], another one shall sing the hymns of David and the people answer back the verses. After this, our Acts [the Apostles are supposed to be speaking] shall be read and the letters of Paul, our fellow- worker, which he sent to the Churches." (Tarnavschi 1928, 569)

Oriental Churches had similar customs: Christians kept vigil and sang all the psalms on the eve of a holy day (Simedrea 1968, 206). Saint John Cassian has a broad study on the monastic arrangements of psalm reading. He observes that the monks from the monasteries in the Tebaida region of Egypt read daily 12 psalms at Vespers and at Midnight Office (St. John Cassian 1997, 206). Moreover, there was a custom to read three psalms at the end of the Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours in the monasteries of Palestine and Mesopotamia (St. John Cassian 1997, 208).

Clement of Alexandria gives us a much broader insight into the use of psalms. Christians had the custom to sing psalms when they had a meal. It is possible that the custom was established during the agape feasts and has been extended to private life: "And as it is befitting, before partaking of food, that we should bless the Creator of all; so also in drinking it is suitable to praise Him on partaking of His creatures. For the psalm is a melodious and sober blessing. The apostle calls the psalm a spiritual song (Eph 5:19)." (Clement of Alexandria 1984, 255-6)

During the time of Saint Ambrose of Milan, the alternative singing custom was introduced in the West (Lesetre 1928). This was owing to the conflict between the Orthodox and Arians. During the night vigil, when Christians from Milan were protecting the church against the Arians, Saint Ambrose advised them to keep vigil and to alternate choral singing. Beside communal and private prayers, psalms were considered useful for the spiritual development of the believers. Apart from using them in prayer, the Church encouraged people to study and meditate on psalms. Spiritual perfection is favored by the frequent use of psalms, due to memorizing and assimilating them. Related to this aspect, Saint Basil the Great says: “A psalm is a safeguard for infants, an adornment for those at the height of their vigor, a consolation for the elders.” (St. Basil the Great 1986, 184) No wonder early Christians knew the Psalteryion by heart and uttered the psalms without ceasing during their daily activities. In this context, Saint Ambrose considers it is unnatural and improper for a Christian to let a single day pass without reciting psalms (St. Ambrose of Milan PL 14, 237). Saint Augustine considered that martyrs, who endure suffering and utter psalms, strengthen their soul accordingly (St. Augustine 1997, 393).

The psalms in the eastern rite

The Psalteryion is the most common book of the Orthodox Church rite; psalm verses are always used during liturgical Services (Neaga 1971, 228). No matter if we take them separately or in kathismata, they enrich and give sense to church services. With the purpose of offering a comprehensive image of the psalms in the rite of the Orthodox Church, we consider it is proper to present in a detailed manner the usage of psalms during the liturgical year. In the first part of this chapter, we will present psalms individually, while in the second part we will present them divided into the 20 kathismata.

A.

Ps 2 – at the First Hour on Holy Friday;

Ps 3 – at Matins;

Ps 4 – at the Great Compline during Great Lent;

Ps 5 – at the First Hour during the year and at Christmas, at Theophany and on Holy Friday during the Royal Hours; verses 7-8 – the Entrance Prayers;

Ps 6 – at the Great Compline during Great Lent;

Ps 9 – at the Baptism of the Jews and during the prayers for sick animals;

Ps 13 – at the Great Compline during Great Lent;

Ps 18 – during Flag consecration prayers;

Ps 19 – at the Tedeum on the opening session of the Holy Synod;

Ps 20 – at Matins, apart from Great Lent; in Penticostarion and at the Tedeum on national holidays;

Ps 21 – at Matins, apart from Great Lent and Penticostarion;

Ps 22 – at the First Hour on Holy Friday;

Ps 23 – at the First Hour at Theophany, at the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharistic orderliness, at the dedication of the church, at the dedication of the Eucharistic vessels (paten, cup, star-cover and spoon), at the married priests and deacons' funeral, at the Baptism of the Jews, at the dedication ceremony of religious schools, during the prayer for those troubled by the evil spirit;

Ps 24 – at the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharistic orderliness;

Ps 25 – at the Great Compline during Great Lent; at the Third Hour during the year;

Ps 26 – at the dedication of the church, at the dedication of the Eucharistic vessels (Censer, antidoron vase, spear, cruets for wine and water); verses 6-12 – during the prayer of the washing of hands before the beginning of the Proskomedie;

Ps 27 – at the First Hour at Theophany, at the tonsuring of rasophors, at the Baptism of the Jews, during the reception of the schismatic into the Orthodox Church, during the prayer for those troubled by the evil spirit;

Ps 28 – during Flag consecration prayers;

Ps 29 – at the Third Hour at Theophany, at the Baptism of the Jews, at the blessing and dedication of church's bells;

Ps 30 – at the Mid-Hour of the Third Hour;

Ps 31 – at the Great Compline during Great Lent;

Ps 32 – at the Mid-Hour of the Third Hour; during the Sacrament of the Holy Baptism (when hands are being washed);

Ps 34 – at Vespers during Great Lent; at Typika of Christmas Eve and Theophany Eve, if there is no liturgical service, at the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, apart from the period of Penticostarion, at the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great and at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, at the Baptism of the Jews, at the Tedeum for the beginning of the school year in theological schools;

Ps 35 – at the Third Hour on Holy Friday;

Ps 37 – at the Tedeum on the opening of the Church National Assembly, of the Eparchial Assembly etc;

Ps 38 – at Matins;

Ps 42 – at the Third Hour at Theophany, at the Baptism of the Jews;

Ps 44 – at the First Hour at Christmas and at the dedication of the Most Holy Theotokos icons; verses 4-6 – at the dedication of flags;

Ps 46 – at the First Hour at Christmas and at the Mid-Hour of the First Hour;

Ps 51 – at the Great Compline and at the Small Compline; at everyday, Saturday and Sunday Midnight Office, at Matins, apart from the Bright Week, at the Third Hour at Christmas, at Theophany and on Holy Friday, during the Sacrament of Holy Confession, of the Eucharist and of the Holy Unction, during the Small Blessing of the Water, during the Akathist Hymn dedicated to the Mother of God, to Our Lord Jesus Christ and to Holy Trinity, during the first and second Small Supplicatory Canon to the Holy Theotokos, during the prayers for the persons who are on the point of dying, at the funerals of the laity, of infants, of married priests and deacons, during the prayer for those troubled by the evil spirit; during periods of infectious diseases and epidemics (plagues, cholera), during the prayers to Holy Trinity and all saints, during the prayers uttered at the beginning of the foundation of a church, during the tonsuring of rasophors, during the tonsure to the Great Schema, during the morning prayer, at the beginning of the Menaion and Octoechos canons for the worship of saints;

Ps 54 – at the Sixth Hour during the year and on Holy Friday;

Ps 55 – at the Sixth Hour during the year;

Ps 56 – at the Mid-Hour of the Sixth Hour;

Ps 57 – at the Mid-Hour of the Sixth Hour;

Ps 61 – at the Mid-Hour of the Third Hour;

Ps 63 – at Matins;

Ps 65 – at Saturday Midnight Office, during the New Year's Eve Tedeum, during the Tedeum on the beginning of the period of sowing, during drought prayers;

Ps 66 – at Saturday Midnight Office;

Ps 67 – at Saturday Midnight Office, at the Third Hour at Christmas, at the Baptism of Lutherans;

Ps 68 – at Saturday Midnight Office and during the prayers for those troubled by the evil spirit;

Ps 69 – at Saturday Midnight Office, at the Ninth Hour on Holy Friday and during the prayers against floods;

Ps 70 – at Saturday Midnight Office, at the Mid-Hour of the Sixth Hour, during the Great Compline and Small Compline, at the Ninth Hour on Holy Friday, in the haunted house orderliness, during the prayers for the persons who are on the point of dying; during the prayers for the sick (with the spear in the hand), during the blessing and the dedication of the bell;

Ps 72 – at the Sixth Hour at Christmas;

Ps 74 – at the Sixth Hour at Theophany;

Ps 77 – at the Sixth Hour at Theophany;

Ps 84 – at the Ninth Hour during the year, during the prayers uttered at the beginning of the foundation of a church, at the dedication of the church;

Ps 85 – at the Ninth Hour during the year;

Ps 86 – at the Ninth Hour during the year, inclusively when the Royal Hours are read (at Christmas, at Theophany, on Holy Friday);

Ps 87 – at the Ninth Hour during the year, during the prayers uttered at the beginning of the foundation of a church;

Ps 88 – at Matins and during periods of infectious diseases;

Ps 89 – at the dedications of Jesus Christ and the Great Feast Days icons;

Ps 90 – at the Ninth Hour during the year;

Ps 91 – at the Sixth Hour during the year and at Christmas, at Theophany and on Holy Friday during the Royal Hours, during the Great Compline, during the house blessing prayers, at the funerals of the laity and of infants, during the requiem;

Ps 92 – at the Mid-Hour of the First Hour;

Ps 93 – at the Mid-Hour of the First Hour, at the Ninth Hour at Theophany, during Proskomedie when the priest covers the paten with the Holy Gifts, during the blessing of the liturgical vestments and of the Holy Table clothes;

Ps 99 – during the dedication of the new Crosses and Crucifixes;

Ps 101 – at the First Hour during the year and during the new house blessing prayers;

Ps 102 – at Great Compline during Great Lent;

Ps 103 – at Matins and at Typika, apart from Great Lent;

Ps 104 – at Vespers;

Ps 107 – during the new ship and boats blessing prayers;

Ps 109 – at the Third Hour on Holy Friday;

Ps 110 – at the Ninth Hour at Christmas;

Ps 111 – at the Ninth Hour at Christmas;

Ps 113 – at the Mid-Hour of the Ninth Hour;

Ps 114 – at the Ninth Hour at Theophany;

Ps 116 – during the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist;

Ps 117 – at Matins;

Ps 118 – during the Tedeum on thanksgiving to God for his blessing;

Ps 119 – at daily Midnight Office, at the funerals of the laity, of married priests and deacons and of monks;

Ps 121 – at daily and Saturday Midnight Office;

Ps 122 – during the prayers uttered at the beginning of the foundation of a church; during the Panagia in monasteries on important days;

Ps 123 – at Matins;

Ps 127 – during the prayers uttered at the beginning of the foundation of a church;

Ps 128 – during the Sacrament of Matrimony, at the dedication of the group of artisans' flag;

Ps 130 – at Matins;

Ps 132 – at Sixth Hour at Christmas, during the Tedeum on the birthday of the Patriarch, of the metropolitan or of the bishop; during the prayers uttered at the beginning of the erection of a church, during the blessing of the new Tabernacle;

Ps 133 – during the dedication of the liturgical attires (Sticharions, Epitrachelion, Phelonion, zone and cuffs), during the dedication of the church and during the dedication of the Antimension; verse 2 - during the prayer uttered while putting on the epitrachelion;

Ps 134 – at daily and Saturday Midnight Office;

Ps 138 – at the Mid-Hour of the Ninth Hour;

Ps 139 – during the dedication of the icon of saints, during all Akathist Hymns apart from the one to Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Annunciation Akathist Hymn;

Ps 140 – at the Sixth Hour and at the Mid-Hour of the Ninth Hour;

Ps 141 – at Matins;

Ps 142 – at Matins;

Ps 143 – during Great and Small Compline, at Matins, during the Holy Unction, during the Small Blessing of the Water, during the first and the second Paraclis of the Most Holy Theotokos, during the Akathist Hymn to Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Annunciation Akathist Hymn, during the prayers uttered at the beginning of the erection of a church; during the prayer for those troubled by the evil spirit, during the prayers for the persons who are on the point of dying;

Ps 144 – during the dedication of the soldier flag;

Ps 145 – at Vespers during Great Lent, during common meals in monastic communities, during the Panagia in monasteries on important days, during the dedication of the church;

Ps 146 – at Typika;

Ps 148 – at Matins (at Lauds) and during the blessing and the dedication of the church's bells;

Ps 149 – at Matins (at Lauds);

Ps 150 – at Matins (at Lauds), during the Great Compline and during the blessing and the dedication of the church's bells (Negoiță 1940, 114-64).

B.

Kathisma I – at Matins during the year and sometimes on Sundays, on the Eve of a Great Feast or on the Eve of the celebration of a Polyeleos Saint; only the first part is sung in this case (Happy are those who do not follow...); at Wednesday Matins during Great Lent, apart from the Holy Week;

Kathisma II – at Sunday Matins during the year, on the 5th Wednesday of Great Lent, on Wednesday at the First Hour in the first, second, third, fourth and sixth week of Great Lent;

Kathisma III – at Sunday Matins during the year, at the First Hour on the 5th Wednesday of

Great Lent; on Wednesdays at the Third Hour in the first, second, third, fourth and sixth week of Great Lent;

Kathisma IV – at Monday Matins during the year, at the Third Hour, on the 5th Wednesday of Great Lent, on Wednesday at the Sixth Hour in the first, second, third, fourth and sixth week of Great Lent;

Kathisma V – at Monday Matins during the year, at the Six Hour on the 5th Wednesday of Great Lent, on Wednesday at the Ninth Hour in the first, second, third, fourth and sixth week of Great Lent;

Kathisma VI – at Monday Vespers in the following period: the Sunday of Saint Thomas, – September 21st , December 21st – until and including January 14th , in the two weeks between the Sunday of the Prodigal Son and Forgiveness Sunday; at Monday Matins in the following period: September 22nd – December 20th , January 15th – the Saturday before the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, on Mondays during Great Lent, on the first, second, third, forth and sixth Thursday of Great Lent; at Ninth Hour on the 5th Wednesday of Great Lent;

Kathisma VII – at the 5th Wednesday Vespers in Great Lent; at Tuesday Matins during the year, apart from Great Lent, on the first, second, third, forth and sixth Thursday of Great Lent; at Sixth Hour on Monday in Great Lent;

Kathisma VIII – at Tuesday Matins during the year, apart from Great Lent; at Sixth Hour on Monday in Great Lent apart from the Holy Week;

Kathisma IX – at Tuesday Vespers in the following period: the Sunday of Saint Thomas, – September 21st , December 21st , until and including January 14th; in the two weeks between the Sunday of the Prodigal Son and Forgiveness Sunday; at Tuesday Matins in the following period: September 22nd – December 20th , January 15th – the Saturday before the Sunday of the Prodigal Son and on Holy Tuesday; on Thursday at the First Hour in the first, second, third, fourth and sixth week of Great Lent; on the 5th Thursday at the Third Hour, on Monday at the Ninth Hour in Great Lent, apart from the Holy Week;

Kathisma X – at the 5th Monday Vespers of Great Lent; at Tuesday Matins in Great Lent, apart from the 5th week, on Wednesday Matins apart from Great Lent; at the Third Hour on first, second, third, fourth and sixth Thursday of Great Lent; at Sixth Hour on the 5th Thursday of Great Lent;

Kathisma XI – at Wednesday Matins during the year, apart from Great Lent; at Tuesday Matins in Great Lent; on Thursday at the Sixth Hour in the first, second, third, fourth and sixth week of Great Lent; at Ninth Hour on the 5th Thursday of Great Lent;

Kathisma XII – at Wednesday Vespers in the following period: the Sunday of Saint Thomas, – September 21st , December 21st – until and including January 21st; in the two weeks between the Sunday of the Prodigal Son and Forgiveness Sunday; on the 5th Thursday of Great Lent, at Tuesday Matins in Great Lent, apart from the Holy Week; at Third Hour on Holy Tuesday; on

Thursday at Ninth Hour in the first, second, third, fourth and sixth week of Great Lent.

Kathisma XIII – at Thursday Matins during the year, apart from Great Lent, on Friday in Great Lent, on the 5th Tuesday of Great Lent; on Tuesday at the First Hour in the first, second, third, fourth and sixth week of Great Lent; at Sixth Hour on Holy Tuesday.

Kathisma XIV – at Thursday Matins during the year, apart from Great Lent, on Friday in Great Lent, on Holy Wednesday, at the First Hour on the 5th Tuesday of Great Lent; on Tuesday at the Third Hour in the first, second, third, fourth and sixth week of Great Lent.

Kathisma XV – at Thursday Vespers in the following period: the Sunday of Saint Thomas, – September 21st, December 21st – until and including January 14th; in the two weeks between the Sunday of the Prodigal Son and Forgiveness Sunday; at Thursday Matins in the following period: September 22nd – December 20th and January 15th – the Saturday before the Sunday of the Prodigal Son; on Friday during the Great Lent, apart from the Holy Week, on Holy Wednesday, at Third Hour on the 5th Tuesday of Great Lent, on Tuesday at Sixth Hour in the first, second, third, fourth and sixth week of Great Lent.

Kathisma XVI – at Saturday Matins during the year, on Holy Wednesday; at Sixth Hour on the 5th Tuesday of Great Lent, on Tuesday at Ninth Hour in the first, second, third, fourth and sixth week of Great Lent.

Kathisma XVII – at Saturday Matins during the year, and at Sunday Matins in the following period: the Sunday of Saint Thomas, – September 21st, December 21st – until and including January 14th; in the two weeks between the Sunday of the Prodigal Son and Forgiveness Sunday, in case there is no Great Feast or the celebration of a Polyeleos Saint; on Sunday during the Great Lent, apart from Palm Sunday, when Polyeleos is sung;

Kathisma XVIII – at Friday Matins in the following period: the Sunday of Saint Thomas, – September 21st, December 21st – until and including January 14th; the Sunday of the Prodigal Son and the Forgiveness Sunday; on the 5th Friday of Great Lent; on Monday to Friday inclusive, in the following period: September 22nd, December 20th, January 15th and the Saturday before the Sunday of the Prodigal Son; on Monday to Friday inclusive in the first, second, third, fourth and sixth week of Great Lent; on the 5th Friday of Great Lent, on Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday and Holy Thursday; at Ninth Hour on the 5th Tuesday of Great Lent;

Kathisma XIX – at Vespers on the 5th Tuesday of Great Lent; at Friday Matins during the year, apart from Great Lent, on the first, second, third, fourth and sixth Wednesday of Great Lent; at the Third Hour on Friday in Great Lent and on Holy Wednesday.

Kathisma XX – at Friday Matins during the year, apart from Great Lent and the Bright Week, on Wednesday during the Great Lent apart from the Holy Week; at the Sixth Hour in Great Lent apart from the Holy Week, and on Holy Wednesday (Dragomir 1981: 213-9).

The order of psalm-reading programme that is to be followed during the week is: at Saturday Vespers – kathisma I. At Sunday Matins – kathismata II, III and XVII. At Sunday Vespers no

kathisma is to be read. Kathisma I is read in case of Great Feast. At Monday Matins – kathismata IV and V; at Monday Vespers, kathisma VI. At Tuesday Matins – kathismata VII and VIII; at Tuesday Vespers, kathisma IX. At Wednesday Matins – kathismata X and XI; at Wednesday Vespers, kathisma XII. At Thursday Matins – kathismata XIII and XIV; at Thursday Vespers, kathisma XII. At Friday Matins – kathismata XIX and XX; at Friday Vespers, kathisma XVIII. At Saturday Matins – kathismata XVI and XVII (Abrudan 1985, 470).

The Psalteryion – a book of prayer in the view of Church Fathers and Christian writers

One of the main reasons that determined the frequent use of Psalteryion by Christians was the varied content of psalms, as far as thoughts and feelings are concerned. They reproduce faithfully the inner struggle, everyday dilemmas, pain, suffering or extreme happiness; that is why believers took up psalms naturally. According to Saint Athanasius the Great, in the Psalter “you learn about yourself; you find depicted in it all the movements of your soul, all its changes, its ups and downs, its failures and recoveries. Moreover, whatever your particular need or trouble is, you can select from the book a form of words to fit it” (St. Athanasius the Great PG 17, 20-28). This diversity of the inner movements that Psalms describe helps the reader to learn verses by heart and to have a longing for God.

Considering Psalms as *a honeycomb for an inner man*, Cassiodorus motivates, using telling examples, the human familiarity with these biblical texts: “Some psalms endowed with health-giving instruction lead luring and stormy spirits into a bright and most peaceful way of life; other Psalms are promising that God is to become visibly man for the salvation of believers, and will come to judge the world; some of Psalms warn us to wash away sins with tears, and to atone for faults with alms; at another they express amazed reverence in sacred prayers; at another the power of the Hebrew alphabet gives them profundity; they proclaim the saving outcome of the passion and resurrection of the Lord, they show deep devotion through the weeping of those who make lamentation; in some of them, their repetition of verses reveals certain mysteries to us; at another they are remarkable for the mounting climax of their song. In short, happily espousing divine praises are rich abundance, indescribable longing, and astonishing depth. The believing mind cannot get too much of it once it has begun to be filled with them.” (Cassiodorus 1990, 24).

Apart from the soteriological aspect of psalms, Cassiodorus also brings into

discussion their social aspect. He considers psalms establish equilibrium between people. Moreover, they give royal dignity to the poor and to the humble. God's Self-revelation has nothing to do with social class or intellectual knowledge. Purity of the soul is of importance. The Book of Psalms becomes in this way "the language of the hidden powers which makes the proud man small before the humble and a royal subject for poor people." (Cassiodorus 1990, 24)

The Church Fathers agree with the two above-mentioned opinions, signaling also new aspects that allows the using of Psalms by more and more Christians (Gherasim Timuș 1896, 37). We mention Saint Basil the Great's famous view from introduction to *Homilies on the Psalms*; the majority of Romanian versions of Psalteryion come together with this quotation: "Any part of the Scriptures you like to choose is inspired by God. The Holy Spirit composed the Scriptures so that in them, as in a pharmacy open to all souls, we might each of us be able to find the medicine suited to our own particular illness [...]. But the Book of Psalms contains everything useful that the others have. It predicts the future, it recalls the past, it gives directions for living, and it suggests the right behavior to adopt. It is, in short, a jewel case in which all the valid teachings have been collected in such a way that individuals find proper remedies for their cases." (St. Basil the Great 1986, 182-3)

Saint Basil the Great motivates through a new method the agreeable and formative aspect of the psalm structure. In this sense, Christians use psalms in a fruitful way: their spiritual illnesses are cured and their faith is strengthened. Although it is difficult to assume dogmatic teaching, the harmony and joy of psalm-singing overcomes this impediment. Saint Basil says: "When the Holy Spirit saw that the human race was guided only with difficulty toward virtue, and that, because of our inclination toward pleasure, we were neglectful of an upright life, what did He do? The delight of melody He mingled with the doctrines so that by the pleasantness and softness of the sound heard we might receive without perceiving it the benefit of the words, just as wise physicians who, when giving the fastidious rather bitter drugs to drink, frequently smear the cup with honey. Therefore, He devised for us these harmonious melodies of the Psalms, that they who are children in age, or even those who are youthful in disposition, might to all appearances chant but, in reality, become trained in soul. For never has any one of the many indifferent persons gone away easily holding in mind either an apostolic or prophetic message but they do chant the words of the Psalms, even in the home, and they spread them about in the market place [...]. Oh! the wise invention of the

teacher who contrived that while we were singing we should at the same time learn something useful; by this means, too, the teachings are in a certain way impressed more deeply on our minds. Even a forceful lesson does not always endure, but what enters the mind with joy and pleasure somehow becomes more firmly impressed upon it.” (St. Basil the Great 1986, 183)

The Book of Psalms helps the believer to overcome any passion. Men utter stichus in-spired by the Holy Spirit that are remedies through their own nature; we consider this aspect a good argument for the psalms' healing nature. However, their moral content offers many examples of overcoming sin. Many times, the author begins his prayer from the depths of sin and death, but in the end, he finds communion with God. In this respect, Saint Augustine says psalms “annihilate passions, do away with angry, teach moderation.” (Timuș 1896, 37); Cassiodorus claims that psalms embrace the bright word that heals the suffering heart (Cassiodorus 1990, 24). Saint Basil the Great is more precise: “It heals the old wounds of the soul and gives relief to those recent. It cures the illnesses and preserves the health of the soul. It brings peace, soothes the internal conflicts, calms the rough waves of evil thoughts, dissolves anger, corrects and moderates profligacy.” (St. Basil the Great 1986, 183)

If psalm reading disintegrates passions, it seems naturally that they defeat the ones who do their best to excite men's passions. Therefore, demons are annihilated because of psalms. The Church Fathers say that these holy words drive away and put a cease to demons (St. Ephraim the Syrian PG 3, 37); the fear caused by the evil presence is also defeated. Moreover, even if man utters psalms mechanically, without keeping his attention, the anti-demonical effect is kept. When one disciple of Saint Barsanuphius asked his confessor what to do when he utters stone heart prayers, the elder told him: “Even if you don't hear the prayer, demons hear it and tremble. So, don't stop praying and uttering psalms! And step by step, God will transform your heart from stone to flash.” (Sf. Barsanuphius and John 2005, 629-30)

Uprooting demons brings about intimacy with angels and with God. According to Saint Ephraim the Syrian, Psalmody is “the work of the Angels, the commonwealth of heaven, spiritual incense”. The man who utters psalms “joins the choir of the Angels” and sits in a place where “there God is, with the Angels.” (St. Ephraim the Syrian PG 3, 37)

Psalms generate communion with God and with the Heavenly powers; and this makes people to be united. Reading or singing psalms brings peace and quietness

between people. For Saint Augustine, they are “the calmness of the soul, the sign of peace, the forming of friendship (Timuș 1896, 37)”; according to Saint Basil the Great, psalms “form friendships, unites those separated, conciliates those at enmity. Who, indeed, can still consider him an enemy with whom he has uttered the same prayer to God? So that psalmody, bringing about choral singing, a bond, as it were, toward unity, and joining the people into a harmonious union of one choir, produces also the greatest of blessings, charity.” (St. Basil the Great 1987, 183)

Therefore, it does not matter if psalms are sung or read, or if they are uttered in communal or individual prayers. Psalms are “a treasure that nobody can rob, the best soul adornment for the emperors and for the simple ones, for those who rule and for those who are ruled, for soldiers and for those who are not soldiers, for the wise and for the uneducated, for monks and for bishops, for priests and for the laity, for those who live on earth or on an island, for agricultures and shipmen, for the elder and for the young; in short, for everyone, no matter the age, the mood, the wish or if it is done in private or in common.” (Eftimie Zigabenu and Nicodim Aghioritul 2006, 30)

In conclusion, Church Fathers say that everyone could take advantage of the psalms' benefits, regardless of social class and age. The time and place of prayer are not that important: when psalms are memorized, they can be uttered anywhere (“at home, at the market, at Church, on the way, everywhere”) and anytime. Saint Gregory of Nyssa wrote in a letter about the life of his sister Macrina who used to read psalms daily at different times of the day: “When she rose from bed, or engaged in household duties' or rested, or partook of food' or retired from table, when she went to bed or rose in the night for prayer, the Psalter was her constant companion, like a good fellow traveler that never deserted her.” (Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa 1993: 52)

In the end, we will mention what Saint Ephraim the Syrian said when he gave advice to the believers to utter psalms unceasingly; he emphasized the importance that psalms have in Christian spiritual life: “Say many things to God and few to humans. If you stretch out your hand to work, let your mouth sing psalms and your mind pray. Let psalmody be continually on your mouth.” (St. Ephraim the Syrian PG 3, 37)

Conclusions

In this study we outlined the arguments in favor of psalms being genuine models of prayer that is welcomed by God and pleasing to Him. First of all, we mentioned the coordinates of the inner dimension of psalms. We indicated the background and the

conditions of praying, taking into consideration both the rigorous relation to God and the inner state of he who prays. Then, starting from the New Testament, we analyzed the manner in which psalms were taken up as prayers by early Christian communities. The patristic evidence we exposed emphasized various aspects of the use of psalms in common and individual prayers inside Church rites. Christians began to assimilate psalms as manifestations of their own soul, regardless of the context in which they were used: together with other scripture texts inside the rite, during the vigil by the monks, in daily life by ordinary Christians.

Then, we presented the use of every psalm and kathisma in liturgical rites in order to show the impact psalms had in the Eastern Orthodox rite. No service is celebrated without uttering psalms or at least some stichus; moreover, they are used frequently. In the last part of the study, we exposed some of the testimonies of our Church Fathers and religious writers. They had a special attachment to the Psalter. Because of its revealed content and because of their diversity, Christians, regardless of their social class and age, have always seen the Book of Psalms as the expression of an intimate aspiration to God. Our intention was to reveal some arguments for the importance and place of the psalms in Christian life. They sustain inner purity, the defeat of passions and the intimacy with angels and with God.

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FOI ET REPOS DES REPERES EXEGETIQUES ET THEOLOGIQUES A NB 14, PS 95, HE 3

Abstract

La vertu de la foi est la condition pour réaliser la communion avec Dieu, et c'est seulement la que l'homme trouve son repos (Mt 11:28). C'est autour de cette problématique qu'est construit l'ensemble des chapitres 13-14 du Livre des Nombres, qui concentre toute une série de thèmes théologiques fondamentaux pour le discours veterotestamentaire. C'est la raison pour laquelle j'ai opté pour une analyse exegetique-théologique brève, en introduisant en même temps quelques éléments de tradition juive au début de l'étude. En dernier lieu, l'exposition d'une présentation de l'épisode sous une forme lyrique (Ps 95) clarifie la relation thématique du texte avec l'ensemble d'He 3-4 ; l'épreuve de la foi, suite à laquelle, en fonction du réponse de l'homme, survient la bénédiction ou la malediction.



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Le récit veterotestamentaire accorde une place privilégiée au thème de la foi, l'exemple par excellence étant le patriarche Abraham. En Genèse 15 nous retrouvons pour la première fois une formulation de l'idée de la foi qui lui est comptée comme de la justice (Gn 15:6). Elle sera terriblement éprouvée dans l'épisode du sacrifice d'Isaac (Gn 22:1-12). Mais le thème de l'épreuve de la foi transparaît depuis le commencement de l'existence, l'épisode de la chute originelle étant justement un qui pivote autour de lui : tout ce que fait le serpent c'est d'induire la doute, c'est-à-dire, ébranler la foi des ancêtres. Un autre aspect qui doit être remarqué est celui de la conséquence de la foi / manque de foi : la première est récompensée dignement, tandis que la deuxième est durement punie. Les portraits des justes de l'Ancien Testament sont un repère essentiel pour cette relation foi – récompense, bien représentée en Hébreux 11, où le refrain « par la foi » est suivi par toute une série de bénédictions qui ont été données aux justes.

Voici l'axe thématique où s'inscrit l'ensemble des chapitres 13-14 de Nombres.

Il présente un épisode de l'épreuve de la foi du peuple élu une fois arrivé au Jourdain, à l'entrée dans le pays où coule le lait et le miel. Même si le thème de l'épreuve de la foi est présent dans tous les livres de l'Ancien Testament, toutefois, ce moment reste unique dans l'histoire d'Israël, puisqu'il a déterminé une longue période d'errance dans le désert, dont le but était d'éduquer un nouveau peuple, épreuve / affermi dans la foi. Dans la conscience juive, l'épisode est de la plus grande importance, ce qui a déterminé son exposition répétée dans les livres de l'Ancien Testament, ainsi que son développement dans les écrits venant du monde juif. Je vais pencher l'œil sur le Talmud (*Haggadah*), Flavius Josèphe (*Les Antiquités Juives*) et Philon d'Alexandrie (*La vie de Moïse*). Ces ressources bibliographiques peuvent nous offrir le fondement pour l'identification des valences théologiques essentielles. Pour achever cette démarche, je vais approcher des commentaires patristiques, ainsi que des écrits exegetiques modernes et contemporains. Si les dernières exploitent au maximum le texte, proposant des interprétations nuancées au cadre d'une exégèse souvent littéraire, les commentaires patristiques les complètent par une interprétation profondément théologique, voire même spirituelle des paroles de la Sainte Écriture. La dernière partie de mon étude proposera une connexion thématique avec l'épître aux Hébreux, par le moyen d'une forme lyrique de l'épisode des espions, le Psaume 94 (95). Par là, je vais proposer une hypothèse de recherche en vue d'une meilleure compréhension du rapport qui existe entre la foi et le repos, problématique étroitement liée au thème de ma recherche doctorale.

Nombres 13-14 chez Flavius Josèphe et Philon

L'ensemble des chapitres 13-14 du livre des Nombres est considérée dans la tradition juive aussi un point tournant dans l'histoire du peuple élu, moment déterminant pour les quarante ans de « punition méritée pour leur grande sacrilège » (Philon d'Alexandrie 2003, 104). Dans ces deux chapitres, nous pouvons identifier certains moments distincts.

L'envoi des espions en Canaan

Philon et Flavius Josèphe respectent la structure narrative du texte biblique, chacun apportant, comme même, certains ajouts. Ainsi, Moïse du récit philonien considère qu'obtenir des informations concernant la terre promise est nécessaire pour concevoir une stratégie. Connaître la terre et ses habitants est utile, tandis que ne pas les connaître est également dangereux (Philon d'Alexandrie 2003, 98-9). Il nomme les trois choses

que le peuple doit connaître après leur mission, conformément au récit biblique (13:19-21)

- Regardant les habitants : leur nombre et puissance, force ;
- Regardant les villes : leur prospérité et la qualité des constructions ;
- Regardant la terre : sa fertilité ;

Ces informations montreront clairement si la terre promise vaut la peine d'être conquise. Flavius Joseph n'accorde pas trop d'attention au type d'information que les espions doivent apporter au peuple. Il parle seulement de la « fertilité de la terre et la force de ses habitants » (Mošit 2002, 172). Pourtant, il rappelle aux Juifs les deux dons promis par Dieu : la liberté et la possession du Canaan, en laissant entendre que la réception du premier est la garantie indubitable du dernier (Mošit 2002, 172). Une idée accentuée dans les deux discours est celle de la foi dans la puissance de l'ave de soumettre les ennemis d'Israël, n'importe combien puissants seraient-ils : « Les armes, les machines de guerre et toute notre puissance est fondée sur notre unique foi en Dieu ; ainsi nantis, nous ne renoncerons pas aux choses effrayantes ; car une telle arme est beaucoup plus satisfaisante pour que nous puissions vaincre des armées invincibles par leur composants, courage, expérience et nombre » (Philon d'Alexandrie 2003, 99). Pour Philon, la certitude de la victoire réside sur le fait que Dieu « nous a fourni au milieu du désert tout ce qui se trouve dans les villes pendant une année fertile » (Philon d'Alexandrie 2003, 99-100) en faisant allusion ici au don de la manne (Ex 16), l'eau du rocher (Ex 17), les caillies (Nb 11).

La recherche du Canaan

Si ces paroles attribuées à Moïse ont été regues sous les ovations du peuple élu (Iosif Flaviu 2002, 172), le moment de la recherche du Canaan produira un changement radical dans l'attitude des Israélites, changement confirmé par les deux auteurs cités en haut, ainsi que de la Haggadah (Wigoder 2006, 258-9) rabbinique. Si Philon hésite dans la description des habitants du Canaan, en affirmant qu'ils étaient « soit très hauts, soit des gens avec une telle stature et puissance qu'ils semblaient être des géants » (Philon d'Alexandrie 2003, 101), et si Flavius Joseph parle en général des difficultés que les espions amplifient, en les considérant plus grandes que celles rencontrées à la sortie de l'Égypte, la Haggadah explique que le motif principal du terrible découragement (Iosif Flaviu 2002, 173) ressenti par les Juifs était la présence d'une famille des géants, « les fils d'Enac du genre des géants » (Nb 13:34) (Ginzberg 1909, 4).

A la vue de ceux-ci, les Israelites envoyes en Canaan ont ete effrayes : « Although they met with no evil on the part of the inhabitants, still the sight of the three giants, Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai inspired them with terror. These were so immensely tall that the sun reached only to their ankles... » (Ginzberg 1909, 4). Il est evident que cette description est exageree, mais elle represente, comme meme, ce que la tradition a consigne. En fait, nous allons le voir, les difficultes rencontres en Canaan n'étaient pas la cause du decouragement des israelites, mais celui-ci etait plutot determine par leur lâcheté et manque de foi.

Le Canaan – la terre ou ruissellent le lait et le miel

Les difficultes entrevus par les Israelites dans la conquete de la terre promise les separaient d'un pays fertile, dont les beautés sont magnifiquement decrites par Philon (Philon din Alexandria 2003, 100-101). L'expédition des espions a eu lieu au moment ou les raisins murissent (Nb 13 :21), c'est la raison pour laquelle la fertilité de la terre pouvait etre facilement verifiee et demontree par les fruits de la vigne. En conformite avec le texte biblique, Philon rappelle « les raisins d'une dimension inhabituelle », dont deux d'entre les espions ont apporte une vigne dans le camp d'Israel, leur charge etant « incroyablement lourde » (Ginzberg 1909, 4).

Le peche amene avec soi l'errance. Regardant d'un côté la fertilité incroyable de la terre promise, et de l'autre cote la difficulté de sa conquete, les israelites se sont laisses convaincus plutot par les estimations humaines, en se considerant incapables d'affronter un tel ennemi. Mais, au lieu de mettre leur esperance dans le Seigneur qui leur avait promis la possession de ce pays, ils ont ecoute plutot ceux qui « exagerait beaucoup dans leur parole tous les details, en leur inspirant que de la terreur » (Philon din Alexandria 2003, 102). Ce manque de foi (Iosif Flaviu 2002, 174) leur a apporte la punition de l'errance au desert pour quarante ans (Philon din Alexandria 2003, 104).

Nombres 14. Approche exegetique-theologique

Nombres 13-14: presentation generale

L'ensemble des chapitres 13-14 fait partie de la coherence narrative et theologique plus large du parcours d'Israel entre le Sinaï et le Jourdain. Ce parcours peut etre schematise sous la forme d'une structure chiasique :

- A Apostasie – le veau d'or (Ex 32:1-25)
- B Mecontentement – Tabera (Nb 11:1-35)
- C Desobeissance – individus (Nb 12:1-16)
- D Desobeissance – Israel (Nb 13:1 – 14:45)
- C' Desobeissance – individus (Nb 16:1-35)
- B' Mecontentement – serpent venimeux (Nb 21:1-5)
- A' Apostasie – Baal-Peor (Nb 25:1-5)

Dans une perspective theologique, la tradition de Nb 13:1-14.45 (Olson 1996) occupe une place centrale dans l'ensemble thematique de « l'ecole du desert » (Chirilă 2003, 46), construite autour de quelques idees fondamentaux :

- le don de la terre promise, conditionne par l'engagement sincere envers cette terre et envers Dieu qui l'a donne (Budd 2002).
- le chef designe par Dieu – autorite supreme au sein du peuple.
- la foi /la manque de foi en Dieu (Moise, Aaron, Caleb et Josue vs. le reste du peuple)
- l'intercession du juste devant Dieu (Moise, Avraam)
- le pardon et le jugement

L'analyse litteraire des deux chapitres 13-14 nous decouvre une unite fondee sur trois caracteristiques:

1. l'emploi des structures chiasmiques
2. la repetition et l'accent mis sur certain termes-cle
3. le dialogue narratif entre Iahve, Moise et le peuple

Un possible schematisation de cette unite litteraire serait la suivante :

- A l'expedition des espions (13:1-24)
- B le rapport des espions (13:25-33)
- C la reponse du peuple (14:1-10a)
- B' la reponse de Dieu (14:10b-38)
- A' l'expedition du peuple (14 :39-45)

La question-cle dans l'analyse litteraire d'une telle unite complexe regarde le centre du chiasme. Quel est le theme central du pericope ? La revolte du peuple, l'intervention de Dieu, ou bien le contraste entre la majorite infidele et la minorite croyante ? (Cole 2001) En tout cas, on peut dire que ce fragment du livre des Nombres (chap. 13-14) n'est pas tellement un recit d'un deement geographique du Sinai au

Canaan, qu'un recit d'un éloignement de Dieu pendant une periode de revolte constante. L'unité entre l'homme et son peuple est détruite, la soumission devient revolte, l'ordre se transforme en désordre, la sainteté en libertinage, l'espérance en désespoir. Le peuple élu de Dieu ne Lui reconnaît plus l'autorité, la terre et le chef (Moïse) (Cole 2001). Je vais me resumer à une approche exegetique-theologique du chapitre 14, qui concentre le contenu theologique de cet ensemble.

La structure du chapitre :

- v. 1-4: le peuple murmure devant Moïse et Aaron
- v. 5-10: l'essai manqué d'apaiser la revolte du peuple
- v. 11-12: l'annonce de la punition divine
- v. 13-19: l'intercession de Moïse et le pardon du peuple
- v. 20-35: l'annonce de la punition envers la generation pecheresse
- v. 36-39: la mort des espions infideles
- v. 40-45: la defaite des Juifs qui luttent sans recevoir un commandement divin

Nombres 14:1-4

Toutes les promesses faites aux patriarches dans la Genese et leur reprise à partir d'Exode 1 sont orientees envers ce moment où le peuple élu se trouve à l'entrée en Canaan, la terre promise (Olson 1996). Mais parce que les Israelites «avaient confiance en eux-memes, en pensant que la victoire allait etre apportee par leurs propres forces et ne mettant pas leur esperance dans l'aide d'en haut, ils criaient pres de la montagne» (Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei 2005, 307). Leur attitude est definie comme etant « peur et effroi specifique aux animaux » (Fer. Teodorit al Kirului 2003, 349) par Theodoret, qui exprime en ces termes la bassesse de leur infidelite.

Les causes de la revolte du peuple sont multiples : le mepris du don divin, la lâcheté face à la lutte et à la mort (14:3), le désir d'accomplir leur volonte propre, la manque de foi, la desinformation des espions (13:28-30). Regardant les derniers, St Gregoire de Nyse souligne le fait que certains des espions « n'ont pas raconte la verite, mais des informations fausses et tristes » (Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa 1982, 36), celle-ci etant la cause principale de la revolte. En tout cas, cette revolte est la plus grave jusqu'à ce moment, elle represente en premier lieu un refus de la politique qui a conduit Israel à l'entrée en Canaan (v. 2-3). Par consequent, quand le peuple pense choisir un nouveau chef (Olson 1996) à la place de celui choisi par l'homme (Clarke 1999) (Ex 3:1-10), il se revolte

contre l'autorite de Dieu Lui-meme (Riggans 1983, 251).

Ce theme du chef élu revient dans le Pentateuque comme expression de la foi inébranlable en Dieu vivant, aux antipodes se situant le theme du «retour en Egypte» (v. 3-4) lequel, dans le recit veterotestamentaire, constitue un symbole de l'apostasie et l'éloignement de l'ahve (Budd 2002) (Dt 17:16; Os 7:11; Es 30:1-7; 31:1-3; Jr 2:18.36 ; Ez 17:15).

Nombres 14:5-10

Entendant les paroles de la revolte, les deux leaders d'Israel, c'est-à-dire Moïse (le prophete) et Aaron (le pretre) tomberent face contre (v. 5), geste interprete comme signe de leur soumission à Dieu et comme essai de reconciliation du peuple (Cole 2001). Les deux autres leaders, Caleb et Josue ont accompli le geste beaucoup pratique dans les cultures du Proche Orient comme expression du grief pour les morts, comme grief pour un desastre ou bien comme annonce du jugement divin immanent sur le peuple (Cole 2001) (v. 6). Dans notre cas, il pouvait annoncer le grief pour la mort des espions infideles (v. 36-37).

Au verset 7, nous rencontrons une expression interessante. Le doublage de *meod* se trouve seulement dans huit autres passages de l'Ancien Testament (Gn 7:19; 30:43; Ex 1:7; 1 Sa 7:47; 2 Sa 10:4; Ez 9:9; 16:13; 37 :10) comme expression d'une quantite ou bien d'une qualite exceptionnelles (Cole 2001). Par consequent, la terre du Canaan est d'une beaute et richesse vraiment exceptionnelles, exprimes dans le v. 8 : « ...dans cette terre-là ruissellent le lait et le miel », par la phrase-cle utilise dans l'entier Ancien Testament pour decrir la qualite et la fertilite de la terre promise (Cole 2001).

Les versets 9-10 contiennent une serie d'affirmations qui peuvent etre organisees sous la forme chiasme suivante :

- contre le Seigneur
- *ne regimbez pas (revolte)*
- *n'ayez pas peur* du peuple de ce pays
- car nous n'en ferons qu'une bouchée
- leur ombre protectrice les a quittees
- tandis que le Seigneur est avec nous
- *N'ayez donc pas peur!*
- La communaute tout entiere parlait de les lapider (*revolte*)
- *Quand la gloire du Seigneur apparut*, dans la Tente du Rendez-vous, à tous les

Israelites. (Cole 2001)

Si la peur des ennemies était la cause principale de leur révolte (Origène 1951, 134-5), la foi dans un Dieu fidèle à l'alliance était leur unique chance de victoire. La réaction des Israelites à ces arguments est violente, ils veulent appliquer aux leaders la punition prescrite par Dieu pour l'idolâtrie (Lv 20:2), les relations interdites (Lv 20:16), la magie (Lv 20:27), le blasphème (Lv 24:14.23), la désobéissance envers les parents (Dt 21:21), la transgression du sabbat (Nb 14:35), même s'ils étaient tout à fait innocents de tous ces péchés (Origène 1951, 134-5).

Pour l'auteur des Nombres, la théophanie annonce certainement la punition. Celle du v. 10 a un double rôle : d'un côté, elle sauve la vie de Moïse et Aaron, de l'autre côté, elle introduit l'intervention du Seigneur dans les v. 11-25 (Budd 2002). Dans l'histoire du peuple élu, Dieu a intervenu toujours dans cette manière quand la révolte des Israelites risquait devenir incontrôlable, en se manifestant miraculeusement pour les ramener à Soi (Cole 2001).

Nombres 14:11-12

Au verset 11, nous retrouvons le verbe *ienaaṭuni* signifiant repulsion ou renoncement du peuple. Les signes / miracles du même verset (*hatot*) sont des preuves de la puissance et présence de Dieu que l'entier Israël a témoigné, mais qu'il n'a pas pris comme fondement d'une foi inébranlable (Budd 2002). Au contraire, comme punition pour son manque de foi (Origène 1951, 134-5), Israël « n'entrera pas dans le repos » (Clement Alexandrinus 1982, 138), mais ils seront rejetés par Dieu qui fera surgir de Moïse un nouveau peuple fidèle. La sentence est identique avec celle de l'épisode du veau d'or :

- Ex 32 :10 – Maintenant laisse-moi, ma colère va s'enflammer contre eux et je les exterminerai ; mais *de toi je ferai une grande nation*.
- Nb 14 :12 – Je vais le frapper de la peste, je le dépouillerai. Mais *de toi, je ferai une nation*, plus grande et plus puissante que lui.

Moïse refusera l'idée puisqu'il ne voulait pas être le seul sauveur d'Israël, il ne voulait pas entrer dans le Royaume des Cieux séparé des siens (Symeon The New Theologian 1980). D'un autre côté, la sentence de Dieu n'est pas toujours regardée comme punition, elle peut être entendue comme prophétie. Un nouveau peuple se lèvera, plus puissant et plus affermi dans la foi, mais Moïse était conscient que ce peuple ne sera pas Israël, mais le peuple chrétien (Caesarius of Arles 1947).

Le moment peut être considéré l'apogée de l'ensemble 13:1-14:45, pour le fait que Dieu Lui-même intervient et communique avec ses élus (Cole 2001).

Nombres 14:13-19

Moïse fait appel au *rqn*, l'amour divin manifeste sans cesse envers le peuple. En même temps, il refuse la possibilité de devenir le père d'un nouveau peuple, en priant ardemment pour le pardon de celui-ci (Olson 1996). Je voudrais remarquer ici la triple structure rhétorique du v. 14 : la répétition est la preuve du fait que Moïse prononce cette prière de tout son cœur, en montrant la relation intime qui existe entre Dieu et son peuple (Cole 2001):

- *Toi, Seigneur*, tu es au milieu de ce peuple
- *Toi, Seigneur*, tu te fais voir face à face
- *Toi, Seigneur*, tu marches devant eux le jour dans une colonne de nuée, la nuit dans une colonne de feu

Le verset 19 est utilisé aujourd'hui dans le rituel de Yom Kippour (Fox 1995). La notion de pardon apparaît en Dt 29:19 ; 1 Sa 8:30.34.36.39.50 (Budd 2002). Mais l'intercession de Moïse pour le pardon du peuple, décrite aux v. 16-19 est très proche de ce qu'on lit en Ex 32:31-32 (Cole 2001).

La prière de Moïse est celle qui apporte au peuple une deuxième chance par l'intermède des descendants, par l'intermède d'une nouvelle génération (Budd 2002); elle fait partie de la même catégorie avec l'intervention du patriarche Abraham pour le pardon de Sodome (Riggans 1983) (Gn 18:23-32). Ce thème de l'intercession du juste devant Dieu revient souvent dans le Pentateuque (Budd 2002).

Les arguments invoqués par Moïse soulignent la justice divine qui se manifeste par la miséricorde, mais aussi par la punition des péchés. J'introduis ici trois fragments avec un contenu similaire :

L'équilibre du jugement divin est très bien souligné dans le discours patristique : « Veux-tu le voir leader ? Voici, il met ordre dans les choses présentes et décide les futures. Veux-tu le voir juge sévère ? Voici, il punit les pécheurs. Veux-tu le voir juste et miséricordieux ? Il est lent à la colère ». Dieu ne punit pas à l'instant nos actes, nos paroles et pensées, mais plutôt envoie la punition à nos descendants ; par là nous entendons leurs péchés et transgressions.

Nombres 14 :20-25

Dieu ecoute la priere d'intercession de Moise, mais il n'accorde pas le pardon totale au peuple infidele, il s'agit plutot d'un delai (v. 20) : ils ne seront pas mis à mort tout de suite, mais ils vont mourir d'une mort naturelle dans le desert, la terre promise leur restant fermee à jamais (v. 22-24) (Spence-Jones 2004). Ainsi, ils ressentiront en meme temps la misericorde divine, ainsi que Sa justice (Spence-Jones 2004). Une certaine tension dialogique entre les deux est exprimee par la mort des vieux et la naissance de la nouvelle generation. La mort au desert est l'expression du jugement divin, mais de la mort surgit la vie, et la nouvelle generation, elevee dans l'ecole du desert, entrera en Canaan (Olson 1996).

Au verset 21 apparaît une formule habituelle de serment : « Je suis vivant », que nous rencontrons seulement deux fois dans le Pentateuque, ici et au v. 28 (Budd 2002), et la punition qui suit cette formule de serment n'est plus negociable, elle est definitive (Olson 1996). L'expression peut nous amener à penser aux paroles d'Exode 3:14: « Je suis celui qui est », en comprenant d'ici que le seul vraiment vivant est Dieu Lui-meme (Origen 1947).

Un autre theme qui apparaît au v. 22 est celle de la tentation : « m'ont mis à l'épreuve » (cf. Dt 6:16; Ex 17:2.7). Cette tentation de l'ahve par le peuple et le revers de la tentation d'Israel que Moise rappelle en Dt 8:2 (Lohfink 1963, 80): « Souviens-toi de tout le chemin que l'ahve ton Dieu t'a fait prendre pendant quarante ans dans le desert, afin de t'humilier, de t'éprouver et de connaître le fond de ton coeur: allais-tu ou non garder ses commandements ? », evidemment avec une signification differente : si Dieu tente le peuple en ayant un objectif pedagogique, le peuple tente la colere divine par son manque de foi injustifiable dans le contexte ou il a temoigne beaucoup d'évenements miraculeux accomplis par sa volonte et puissance. Cette tentation n'est pas la premiere, la formule « maintes fois » (v. 22) denote avec certitude le peche constant pendant une longue periode de temps. Le nombre dix a ete probablement utilise en contraste avec les dix plaies envoyees sur l'Egypte. En verite, celles-là on ete dix signes par lesquels a ete accomplie leur liberation (Cole 2001).

La punition ne s'applique pas à Caleb, il est differentie d'Israel (v. 24) : « puisqu'il m'a parfaitement obei ». Il est le seul fidele au sein du peuple, different de ceux dont « toujours leur cceur se fourvoie » (He 3:10) : „Le nom nous montrera qui est Caleb. Car il signifie : le coeur tout entier », il est celui qui suit Dieu de tout son csur, de toute son âme et de tout son esprit.

Dans la pensée de St Basile le Grand, les Juifs ont attiré le jugement divin par leur gourmandise et mécontentement avec la nourriture simple offerte par Dieu : « Qui ont laissé leur os au désert ? Non pas ceux qui désiraient manger de la viande ? Le temps qu'ils se sont contentés avec la manne et l'eau du rocher, ils ont vaincu les Égyptiens, ils ont traversé la mer, et ils n'avaient pas des malades parmi eux. Mais quand il se sont souvenus des viandes païennes, quand ils se sont retournés, par leur désir, en Égypte, ils n'ont plus vu la terre promise. N'es-tu pas effrayé par cet exemple ? N'es-tu pas effrayé par la gourmandise qui te fait manquer les biens espérés ? (Sf. Vasile cel Mare 1986, 355)

Nombres 14:26-35

L'élément talionique du discours est évident (Cole 2001), comme réponse à l'attitude du peuple, la punition divine accompli le contraire, en commençant avec le thème de la sortie d'Égypte, la punition étant justement l'éloignement de cet objectif initial (Olson 1996). Ainsi, par un serment solennel, Dieu montre que la punition d'Israël correspond parfaitement à ses paroles et actes (Olson 1996).

L'ironie c'est que justement les petits et sans défense seront ceux qui habiteront la terre que leurs parents n'ont pas osé conquérir (Riggans 1983).

Nombres 14:36-39

Une nouvelle comparaison est faite entre les espions fidèles et les infidèles, comparaison construite sur une structure chiasique :

- A Ces hommes que Moïse avait envoyés reconnaître le pays
- B et qui, à leur retour, avaient excité toute la communauté d'Israël
- C en décriant le pays
- D furent frappés de mort devant l'Éternel (v. 37)
- C' qui décriaient malignement le pays
- B' Josué et Caleb restèrent en vie
- A' des hommes qui étaient allés reconnaître le pays (Cole 2001).

Nombres 14 : 40-45

En ignorant complètement les paroles prophétiques de Moïse (v. 41-43), les Israélites font un dernier essai de se lever contre le jugement divin, essai soldé avec une terrible défaite à Hormah. Le récit suit une simple structure chiasique :

- *A essai de monter sur la montagne - nous avions peché*

Vers ce lieu promis par Dieu

Moïse : *pourquoi transgressez-vous l'ordre de l'Éternel ?*

- B Ne montez point, car le Seigneur n'est pas au milieu de vous ...les Amalécites et les Cananéens (...) vous tomberez sous le coup

- B' Vous vous êtes détournés du Seigneur

- *A' essai de monter sur la montagne - défaite*

Moïse et l'arche de l'alliance ne quitteront le camp

les Amalécites et les Cananéens les battirent... (Cole 2001)

Je conclurai avec une expression de St Cyrille d'Alexandrie. qui décrit très bien le caractère des Israélites, quand il les nomme « toujours malades de désobéissance ».

L'épisode des espions dans le Ps 95 (forme lyrique) et He 3-4 (le repos véritable)

Psaume 95:8-12

Le récit de Nombres 14 est repris brièvement par le psalmiste qui introduit, dans ce contexte thématique, l'idée de « repos ». L'idée apparaît dans un contexte doxologique : Israël se revendique comme peuple de Dieu, comme « peuple de son pâturage et brebis de ses mains » (Eftimie Zigabene et Sf. Nicodim Aghiorit 2006, 296) (v. 7), et en même temps, comme peuple qui accomplit le service liturgique qui lui est propre (v. 2). Ce type de manifestation est déterminé par l'œuvre créatrice et la prise de soin que Dieu manifeste envers le monde entier (v. 3-5), l'homme inclut qui, dans un état méthanostique, confesse sa dépendance et reconnaissance envers Dieu (v. 6). L'appel à une soumission fidèle (v. 8) débute avec un signifiant « aujourd'hui », qui n'indique pas un tel jour pour cela, mais « chaque jour quand on peut dire aujourd'hui (...) »... cet aujourd'hui veut dire tout le temps » (Eftimie Zigabene et Sf. Nicodim Aghiorit 2006, 296). Le Psaume invoque l'image de la révolte d'en autrefois (Nb 14 :1-4), comme repère pour ce qu'on ne doit pas répéter, pour ce qu'attire la colère et jugement divins. Dans les versets 9-10, une construction rhétorique met en contraste les deux sens de la tentation qu'on a déjà identifiés.

- ...le jour de la tentation au désert... (v. 9) = *épreuve de la foi* Dieu – homme
- ...ou ils m'ont tenté... (v. 10) = *peché* homme – Dieu

Voilà le cadre dans lequel la terre promise est nommée « repos ». Quelle est la justification de l'expression ? Éphraïme le Zigabene considère qu'on appelle la terre promise repos parce qu'elle a reposé les Juifs qui sont entrés en elle, quittant l'errance et la vie nomade qu'ils avaient menés pendant quarante ans au désert.

Le verset des Nombres qui prononce la sentence au peuple (14:23) ne contient pas le mot « repos », il parle que de « la terre que j'ai promise par serment à leur peres ». L'idée de repos apparaît clairement, comme je l'ai montré, dans la forme lyrique de la Torah – le Psautier, dans le Ps 95. La justification de cette association nous est offerte par Theodoret : « Ceux qui n'ont pas donné d'importance au serment divin, et ils n'ont pas éludé le jugement divin par la repentance, n'ont pas reçu la terre promise à leur peres, et cette terre-là a été nommée « cessation » ou bien « repos », après d'autres. Car – après leur voyage dans le désert, quand ils avaient l'Arche de l'Alliance voyageant devant eux, une fois entrés dans la terre promise, ils ont cessé les voyages et l'Arche a trouvé sa place permanente au milieu du camp – ils ont bien nommé le Canaan « cessation » (Eftimie Zigabenu et Sf. Nicodim Aghioritu 2006, 296). Le texte du Psaume sera repris dans l'Épître aux Hébreux, voilà un possible résumé schématisé des trois textes : la terre - cessation / repos – repos :

- Nb 14 :23 ... ne verront pas le pays que [ai] promis par serment à leurs peres. Aucun de ceux qui me méprisent ne le verra.
- Ps 95 :11 Alors j'ai juré en ma colère jamais ils ne parviendront à mon repos.
- He 3 :11 ... aussi ai-je juré dans ma colère Non, ils n'entreront pas dans mon repos.

« L'appel céleste » avec lequel débute le chapitre 3 de l'Épître aux Hébreux (v. 1a) a aussi une valence de promesse, il est une sorte de garantie pour l'entrée dans le repos de Dieu (Eftimie Zigabenu et Sf. Nicodim Aghioritu 2006, 298), offerte à tous ceux qui, contrairement aux Juifs du désert (v. 8-11), se montreront fidèles. Le texte est explicite : les Juifs n'ont pas pu entrer dans le repos de Canaan « à cause de leur infidélité » (v. 19).

Le discours patristique observe dans cet épisode la signification profondément spirituelle du repos, signification que le Père met en lumière en relation avec les écrits néotestamentaires. Si le manque de foi des ancêtres leur a fermé l'entrée en Canaan, d'une manière similaire, le manque de foi d'aujourd'hui ferme la voie envers le Royaume de Dieu. C'est ainsi que St Cyrille d'Alexandrie affirme : « tout comme les infidèles du désert n'ont pas pu entrer dans la terre promise (Nb 14 :28-30), de même, ceux qui par leur infidélité n'ont pas rendu gloire au Christ, n'ont pas entré dans le Royaume des Cieux, dont l'image était la terre promise : « Dieu serait-il injuste en nous frappant de sa colère ? » (Rom 3 :5) (Fer. Teodoritu al Kirulu 2003, 349). Il reprend l'idée sous une forme développée : « ...puisqu'ils n'ont pas voulu entrer dans la terre où ils avaient été appelés, on leur a commandé de se retourner et ils sont obligés de refaire la même route. Car ils n'ont pas voulu obéir aux paroles de Josué, et, en entendant combien la terre était bonne,

ils n'ont pas consenti à leur conseil. Donc, ce qu'a subi le peuple en autrefois, subissent ceux d'aujourd'hui. Car, leur étant montrée la voie envers la vie éternelle et étant appelés à entrer dans le Royaume des Cieux, ils blasphèment par leur désobéissance. Pour cela, ils se sont retournés, perdant l'avancement avec leur chef envers le salut».

La foi est, ainsi, la condition / la voie d'entrer dans le repos véritable, celui préfigure par la fertile terre du Canaan. Et le repos véritable est « le repos de Dieu », auquel nous appelle l'Apôtre: « Efforçons-nous donc d'entrer dans ce repos » (He 4:10).

Conclusions

Le moment de l'enquête de Canaan coïncide avec le temps de l'année quand les raisins mûrissent. Leur fruit était riche et cela me rappelle les paroles du Seigneur qu'il a prononcé devant ses Apôtres : « La moisson est abondante, mais les ouvriers peu nombreux » (Mt 9:37). Pourquoi ont-ils choisi précisément ce moment de l'année ? La synchronisation nous facilite quelques connexions. Le Canaan avec sa beauté et sa fertilité, merveilleusement consignées par la tradition judaïque, peut être regardé comme une réactualisation des choses « très bons » (Gn 1:31) du commencement de la création, il peut symboliser une rentrée par la foi dans l'état édenique perdu par le péché. J'ai introduit la foi comme condition puisqu'en vérité, l'épreuve de la foi est un thème présent dans le rescrit vetero-testamentaire à partir du patriarche Abraham : « Abram crut en Yahvé, qui le lui compta comme justice. » (Gn 15:6). L'épreuve de la foi précède toujours la récompense, dans notre cas, la terre fertile du Canaan. C'est par la foi qu'Henoch fut enlevé, en sorte qu'il ne vit pas la mort (He 11:5), c'est par la foi que Noé a construit l'arche pour le sauver son entier maison ; c'est par la foi qu'Abraham « obéit à l'appel de partir vers un pays qu'il devait recevoir en héritage, et il partit ne sachant où il allait. » (He 11:8). La vertu de la foi est la condition pour réaliser la communion avec Dieu, la seule où l'homme peut trouver son véritable repos, d'où la parole du Seigneur : « Venez à moi, vous tous qui peinez et ployez sous le fardeau, et moi je vous soulagerai. » (Mt 11:28). Mais le peuple d'Israël s'est prouvé infidèle, c'est pour cela que Dieu a pris la décision d'élever un nouvel peuple, ne et élève dans l'école du désert, un peuple affermi dans la foi et l'obéissance.

Les raisins ? Le vin coule d'eux, d'une seule vigne (Nb 13:24), a suffi pour tous les sacrifices du peuple juif pendant les 40 ans d'errance au désert. Le caractère préfigurateur est évident : si au jardin de l'Eden nous voyons l'arbre de vie comme étant une préfiguration eucharistique (Gn 2:9), au Canaan, le fruit qui conquiert l'admiration

des espions est celui de la vigne, et je ne peux pas ne pas penser tout de suite au Christ qui a assumé ce symbole : « Je suis la vigne véritable » (Jn 15:1). On pourrait également remarquer l'abondance du vin : c'est l'abondance du don divin destinée à compenser nos péchés. Un peu de la beauté du Canaan les a accompagnés pendant leur errance, naturellement : c'est la semence, le souvenir qui a le pouvoir de te ramener au naturel de ton existence. C'est ce qui détermine le fils prodigue à dire : « Je veux partir, aller vers mon père » (Lc 15:18), c'est une célébration du csur, et c'est à cause de cela que le vin (dont la tradition juive confesse qu'il a été utilisé exclusivement dans le cadre liturgique) ne s'épuise pas.

Je proposerai une dernière connexion, dans le contexte du discours messianique : au moment de la deuxième enquête du Canaan, cette fois au commandement de Josue (Jos 2), Rahab est celle qui sauve la vie des espions juifs (Jos 2:3-7), et le geste marque l'ouverture du salut envers l'univers entier. Cette possibilité d'accès au salut de tous les peuples sera exprimée par l'introduction de Rahab dans la généalogie du Christ (Mt 1:5).

On a pu observer le contenu théologique particulier de l'ensemble des chapitres 13-14 du livre des Nombres. Chapitre 14 condense toute une série de thèmes théologiques fondamentaux pour le discours veterotestamentaire. Par conséquent, j'ai opté pour une sorte d'analyse exegetique théologique brève, en mettant seulement les accents théologiques essentiels pour le fragment étudié. L'introduction de quelques éléments de tradition juive au début de l'étude a fourni le contexte indispensable pour la mise des accents théologiques, en vue de laquelle j'ai fait appel aux ressources patristiques aussi bien qu'aux études des théologiens modernes et contemporains. Enfin, présenter la forme lyrique de l'épisode m'a semblé clarifier la relation thématique qui existe entre Nm 14 et He 3-4 : l'épreuve de la foi, à laquelle suit la bénédiction ou la malediction, en fonction de la réponse que l'homme choisi donner à Dieu. Il est sûr que la recherche peut continuer autour de cette relation thématique Nb 13-14 - Ps. 95 - He 3-4, je me suis proposée seulement une brève investigation du thème, destinée à découvrir des nouvelles possibilités de recherche en vue de clarifier la relation entre foi et repos, d'une perspective veterotestamentaire.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE QUMRAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE LIGHT OF ROLAND DE VAUX'S RESEARCH

Abstract

The almost 900 manuscripts found in the grottos near Khirbet Qumran on the shore of " the Dead Sea between 1947 and 1956 were a sensation among theology, archaeology and other various Sciences scholars. Probably no other archaeological find has stirred this much controversy emotions and interest as this one; it quickly mobilized the archaeologists who started digging the site in 1951, resuming their work in 1953-1956. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community are the two points on which the Biblical Archaeology and modern researches focus. For this reason, I saw it fit to call the readers' attention some pieces of Information on the results of the excavations which were carried out under the direct supervision of the theologian Roland de Vaux.



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Introduction

In the context of present political and social turmoil, even though everyone has heard about the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is very difficult to tell myth from fact. From 1947 to 1956 an approximate 900 manuscripts were found in the grottos near Khirbet Qumran (the old name remains unknown), on the Dead Sea shore. No other archaeological find has ever risen so many controversies, nor has it stirred the amount of emotions and interest as this discovery, which had quickly mobilized the archaeologists; they started digging the site in 1951, and continued digging throughout 1953-1956. Biblical archaeology and current research are focused on the Dead Sea scrolls and the Qumran community.

The first digging season was lead by G. Lankester Harding from the Antiquities

Department of Jordania and by Father Roland de Vaux from the French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem. The following seasons have been conducted under the supervision of de Vaux, who later coordinated the diggings of the nearby village of Ein Feshkha in 1958. Although de Vaux published several preliminary reports and presented the general synthetic situation of the Qumran archaeology, he has never given a final report of the diggings prior to his death in 1971. All the information on the objects found in the cave were published along with the parchments in "The Discoveries of the Judaic Desert". In 1994 the first volume of the final reports on de Vaux's diggings at Qumran and Ein Feshkha was published by Jean-Baptiste Humbert and Alain Chambon; it is mostly composed of a photo-album accompanied by de Vaux's field notes. The next volumes will be dedicated to pottery, stone-work, glass, metal, bones and other objects, coins and archaeology (stratigraphy, chronology, and architecture) (de Vaux, 1953: 83-106).

Jourdain-Marie Rousee, former librarian of the French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem, remembers with admiration the figure and the dedicated work of Father de Vaux. P. R. de Vaux had never intended to become an archaeologist. He had come to Jerusalem to study biblical theology: he told everyone how in his first year at the Biblical School he used to start a day's work by reading a page from the Leonine edition of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

During the war e worked on a commentary of the Book of Kings for the "Biblical Studies" collection. Only after the war was he contacted by the cultural Services of the ministry for Foreign Affairs soliciting the Biblical School to open a digging site in the Palestinian area occupied by Jordania. R. de Vaux accepted the proposition and thusly became an archaeologist.

Nevertheless, R. de Vaux possessed several qualities recommending him for this kind of work: the first was his love for observing nature. R. de Vaux dug only in places where he could enjoy an excellent landscape; this reflection belongs to an English scholar who worked with Miss Kenyon at Jericho. As she characterizes de Vaux's choice, he chose to live where people had lived before and to adapt to their style of living; he traced them, tried finding them, reencountering them and finally, somehow joining them. He seemed to have been thinking exclusively about them. Father de Vaux always arranged his camp with the Vision of a landscape artist, setting it so that it would face a magnificent view: the sun, the winds, the rain, everything was anticipated and tamed. And so, day to day life became luxurious at low costs, in a previously desert place, as

vegetation at Qumran was usually scarce but could give birth to an unforgettable vivid see of plants in spring.

Father de Vaux's knowledge of animal life was considerable. He used to tell that in his infancy he had been called to the Louvre to identify insects that had been preserved in ancient Egyptian artefacts or art works. At that time, he was a member of an entomological society and leapt with joy every time he saw an unusual insect, explaining to everyone around him everything that was particular to that minuscule creature. Those that were with him during the digging campaigns remember the long legged spider which used to sit on the bottle of wine for the religious service. Roland de Vaux would greet it when he entered the tent and stroke its feet. One year they have had problems with some scorpions which had multiplied in a hay stack and appeared without warning. Father de Vaux remained calm, even though he had found a dead scorpion one morning, crushed right under the sheets of the bed on top of which where he had slept the other night, because of the heat. Luckily enough, as a scorpion's sting is quite painful.

Roland de Vaux's love for nature should explain how a man whose vocation was the Bible study has been able to dedicate himself to archaeology and to fearlessly undertake this mission. Those who have been with him on digging sites have bore testimony of the working days. Father de Vaux always worked with a team of Arabic workers. At Qumran, half of them came from Jerusalem, while the other half were Ta'ameres Bedouins, live-stock breeders from the Judean desert east of Bethlehem. Work always began before sunrise, and the workers had three types of tasks: some of them dug with a spade, others used a mattock to collect the dirt and put it in baskets made out of old tires, and last but not least, the carriers took these baskets to the carts that evacuated the dirt as far away from the excavated ruins as possible.

Usually, there were two sites, with Arabic team chiefs in charge. They were employees of the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem, and the always present R. de Vaux used to see both of them and organize the work needed to be done. He communicated with the workers in a quite personal Arabic language, one that the team chief had to clarify and complete when necessary. Roland de Vaux knew classical Arabic from his studies with Marmardji, but had very little practice in speaking the Palestinian dialect. He used to say he had added yet another dialect to the existing ones, as Arabic has the tendency to multiply them. Nevertheless, de Vaux never hesitated and always made his thoughts understood.

There was a breakfast break at 8 or 9 o'clock, and a one-hour lunch break at noon; after that they would complete the 8 hours-work day according to the hour of the sunrise. When it was finished there came the tea time, and the moment when de Vaux gave aspirin pills to the limping. He was assisted by an auxiliary team, some of whose members were students of the Biblical School while others were specialized archaeologists. In the hours preceding tea time they had to complete various tasks: some were recomposing and pasting together pottery, others drew them, and others took the responsibility of an annex digging site requiring special attention. The topographer drew the mapping of the ruins excavated the previous days.

The actual group work began after tea time. First there was the examining of the pottery uncovered the day before that had been washed earlier during the day. Then, all those willing could accompany de Vaux in a complete tour of the site. When the diggings had begun he used to note every day what had been done in each sector of the site, and to type what he had written, filing his notes separately.

After some time, his collaborators began taking notes as he dictated, one by one at first, but then all together, as they walked through the site and wrote down the results of a day's work. They discussed the points where they hadn't reached an agreement on and everything was decided openly and democratically. Everyone thought that this way of organizing things ensured the quality of the research done by and with de Vaux: no solution was adopted without everyone agreeing on it. Other methods of recording the archaeological digs were in use, many of which seemed to be methodically and scientifically superior.

However, many of those who have worked with de Vaux said that his team discussions which took place right when the archaeological remains were being uncovered are unparalleled. More people should be involved in the process of debate and assessment, making the recordings more reliable and ensuring the fidelity and the certainty of the data. Roland de Vaux was a master of debate and research and his notes on the digging sites are truly a collective work, as each person had a say in the discussions and no one's opinion was neglected.

The work day was over at sunset, a marvelous moment at the Dead Sea side. When they finished dinning they would sit facing the other shore. For R. de Vaux the best scientific research instrument was a row of armchairs set in front of the blooming nature: there all experiences can be shared, all problems considered, and sometimes Solutions naturally rise in all their complexity.

Father de Vaux practiced the archaeology of his time, which many would deem primitive. Fie was aware of this but could do nothing about it. Fie often said he was digging too soon; the Palestinian archaeology was barely taking flight, only a few pioneers had exercised on Biblical sites: Megiddo, Ai, Jerusalem, Lakish, Beit Mirsim, and other places in search of the biblical history. They had gradually discovered the analysis methods meant to bring back to life the past times of these places. But after the war, when Roland de Vaux enters the field of archaeology, the echoes of the new techniques reach Palestine. Roland de Vaux was well informed and tried to keep up with the new discoveries. But because there was not much time and financial means he couldn't have stopped and waited for the new techniques to spread; his door was always open for the technicians passing by and he was often a keen listener of what they had to say.

Roland de Vaux also practiced archaeology with amateurs one may even say "literati" who did not seem to be the best suited for this kind of work. However, at least one patented archaeologist was present at all times, and the experience he had acquired elsewhere was always valuable. We should mention here the important part played by L Harding, the head of the Antiquities Department of Jordania. He was a professional archaeologist: he remained at Qumran from Friday till Monday every 15 days and carried out rigorous Controls of the work that had been done. Roland de Vaux practiced a humanistic archaeology while confidently seeing how a scientific archaeology took shape.

Even when dressed for the country side, Roland de Vaux remained a monk: whenever he came to Jerusalem he wore his cassock, he strictly observed the daily ritual of his monastic order, he woke up early in the morning to perform the Liturgy, for which he prepared the liturgical altar and attire every evening. He kept all the necessary objects in two green metal suitcases. The Dominican service was too long to recite every day, so as a privilege granted at his request by the Pope, he was allowed to replace it with praying on one rosary. He usually prayed like this while walking before he went to bed, and he held this liturgical discipline dear, being so far away from his convent.

There was yet another aspect of de Vaux's religious life which profoundly astonished those who worked with him. They lived among Muslims at Qumran; Father de Vaux shared a close friendship with Ibrahim, one of the team leaders, a native of Gaza. He himself was very fervent in his religious practices, but his fact not only didn't harm their friendship, but made it even stronger. Their conviction expressed by one or the other

was the following: “We are both faithful of the same true religion, but in France it is expressed as you express it, whereas in the East, as I do. In fact, God is one and the same for all, but we each talk to Him in our own language and through our own religious practices.” (Rousee 2000, 39-45)

This combination of passionate religious practice and lack of proselytism is an ideal. Whether it was an attitude meant to bring peace or a profound conviction, we have yet to know, but it is certain it guaranteed peace there where conflicts often arose. When, in 1994, a book with photographs from the digging sites of Qumran and Ein Feshkha was published, it was received rather well. However, some were surprised to see that instead of commentaries, the photos were accompanied by a synthesis of R. de Vaux’s notes. This raw presentation of this document did stir reflection. Robert Doncel performed an exegesis of the notebooks which he will one day hopefully publish or at least make public. Archaeology is not accustomed to publishing documents’ drafts of an archaeological site. De Vaux and his collaborators have gathered disparate materials in order to build the “Qumran file” in the convincing form we have, to some extent, today.

Naturally, we have here the opportunity to better understand the method of the explorer and to follow his path of thinking. Someone once said we shouldn’t feel any indignation for the fact that R. de Vaux hadn’t been able to assume the final report of the works he leads, because the only reason why he hadn’t been able to finish this project, so dear to him was his unexpected death. Before he died he presented the essence of his results: he joined all his commentaries on Qumran, which are enough to give us a clear idea of the report as he had understood, conceived and documented it. The process of structuring the final report can be traced in his articles and reviews from the *Biblical Review*, and in the two editions of the “Schweich Lectures”.

The issue of a summary of the archaeological diggings with the numerically ordered findings may have seemed quite uninspired. If Roland de Vaux had corroborated all the data satisfactorily, of what interest could returning to the past be? Reflecting on findings as a whole requires all the digging to be finished. As the works progressed with every campaign and with every new piece of information, a sound knowledge of all the architectural and stratigraphical data was needed. The document was prepared and it announced a synthesis which may later be called to form the definitive archaeological report - this document, this “synthesis” is therefore half way from the digging notebook and the “Schweich Lectures”, and it borders the accounts given the *Biblical Review*.

At the time when Roland de Vaux was writing his London conferences, he had

already published a report after each campaign, and the general lines of his global interpretation were in place. Consequently, his interpretation wouldn't vary in time, but rather refine an argumentation making it more and more convincing. The document does not reconstruct anything; it does on the other hand tend to return to the analysis. R. de Vaux assembles his text y extracting all his site notes and re-categorizing them according to the loci and the day to day advancement of the works. This could be a synthesis only to the extent it would regroup non-cohesive pieces of information.

We should return to how the handwritten notes were taken. R. de Vaux was always present on the site, supervising the work in progress in one locus that raised problems. He noted his observations daily with a fine, tense, almost illegible handwriting. He wrote only for himself, and he did so mathematically, without the use of images when he described the works taking place in a certain locus, a space defined as a living or circulation unit. One could wonder whether R. de Vaux actually wrote his observations after the date of record, as leading an archaeological site left no time to spare. With only a few exceptions, all the entries are his, which leads us to believe he had complete control of the site and therefore, he noted down his observations during the breaks or after work.

The notebooks are intact, without any scratches, showing that Roland de Vaux didn't write on site; his fast and fluent handwriting is never affected by the inevitable clumsiness of a man writing in the open air. His remarks were written inside a tent, probably sitting down. Those who have taken part at the digging campaigns are those to say how R. de Vaux led his site. We know he was surrounded by an excellent team and that the different tasks concerning the exploration, topography and mapping, photographs, recordings, drawing of the objects were done on site, even though they may have been later on completed, perfected, and given the final form. The folders that had been compiled later allowed checking. It is possible that R. de Vaux, who had described the site locus by locus, to have had a plan to look at while writing his notes. We can tend in his accounts interrogative phrases, but never anything resembling an investigation.

Sometimes his notes end with the phrase "finished work", meaning the result had been positive: they had touched the base soil and the basin had been emptied. Nonetheless, other passages testify to his doubts: "to check". His notes account for a succession of soils, a modification in the building, they allow the construction of an argumentation; they aim at being pieces of a strictly archaeological demonstration. The analysis is barely articulated; the understanding of the terrain is constantly active during the works and

it is elaborated on site. An unsuccessful investigation is useless because research needs clear ideas; the various elements of a stratigraphy will not be organized in a laboratory.

In his notes, Roland de Vaux described the relation between the various layers and the way they connected with the available built elements just like an archaeologist should. In the “notes’ synthesis” he firstly aimed at being strictly objective, resisting the temptation of interpretation and forbidding any historical reference. It is obvious that he was more interested in certain loci (77, 89, 30 etc.) than in others; in these cases, he was more drawn towards commentary and the interpretation emerged whatever the circumstances. We would be inclined to believe that the document hasn’t been compiled by only one person: pages have been added. The reflection which retained Roland de Vaux, who hesitated and kept reassessing his notes, should have reached a coherent and verified systematization of Periods I and II. This task was far from easy and in certain cases the arguments were missing.

When R. de Vaux set his interpretation of a site within a chronological frame, was compelled to assume a stratigraphical presentation. The settlement had been almost completely dug out and the architect stood in front of a far more complex architectural ensemble than predicted: the surroundings had been explored and the water adduction found. The filling from the loci didn’t always give the same sequence. From the very beginning of the works it had been obvious that the settlement comprised several occupation levels which wouldn’t generate any chronological debates. In certain loci two or three occupations were superposed, separated by collapse masses or mounds. Layers of ashes revealed in some parts have allowed archaeologists to consider the theme of the “destruction by fire”, recurrent in the Palestinian archaeology. Then they found the traces of an earthquake and then those of abandonment.

These observations required a historical framework, a reference system which would constitute the chronological structure. R. de Vaux was well aware that pottery making and especially the coins, regardless of the place of discovery, indicated an occupation that extended over two centuries. He tried to systematize the architectural evolution of the settlement, but the plan of Period I lacks coherence, as the stages which mark the Progressive arrangement of the space correspond poorly to connection points proposed.

Why is that? Let us not forget that Roland de Vaux has alternated the Qumran campaigns (1951, 1952, 1953, 1956, 1958) with those lead at Tell el – Far’ah (1947, 1948, 1951, 1951, 1954, 1955, 1958, 1960, 1961). After the second world war, in this settlement of Samaria, in the context of the traditional Palestinian archaeology, there was a concern

to articulate extensive exploration based on an argument found in the historical books, with the help of a popular method in that time, namely one that consisted of juggling a formula which endured to this day: the three levels stereotype, defense wall and two layers of destruction. The intention was not to reduce Albright's Vision to a scheme and to assimilate de Vaux's knowledge to the so called biblical archaeology small talk. At Tell el – Far'ah de Vaux assessed the cross sections of three millennia and inventoried ceramic classes that had already been well documented for the Bronze Age.

From Far'ah he went to Qumran and almost constantly commutes between two settlements. At Qumran he does not find the ample layers' sequence associated to a succession of architectural phases. It would be interesting to compare the Far'ah and the Qumran notebooks. A quick look shows that the notes from the former site are longer contain more details; de Vaux is concerned and even alarmed by the sequences, and often uses the "locus/ sub-locus" expression, because obviously, the complexity of the Teii stratigraphy required it. In the middle of the "kirbeh", the collapse mass of the constructions was thicker because a tower had caved in and a nucleus had subsided, namely the main building which had probably been one story high. Consequently, the digging had crossed several collapse masses, and then two or three traces of successive occupations.

Roland de Vaux was puzzled by the absence of the levels; the spatial connections between the various deposits and layers were isolated by what was left from the walls, a juxtaposition of more or less autonomous cassettes. Therefore, the reconstruction of the levels by associating and combining the constitutive elements of the terrain was often done at random. The method suited for Far'ah did not work at Qumran. In order to cope with these difficulties R. de Vaux felt he needed to assert his notes and to carefully compare the layers' succession in every locus. This is how the site notes' synthesis was borne. As far as we know there is no equivalent of this synthesis for the Far'ah site. This was also a way to return to the various discoveries, to return to the period preceding his present interpretation, to verify the occupations' succession and to establish the non-synchronisms. He tried to do have the ceramic criterion as a guide in his interpretation of the deposits, analyzing the eventual evolution of certain types.

This was a difficult task because he was a pioneer of the Dead Sea basin archaeology for the Roman era and because the comparative material was missing at that time. Considering all these difficulties his attempt to create a global interpretation had an even greater merit. In order to present the occupational phases at Qumran, the explorer

had renounced the level based distinction and adopted the more daring and supple formula of the periods, overcoming the stratigraphical restraints. The “notes’ synthesis” document is very useful, because besides the lapidary descriptions, it allows us to see how the settlement had been perceived during the excavations and the research, and it also gives us an image of the explorer’s thoughts, which is an unexpected testimony (Humperfs 2000, 47-54).

It is very important to make mention of the rigorousness with which de Vaux studied every aspect uncovered each day by the archaeological diggings, establishing a chronology we will briefly present. De Vaux has divided the sectarian occupation at Qumran into three phases, calling them Period Ia, Period Ib, and Period II. A late colonization from the Iron Age had proceeded these periods, which were followed by a short phase of the Roman occupation, which de Vaux refers to as Period III. The Periods were identified according to the stratigraphical and architectural evidences. De Vaux has dated Period Ia approximately around the third quarter of the 2nd. century B.C.; Period Ib from the last quarter of the 2nd century B.C until 31 B.C. and Period II from 4-1 B.C. until 68 A.D. The following section will be dedicated to a brief description of the remains belonging to each of these phases (de Vaux 1954: 206-306).

The Iron Age

The Qumran settlement has been firstly inhabited during the late period of the Iron Age (8th to 7th century B.C.). De Vaux observed that the foundations of some walls found at lower levels than the others were trapped in a layer of ash which contained many vestiges of the late Iron Age. Other objects uncovered in this phase included a title with the paleo-Judaic inscription reading “lamelekh” (=of the king). De Vaux reconstructed the Iron Age settlement as being formed by a construction with a long row of rooms along the eastern side of a courtyard. An enclosure on the western side of the courtyard contained a large circular reservoir (110 I), which was probably supplied by the surface waters. De Vaux observed this structure’s similarity to an Israelite fortress from Bugea and Negev, and dated its destruction around the time of the collapse of the kingdom of Judah.

Period IA

The Qumran settlement had been abandoned for a few hundred years, and then it was again occupied by a new population which de Vaux identified as being sectarian.

According to de Vaux the initial phase of this colonization was rather modest and brief. The ruined parts of the Iron Age structure have been repaired and re-occupied. The circular Iron Age reservoir has also been cleaned, a new channel has been built to supply it and two other rectangular reservoirs (117-118 I) have been dug in its proximity.

De Vaux attributed two pottery hearths to this phase, which were set one beside the other in the Southern corner of the building. They were surmounted by steps leading up to the reservoir (66 I) built in the next occupation period. De Vaux was faced with the difficult task of having to date Period Ia, because not even a single coin was found, and the few pottery pieces they retrieved were identical to those of the following phase, Period Ib. Since Period Ia remained very poor and he dated the beginning of Period Ib in relation to the life of John Hyrcanus (103-76 B.C.) de Vaux set Period Ia in the third quarter of the 2nd century B.C.

Period IB

According to de Vaux, the sectarian colonization of Qumran completed its final shape during the reign of John Hyrcanus or that of Alexander Jannaeus. The main entrance of the settlement is based on a square tower, two stories high, in the centre of the northern side (9-11 I). At the heart of this settlement there was an Iron Age building comprised of chambers (some of which were two stories high) grouped around a central courtyard. A generous chamber was identified by de Vaux as having been the dining room and the gathering hall (77 I); there was yet another adjacent storeroom (86, 89 I) which had been erected during this period towards the south side of the original centre. Another group of chambers had been added to the west wing, around the old circular reservoir, still in use. The water system had quickly developed through the building of new reservoirs and pools; some of them were apparently used as ritual baths (migua'ot). The particular thing about this settlement is the seemingly absent private chambers; in exchange many of the chambers seem to have been used as workshops (including a pottery workshop, 64 I and 84 I, in the eastern side) or for collective purposes (the gathering hall/ dining room, 77 I).

Not everyone agreed on the exact location of the community: some of the taller chambers comprising of more than one stories may have been used for housing, but many of the inhabitants seemed to have lived in huts and tents around the site (Broshi 1992, 103-15). The presence of domestic pottery, burned pots and oil lamps suggest that some of the caves in the area were also inhabited. In the open spaces from

between and around the buildings the archaeologists have found sheep, goat and cattle bones carefully deposited under shards or within pots. De Vaux interpreted them as the remains of a ritual meal. Others suggested they were sacrifices, despite the fact that there are no identifiable remains of altars at Qumran, nor do the Dead Sea Scrolls refer to the members of the sect as offering animal sacrifices outside the Temple of Jerusalem (de Vaux 1973, 13-6).

According to de Vaux's opinions, the end of Period Ib was marked by an earthquake and a fire. The evidence of the destruction caused by the earthquake, visible along the entire settlement is probably the clearest in the case of a water reservoir (49 I), the steps and floor of which were separated and the eastern half collapsed. Flavius Josephus' testimony (*The Jewish War*, approximately 370-380; *Antiquities* 15-121-147) didn't allow de Vaux to pinpoint the date of this earthquake around 31 B.C.; adding to this destruction there is the evidence of a fire.

De Vaux reached the conclusion that the earthquake and the fire took place simultaneously because it is the easiest solution but he was ready to admit that there was no evidence to confirm it. R. de Vaux used the numismatic evidence to support his interpretation: all 10 coins identified at Qumran with Herod the Great's effigy came from mixed levels, some of them associated with later coins. He noted that the Herodian coins were not dated. He later quoted a recent study which stated that these coins belonged to the period following the year 30 B.C. Yaakov Mesharar suggested that the undated bronze coins of Herod were minted after 37 B.C (Magness 1995, 58-65).

Period II

According to de Vaux the buildings damaged by the fire and/or the earthquake haven't been immediately repaired. The sewage system was no longer tended to, the settlement was flooded and the mud accumulated, reaching 75cm in depth. The sediment has covered the ash layer left by the fire, indicating that the time of the abandonment followed the fire (and that the two were probably related). After the abandonment, the settlement was once again occupied by the same community which had previously left it, a fact confirmed by the keeping of the general plan, as well as by the same use given to the buildings as before. Most of the chambers have been cleaned, some debris thrown on the slopes of a hill on the northern side of the village. Some of the damaged structures have been reinforced while others were left there and abandoned. For instance, the tower has been reinforced by adding a slope stone, a sort declivity of towards the exterior, but

the over 1000 pots' deposit (86 I, 89 I) fallen and broken during the earthquake has been left on the chamber floor and buried. The reservoir was abandoned, as its steps were no longer useful due to the earthquake.

In order to date the beginning of Period II de Vaux resorted once more to the numismatic artefacts. Since only 10 identifiable coins of Herod the Great had been found, all from mixed contexts, he attributed them to the Period II. He concluded that these coins still circled after the death of Herod and set the beginning of this period to the reign of Herod's successor, Herod Archelaus. His reasons were the following: first of all, 16 coins with Archelaus' effigy had been retrieved proving that the numismatic sequence of Period II was uninterrupted until the First Rebellion. Secondly, one of the Archelaus coins had been found in one of the deposits filling a building which got excavated. The fact that the other coins' form this deposit all date from the Period Ib and do not include other coins from the time of Herod the Great, suggests that the settlement had been re-occupied during the reign of Archelaus.

Finally, there was the evidence brought by a 561 silver coins' treasure from 120 I, which was preserved in three pots. Most of them are Tyrian tetradrachms dating from after 126 B.C., the most recent of them dating back to 9-8 B.C. (as well as some other forgery pieces from the same year). As de Vaux noted, this proves that the "terminus post quem" for burying the treasure is 9-8 B.C. based on Sering's observation that there is a relative lacuna in the origin of the Tyrian tetradrachms from 9-8 B.C. to 1 B.C. -1 A.D. (a lacuna which was dismissed from the start), de Vaux dated the beginning of Period II to somewhere around 4 and 1 B.C., namely right at the beginning of Herod Archelaus' reign. Therefore, the presence of the Herod Archelaus coins has offered de Vaux the "terminus post quem", 4 B.C., while the absence of a dated 1 B.C. Tyrian tetradrachm has suggested a "terminus ante quem" for the beginning of this Period.

Leaving aside the reinforcement or the abandonment of the structures mentioned above, de Vaux observed that certain small modifications had been done to the chambers and the sewage system when the settlement was reoccupied during the second Period. However, the pottery workshops were preserved (64 I, 841), as well as the tradition to deposit animal bones under pottery shards outside the buildings. One of the most controversial installations from this occupation phase comes from a chamber in the central part of the settlement (30 I). The debris from the second floor produced the remains of benches and tables built out of mud and bricks, a platform with two tea-cup shaped hollow spaces and two ink bottle. De Vaux saw this chamber as having been

the “scriptorium”, but his opinion was challenged because there is no evidence that the scribes from this period sat on a bench while writing. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis, of it having been a “triclinium” is even less satisfactory, as the benches were far too rough for someone to recline on (de Vaux 1973, 29-33).

A cemetery containing approximately 1100 tombs was localized 50m from the eastern side of the settlement. The tombs arranged in elegant rows along the higher part of the plateau are marked with stones set in an inclined position at the surface. All but one is oriented on a north-south line. Other tombs found on the outskirts of the cemetery or on the low hills in the east do not have the same regular alignment and orientation. The bodies were laid in a niche in the lower part of a rectangular cavity, carved in the plateau's marl. Out of the 26 tombs discovered by de Vaux, those from the central part contained the bones of adult males, while those on the exterior, the bones of women and children (de Vaux 1973, 45-50). The second Period colonization had suffered a violent destruction with the fire de Vaux had attributed to the Roman armies during the First Judaic Rebellion. He made use of the numismatic proofs and of Josephus' statements in order to establish the date of 68 A.D. This destruction had brought the sectarian colonization of Qumran to its end.

Period III

Following the destruction of 68 A.D. the settlement seems to have been occupied by a small Roman garrison. No fewer than five soldiers have cleared the debris from some parts of the village. Proofs of activities or small scale occupation of the site during the Rebellion of Bar Kokhba (132-135 A.D.) have been uncovered. As a conclusion to those presented so far, we could say that publishing the materials resulted from de Vaux's research and digging campaigns has been a substantial progress in the Dead Sea Scrolls' research; however certain statements remain speculative until all the materials and the results of the research carried out on the archaeological sites will be published. For now, the mystery and the darkness of the Qumran caves have not yet been cast away and the scholars are left with the task of continuing their research.

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BOOK REVIEWS

STELIAN PAȘA-TUȘA

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ISAGOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS IN THE WRITING PROPHETS

Stelian PAȘCA-TUȘA

Petre Semen, *Introducere în teologia profeților scriitori* (Iași: Trinitas, 2008), 368p.

The Introduction to the Theology of the Writing Prophets authored by Father Petre Semen inevitably continues the volume Introduction to the Old Testament Biblical Theology. The latter was shaped into the requirements of the curriculum of the Departments of Theology and into the recent necessities of Old Testament studies.

In the previous volume, in addition to making a general introduction, the author presented the historical books from an isagogical and theological point of view. In the present volume, prophetic writings are emphasized; thus, minimal knowledge is given to those who wish to understand the theology of the prophets. I would mention that this is the first Romanian study in the specialty literature that separately presents the notions concerning the prophetic writings. The previous volumes and studies offer only particular information about the structures or ideas of prophetic books. That is the reason why professor Semen's book is important for the Romanian Old Testament theology.

In the first part of the book, the author makes an introductory study on the main elements of the prophetic act. First, the writer marks the limits of Jewish prophetism and the prophetism of other cultures. The prophetic phenomenon of the chosen people has particular traits. According to Semen, prophetism was seen in Israel as “a religious institution initiated by Yahwe, with a well-defined purpose: to support or to replace the other institutions in order to encourage monotheism, especially in periods of crisis” (p. 2). For this reason, Jewish prophetic manifestation is obviously different from the way in which foretellers or clairvoyants from other civilization foretold messages.

Later, the author defines and separates divine prophetism from pseudo-prophetism that emerged because of various reasons inside the chosen people. Genuine prophetism is presented antithetically: it was not a continuous condition like priesthood, and it did not depend on the family, tribe or social class. God and not the prophet took the prophetic initiative. Prophets always moralized people on their sins and avoidance of God. Prophets were usually rejected in their country and nobody listened to their

words. They had many conflicts with the royalty and with the sacramental priesthood, since they tried to change spiritual life.

After insisting on the fact that prophecy did not cease to exist from Samuel to Malachi (approximately 700 years), father Semen mentions the number of prophets (48 men prophets and 7 women prophets) and divides them into two categories: old/non-writing prophets and new/writing prophets. The latter belong to two categories according to the size of their work: major and minor writing prophets. There are other types of division according to factors such as chronological order, the period when they made their prophecies (the Assyrian period, the Haldæic period and the Persian period), or the Babylonian slavery (pre-exile, exile and post-exile prophets).

Last in the general section is a brief presentation of the stylistic traits of prophets. The author tackles their manner of expression and how Messiah was received.

The work has a special part which analyses all prophetic writings from Isaiah to Malachi, concerning isagogical, theological and other aspects related to Old Testament messianism. The introductory part brings into discussion various aspects about the author of the books, the authenticity and the peculiar characteristics of the writing. We have to say that the author does not intend to present exhaustively these aspects: he mentions them and indicates his purpose.

Semen dedicated much attention to the division of the book. The draft of the book indicates the main aspects of the writing. This section makes connections with the main events in the history of the chosen people and of other people they interacted with. The syntheses concerning the thematic structures of the book are remarkable. This general view facilitates a better understanding of the theological dimension.

The theological part of the book focuses on doctrinal and specific aspects of the prophetic work. The author insists on those structures which are definitory for the prophetic messianic teachings. He identifies both messianic texts and their new testamentary corresponding events. In order to support his ideas, he resorts to patristic and contemporary theological testimony.

Father Semen clearly stresses the messianic character of Isaiah's book. Therefore, he interprets the most important messianic texts: Messiah's birth (7:14), the attribute of the enigmatic infant (9:5-6), messianic peace (11:6-9) and Saint John the Baptist (40:3-11). The author makes a detailed analysis of the hymns to Ebed-Yahweh (42:1-4; 49:4-9; 50:4-9; 52:13; 53). He calls them a gospel before the Gospels, since he makes a parallel to the New Testament.

We must mention the characteristic elements of a specific book, in no way related to the above. In the case of Daniel, he presents his prophecies in a context of world history. Hosea's prophecies are topical, while Amos introduces religious and moral teachings.

It seems possible that an introduction and conclusion would have been very useful in understanding the author's position regarding the subject.

As we have seen, we can certainly affirm that father Semen's book is of great use for understanding the isagogical and theological aspects of the prophetic writings. The study closes a gap in the biblical theology of the New Testament. Therefore, we are looking forward for its third part that will analyse the last section of the Canon of the Old Testament, which is the section of didactic and poetical writings.

LANDMARKS IN THE CONTEMPORARY BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Mihai NAGY

Petre Semen, *Arheologia biblică în actualitate* (Iași: Trinitas, 2008), 278p.

Studying the Holy Books of the Old Testament implies a voyage in the past. Essentially, there are two ways through which we can go from the 21st century backwards, to the world in which the holy books had been written. One of them is to be found in the Old Testament, together with other ancient writings which were preserved from ancient times till nowadays. Through the simple reading of the holy books, we can regain something from the history and civilization of the initial places. But no matter how valuable this approach might be, it is limited, because the writers of the Old Testament referred less to the historical and cultural conditions of the times they lived in, their main aim being that of discovering the holy will of God regarding the people of Israel and the whole world. The second way of travelling back for the biblical world is offered by archaeology and implies the systematic recovery of the proofs that can be found regarding the disappeared civilizations and societies and the attentive examination of these recovered proofs, in the attempt to rebuild something from the character of these worlds.

In many parts of the world, the archaeological work implies diggings. These diggings represent the initial part of the archeological work; after that, the classification, study and interpretation of the discovered proofs make possible the gradual reconstitution of the ancient societies. By doing so, we can obtain a more complete image of the life in the ancient world than that which is formed in a written text. For a better understanding of the environment in which the history of the Old Testament takes place, we must take in account the information offered by the archeologists. In the XXth century the archaeological proofs have become so important for the study of the Old Testament, that some general information referring to the biblical archeology is useful to any reader.

The universal impulse which gave birth to the exploring of the Middle East had a special interest for the way in which the majority of the events told in the Holy Bible took place. The term “biblical archeology” should be understood and interpreted in a large sense. In geographical terms, biblical archeology is limited to those areas in which

biblical narrations take place and to the neighboring regions that had an influence on the history of those areas.

The term “biblical archeology” can be used in a responsible way only if we are fully aware of the history and its implications, and in the same time if we try to find out something more about the world in which the Old Testament was written.

The archaeological work has become a relatively exact science in the same time with the new methods of investigation. As a result of the diggings and of the archaeological discoveries, our knowledge about the biblical world is considerably more extensive than it was a century ago, so that large areas from the history and civilization of the ancient world we knew nothing about until recently is completed now with specifically interesting information. Surely, there is still very much work to do, but the biblical archeology has progressed enormously in the last thirty years.

Regardless of the historical truth found in the different literary genres of the Old Testament writings, it is obvious that the data need a critical interpretation before they can be used by the historian who deals with the old Israel. The Holy Scripture cannot be read just like a simple historical document. Generally speaking, the authors of the Old Testament books were very selective regarding the content of their works. So they do not simply tell us things which we would like to know. The Holy Scripture does not contain a true historiography in the modern sense of the word: the word “history” does not even appear in the Hebrew Bible. For example, the biblical authors from the 8th century B.C. depict on a large scale the dramatically public actions of the great kings, priests, reformers and prophets, but tell us nearly nothing about the everyday life of the Israelites. We can only find some hints in the Holy Bible regarding the people's look, their clothes or feeding, as well as what usually happened in the streets or markets of the ordinary town or about the way in which they practiced agriculture, or trade, in what way they wrote or kept documents, how they had fun, how long they lived, what diseases they died of and how they were buried. Precisely these are the details that the biblical archeology places at our disposal.

Even if archaeology cannot confirm each time the fundamental religious meaning of the Holy Bible, it still succeeds in clarifying the historical circumstances of numerous biblical texts and the events they describe. Sometimes the archeology can bring foremost certain problems the biblical authors didn't insist on very much from different reasons. Although this supplementary or compensatory aspect of the biblical archeology is often neglected, in reality it represents a specific significance due to its explaining function of

the biblical texts.

So the main contribution of biblical archeology to a correct understanding of the Old Testament consists in the fact that it helps to reconstruct the initial frame of the Holy Bible, bringing new information about the peoples, places and forgotten cultures of the Old Middle East - a world lost in the darkness of time in which Israel has its origins and where its literature gained form and sense. The Holy Bible is not, consequently, an isolated vestige of antiquity, of an unknown origin and without credibility. Archeology seems that it could not demonstrate the pure historical existence of some personalities from the Old Testament such as Abraham or Moses, but it invalidated forever the theory according to which the Holy Bible is pure mythology. The Bible speaks about a real people in flesh and blood, existing in a specific place and time, whose historical experience led irrevocably to a conception on the condition and human destiny that transcended all the ancient conceptions.

Therefore, biblical archaeology, as a historical discipline, disposes of unique necessary means in order to respond to questions like: What happened in fact? When did it happen? Who were the main participants? How did it happen? Here ends in fact the domain of the archeological research. The biblical archeology cannot and does not intend to answer the question: Why? The answer to this question is in the care of the creed.

The work of Father Petre Semen entitled "The Biblical Archeology in Present Times", comes to help both students in Theology, as well as all those who wish to understand more of the "Promised Land" and implicitly, of the Holy Bible. This manual is made up of 27 lectures elaborated at the highest academic level, having a rich and up-to-date bibliography. Within these lectures, you will find a historical presentation of the events in the life of Israel, their connection with the historical narratives of the Scripture, as well as their interpretation in the spirit of the holy books and the monotheist creed. Regarding the way of presenting these lectures, we can divide them into four chapters: the first explains some technical terms, the second presents the geographical position, the climate and the inhabitants, the third contains information regarding all that represents the domestic, social and lawful institutions, and the fourth shows us the organization and the leading ways, as well as the Mosaic and penal law. In the following we will briefly present the proposed topics included in this volume, allowing those interested in to discover the importance of these lectures from their minute approach, by themselves.

The first proposed structure presents some introductory notions of Biblical

Archeology. Here the definition of archeology is given, its division is made and the necessity of its study in the light of the study of the Old Testament is shown. When ending this first topic, Father Semen shows that the most correct definition that should be given to this discipline should be: the archeology of Palestine and the neighboring countries in the biblical period. Later on he passes to certain chronological reference points, where he places at disposal some sources, concerns and stages of archeology and, in the end, a dating of the main discovered archeological object is done. Afterwards, the author inserts a presentation of the archeological discoveries from the neighboring countries of Palestine: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Syria, also presenting the use of these discoveries for biblical archaeology. The geography of the Holy Land; the climate, flora and fauna are two lectures that couldn't have been absent from this manual. All these are necessary in order to define the place where the important events mentioned in the Bible took place. The next lectures, having the same aim are the ones that present the Administrative and Territorial Division of the Holy Land with the more important places of safety, the inhabitants of the Holy Land as well as the neighboring peoples of the Holy Land. These peoples have influenced the Jewish people in different ways so that they are of a special importance for the biblical archaeology. The third part is reserved to the Household and Social Institutions. Here the way of building houses is presented, as well as the clothing, the way of obtaining food, the occupations. An important topic is that of the family, the social position of women, the raising of children, and the way of struggling against immorality through the Mosaic law. Connected to the social institution, Sciences, arts, and the calendar are presented, as well as the death theme and the funerary rituals. The last section of the book inserts information on administration and organizing forms; Mosaic Law problems, and those regarding the Penal Law; the Religious institutions, the Cult places, the priests, ordinary and extraordinary cult actions, symbolism and typical character of sacrifices, holy actions, the daily Divine cult, the sabbatical holidays and other Israelite holidays are approached. In the end of this chapter the groups and parties of political and religious character are presented.

This work is valuable not only for the fact that it helps to understand the social, economic and cultural context in which the writings of the Old Testament appeared, but especially because it brings up to date the news in this domain. We recommend this textbook to all those interested in rediscovering the original framework of the Holy Bible, which will later allow a correct understanding of the Old Testament.

SCRIPTURILE – CUVINTE DĂRUITE DE DUMNEZEU PRIN OM, OMULUI

Paula BUD

Pierre Gibert et Christoph Theobald (eds.), *La réception des Ecritures Inspirées. Exégèse, histoire et théologie* (Paris: Bayard, 2007), 314p.

A vorbi despre Inspirația divină a Scripturilor Sfinte, poate părea într-adevăr, după cum mărturisește prefața volumului, un truism, fiindcă, dacă există Sfânta Scriptură, ea există pentru că Dumnezeu a binevoit așa, și, prin urmare, a inspirat scrierea ei. Totuși, în istoria creștinismului, unele diferențieri, unele nuanțe de limbaj au făcut ca percepția asupra in-spirației Sfintei Scripturi să difere de la o confesiune la alta. Aceste elemente au condus la cristalizarea unui prim obiectiv, și anume acela de a explicita problematica inspirației cărților canonice ale Sfintei Scripturi în interiorul creștinismului. La începuturile Bisericii creștine, noțiunea inspirației părea să se impună prin simpla credință în Acela care era venit să împlinească Scripturile (Mt 5:17), la a căror scriere lucrase Duhul lui Dumnezeu. Ulterior, însă, în anumite momente ale istoriei, conceptul a suferit unele modificări, iar marcarea acestora constituie cel de-al doilea obiectiv mărturisit al volumului.

Apărut prin osteneala celor doi coordonatori (Pierre Gibert și Christoph Theobald), și prin bunăvoința autorilor, volumul este fructul unor studii realizate și prezentate la Colocviul bianual al revistei *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, organizat în iunie 2006 la Paris, dar, în egală măsură, și fructul discuțiilor tematice care s-au încheiat cu acea ocazie. Toate acestea prezentate într-o structură întreită, constituind, în ansamblu, o reflexie asupra conceptului de inspirație din perspectivă exegetică, istorică și teologică.

Un prim nivel al cercetării vizează modul înțelegerii conceptului de inspirație, în per-manentă relație cu problema receptării și a canonicității Scripturii. Pornind de la afirmația Sfântului Apostol Pavel că „toată Scriptura este insuflată de Dumnezeu” (2 Tm 3:16), se pune întrebarea ce cuprinde „toată Scriptura”? Ceea ce presupune sintagma paulină este determinat de principiul canonicității (p. 17). Pentru a lămuri întrucâtva această problemă, aş zăbovi puțin asupra studiului inaugural al volumului semnat de prof. Yves-Marie Blanchard („Toute Ecriture est inspiree (2 Tm 3:16). Les problematiques de la canonisation et de l'Inspiration”) care abordează trei structuri:

Scripturile iudaice (Vechiul Testament), scrierile apostolice datând de la sfârșitul secolului I și începutul sec. II d.Hr. (Noul Testament) și toate eforturile exegetice și hermeneutice făcute până la încheierea canonului scripturistic. Apoi, interogându-se cu privire la sensul adjectivului *theopneustos* din 2 Tm 3:16, autorul definiște inspirația divină, exercitată deopotrivă primilor misionari creștini și profeților Vechiului Legământ, ca fiind însoțirea de către Duhul, însoțire care poate fi recunoscută la întâlnirea celor două Testamente, articulate în evenimentul central al misterului pascal (p. 28). Perspectiva este completată de o abordare istorico-teologică a problemei canonicității și inspirației (Bernard Sesboue, „La canonisation des Ecritures et la reconnaissance de leur Inspiration”). Studiul este dezvoltat pe două direcții principale. Cea dintâi este o scurtă istorie a dialecticii canon – inspirație, urmând o desfășurare logică ce pornește de la Sfânta Scriptură, continuă cu discursul patristic, Evul Mediu, timpurile moderne, perioada contemporană (Karl Rahner), și, în sfârșit, prevederile canonice privind aceste chestiuni. A doua direcție vizează dimensiunea teologică a problemei inspirației și canonului, autorul preocupându-se în primul rând de relația existentă între inspirația divină și taina Întrupării (pp. 66-68).

O serie de momente ale istoriei, dintre care unele sunt consemnate de textul scripturistic, au fost dedicate unor încercări succesive de alcătuire, de definire a canonului. Aceste momente alcătuiesc o succesiune de etape de dezvoltare care oferă temelia necesară definirii ultimei a canonului scripturistic. Primul dintre acestea este Pentateuhul grec, primul canon al Sfintei Scripturi în sânul iudaismului. Un al doilea punct în acest demers propus de Folker Siegert („Du bon moment de la canonisation”) este cel al importanței Septuagintei în definirea canonului. Din acest studiu, aș mai semnală aici un singur segment interesant, din punctul meu de vedere, și anume cel dedicat traducerilor care au precedat redactarea finală a unora dintre cărțile Sfintei Scripturi, autorul considerând că traducerea unui text este echivalentă oarecum fixării lui. El prezintă câteva cazuri în care traducerea a precedat redactarea finală a cărții: Ieremia și Iov, Ezdra și Estera, Daniel. În sfârșit, un ultim studiu (Jean Pierre Sonnet, „De Moise et du narrateur: Pour une pensee narrative de l'inspiration”) din această primă secțiune a volumului propune o distincție între imaginea dedramatizată a naratorului Pentateuhului și chipul eminent dramatic al lui Moise, persona naratorului și dramatis persona a lui Moise oferă cele două elemente ale unei analogii ce înlesnește înțelegerea problemei inspirației.

Abordarea specifică cercetării istorice revine în partea a doua a volumului, care reia problema extensiunii canonului Sfintei Scripturi în primele secole creștine (Allain Le Boulluec, „Le probleme de l'extension du canon des Ecritures aux premiers siecles”), amintind caracterul flexibil al elaborării și recunoașterii canonului în acel moment (Pierre Gibert, „La differenciation moderne de la lecture biblique. Le conflit des epistemologies”). Reeditarea Scrisorii despre inspirație a lui Richard Simon (Richard Simon, „Lettre a M. l'abbe Pirot sur l'inspiration des Livres sacres”) marchează în continuare cele petrecute între sfârșitul secolului XV și sfârșitul secolului XVII în domeniul receptării și acceptării Scripturilor, în funcție de penetrarea treptată a culturii libertinilor în viața Bisericii. Exegeza critică nu putea rămâne ex-terioară unei receptări a Scripturii în Biserică care ținea cu fermitate la caracterul ei inspirat.

Partea care încheie volumul reconsideră problema „receptării” Scripturii, lăsând loc re-flexiei unui teolog apărută ca reacție la cea a unui filosof (Pierre Gisel, „Lire theologiquement et spirituellement les Ecritures. Un contrepoint a la contribution de Jean-Louis Chretien „Se laisser lire avec autorite par les Saintes Ecritures”). Aș remarca în chip deosebit acest studiu datorită convingerii că o lectură duhovnicească a Sfintei Scripturi este obiectivul în vederea căruia ar trebui utilizate ca auxiliare metodele specifice cercetării biblice, fie isagogice, exe-getice sau sintetic-teologice. În sfârșit, o ultimă contribuție actualizează problema, lansând interogații privitoare la ceea ce timpul nostru poate înțelege prin inspirație (Christoph Theobald, „La reception des Ecritures inspirees”).

Bucurându-se de un colectiv de autori de referință în domeniul studiilor biblice, volumul pune la dispoziția cititorilor un periplu prin istoria formării canonului, în care prezentarea acesteia nu se limitează la o abordare strict științifică, ci punctează, acolo unde este necesar, aspectele teologice. Colecția de studii realizează în mod fericit trecerea de la analiza evenimentelor și momentelor istorice binecunoscute la perspectiva contemporană asupra problemei inspirației și canonicității scrierilor scripturistice, lansând interogații privind noi sensuri ale conceptelor și încercând, totodată, să ofere răspunsuri suficiente timpului nostru.

Iată, în acest volum, un nou efort de reîntoarcere la sensul autentic al conceptelor, evitându-se riscul de blocare în imobilitatea specifică istoriei și căutându-se dimensiunea lor dinamic-duhovnicească, ce transcende cadrele temporalului.

JEWISH TRADITION

Paula Bud,
Rabbi Şammai şi suprenaţia Torei

Stelian Paşca-Tuşa,
Procreaţia şi circumcizia

RABBI ȘAMMAI ȘI SUPREMAȚIA TOREI

Paula BUD

- **Numele:** Șammai Hazaken, Bătrânul
- **Locul activității:** Ierusalim
- **Timpul activității:** 50 î. Hr. – 30 d. Hr.

Rabbi Șammai a fost unul din înțelepții din Ereț Israel care a deținut funcția de vicepreședinte al Sanhedrinului, după Menahem Esenianul, în timp ce Hillel era președintele acestei structuri. Discipolii și adepții gândirii sale au fost numiți, timp de secole, „școala lui Șammai” (Bet Șammai), în opoziție cu discipolii lui Hillel (Bet Hillel), predecesorul său la conducerea Sanhedrinului.

Schiță biografică

Șammai a fost contemporanul lui Hillel și este menționat invariabil alături de acesta. Șammai și Hillel cel Bătrân au constituit ultima din cele cinci mari „perechi” (zugot) de înțelepți care au transmis legea orală. În această pereche, judecând după controversele consemnate în Mișna, Șammai, constructor de meserie (Șabat 31a), reprezenta strictețea halahică, în vreme ce Hillel înclina întotdeauna spre o interpretare mai flexibilă a legii.

Severitatea învățatului și temperamentul lui iritabil răzbat dintr-o întâmplare celebră: Un neevreu vine să-l „provoace” pe Șammai, făgăduind să se convertească la iudaism dacă acesta reușește să-l învețe toată Tora cât timp poate el sta într-un picior. Se spune că Șammai s-a înfuriat și l-a alungat pe „provocator” cu bățul pe care-l purta mereu cu el. Confruntat cu aceeași întrebare, Hillel a adoptat o abordare mai conciliatoare și i-a răspuns prin celebrul dicton: „Ce ție nu-ți place, nu face aproapelui tău” (Șabat 31b).

Șammai adera la „spiritul literei legii” în cele mai multe dintre cazuri, având convingerea că este responsabilitatea evreilor de a respecta în mod absolut Torah.

Strictețea cu care Șammai înțelegea să respecte Legea reiese și din două episoade din viața personală. Într-un anumit moment, el a dorit ca fiul său, încă copil, să postească conform Legii în ziua Curățirii (Yom Kippur). Se pare că a renunțat la această idee doar la insistențele prietenilor săi (Yoma 77b). Altădată, când nora lui a dat naștere unui băiat în sărbătoarea Corturilor (Sukkot), a spart acoperișul camerei în care ea stătea, transformând-o astfel într-o sukka (cort), pentru ca noul său nepot să-și îndeplinească

obligățiile religioase specifice sărbătorii (*Sukkah* 28a).

Interpretarea Torei

Mentalitatea riguroasă a lui Șammai este caracteristică unui stadiu mai vechi al Halahei, bazat pe o interpretare literală a Sfintei Scripturi.

Mișna (*Avot* 1,15) consemnează trei din învățămintele lui Șammai:

- „Fixează-ți un timp pentru studiul Torei”;
- „Vorbele să-ți fie puține, faptele, multe”;
- „Întâmpină pe oricine cu blândețe”.

Această ultimă povață, ca și unele halahot care i se atribuie, demonstrează că Șammai nu era lipsit de indulgență și de bunăvoință, chiar dacă zelul lui religios l-a făcut să apară drept un om sever și impulsiv.

Bet Hillel și Bet Șammai

Talmudul consemnează trei dispute (sau, după unele păreri, cinci) între Hillel și Șammai (*Șabat* 15a; *Niddah* I.1). Dar, odată cu înmulțirea ucenicilor, disputele s-au amplificat în așa măsură încât a apărut formula: „Legea cea una a devenit două legi.” (*Sanhedrin* 88b; *Sotah* 47b).

Cei doi învățători au întemeiat două școli rivale (Bet Șammai și Bet Hillel), care au înflorit în Palestina secolului I și promovau învățături contradictorii. Ambele au avut o contribuție consistentă la dezvoltarea legii orale. De aici provin probabil așa-numitele *hilhot Bet Șammai* („legile școlii lui Șammai”). Cu toate acestea, în câteva cazuri, Șammai respinge soluția ambelor școli, optând pentru o linie mai dură, în timp ce în altele, se aliază poziției adoptate de școala lui Hillel. Măsurile preconizate de Bet Șammai, care vizau restrângerea la minimum a contactelor cu neevreii, reflectă clar primejdiile care amenințau identitatea și existența poporului evreu în acea vreme.

Relațiile prietenoase care s-au menținut până la o vreme între cele două școli s-au datorat numai spiritului împăciutor al hileliților (*Tosef.*, *Yeb.* I. 10; *Yeb.* 14b;).

În anii ce au urmat morții celor doi mari învățători, disputele s-au amplificat teribil. Tendința restrictivă a ucenicilor lui Șammai și moderația hileliților au determinat tensiuni permanente între membrii celor două școli. Talmudul consemnează 316 controverse între ele, având ca obiect 221 de *Halakot*, 29 de interpretări halakhice și 66 de *gezerot* (guard-laws).

Uneori, o înțelegere foarte riguroasă a unei probleme determina o înțelegere

liberală asupra alteia. Spre exemplu, învățătura strictă a lui Șammai privind divorțul a determinat cristalizarea unei înțelegeri mai liberale privind comportamentul îngăduit de Lege soților.

Se spune că șamaiții au moștenit, sau chiar au imitat în chip premeditat caracterul rigid al fondatorului școlii lor. Li se părea imposibil să fii prea riguros în aplicarea Legii. Erau patrioți înflăcărați, refuzând să se supună stăpânirii străine. Se opunea relațiilor prietenești nu numai cu romanii, ci și cu romanii care colaborau cu administrația romană. Casa lui Șamai respingea sistemul roman de taxe și pe acei dintre evrei care lucrau ca vameși. Sub conducerea zelotului Iuda Galileanul și a unui șamait numit Zadok (*Yeb.* 15b), s-a ridicat o mișcare politică care să se opună, chiar în mod violent aplicării legilor romane. Hileliții, animați de un spirit mai tolerant și mai împăciuitor, au pierdut din influență și importanță. Relațiile dintre cele două școli au devenit atât de ostile încât ei refuzau să săvârșească cultul împreună.

Treptat, șamaiții au încercat să oprească orice comunicare între evrei și păgâni, interzicând evreilor chiar să cumpere alimente de la vecinii lor neevrei. Hileliții se opuneau acestor extreme. Dar în Sanhedrin, șamaiții și zeloții au preluat puterea. Un episod nefericit din istoria acestor dispute consemnează convocarea Sanhedrinului pentru lămurirea acestor aspecte. Eleazar ben Ananias i-a invitat pe membrii ambelor școli pentru a se întâlni la casa lui. Oameni înarmați așezați la ușă permiteau tuturor să intre, dar nimănui să iasă. Se spune că în timpul acestor discuții, mulți dintre hileliți au fost uciși. Și atunci, cei rămași au adoptat pozițiile restrictive ale șamaiților, cunoscute în Talmud ca „Cele 18 articole”. Atât datorită violențelor, cât și datorită pozițiilor rigide adoptate, această zi a fost considerată ulterior una total nefericită (*Shabat* 13a, 17a).

Astfel, lupta dintre Șammai și Hillel constituie un element important al situației istorice din timpul primei revolte a evreilor împotriva Romei și al distrugerii Templului din Ierusalim.

Casele și-au continuat disputele și după distrugerea Templului, probabil până la reorga-nizarea Sanhedrinului sub conducerea lui Gamaliel al II-lea în jurul anului 80 d. Hr. Până la acel moment, toate speranțele de victorie împotriva Romei au fost năruite, și casa lui Șamai a fost obligată să se supună stăpânirii romane. Subiectele legale dezbătute în trecut au fost reluate și, aproape în toate cazurile, opinia hilleliților a avut câștig de cauză (*Yeb.* I. 13; *Yer. Ber.* i. 3b).

Hileliții erau, asemenea fondatorului școlii lor (*Berachot* 60a; *Shabat* 31a), tăcuți, iubitori de pace, adaptându-se la circumstanțe și timpul în care trăiau, fiind preocupați

numai să aducă omul mai aproape de Dumnezeu și de aproapele său. Ucenicii lui Hillel, „urmașul evlavios al lui Ezdra” (*Sanhedrin* 11a), răspândeau în viața lor publică pacea, bunătatea și spiritul împăciuitoare care îl caracterizau pe marele lor învățător; aceleași principii i-au condus și în timpul frământărilor politice.

Talmudul Babilonian (*Sukah* 28a; *Baba Batra* 134a) consemnează numărul aproximativ al discipolilor lui Hillel ca fiind 80, în timp ce Talmudul Palestinian numără 160 (*Yer. Ned.* 39b). Ambele surse menționează nominal doi dintre acești ucenici, Ionatan ben Uzziel și Iohanan ben Zakkai, cu precizarea că Ionatan era cel mai mare dintre ei și Iohanan cel mai mic dintre toți. Din școala șamaiților, numai trei sunt menționați nominal: Baba ben Buta (*Bezah* 20a), Dositai din Kefar Yetma (*'Orlah* II. 5), și Zadok (*Tosef.*, *'Eduy.* II. 2) dar, chiar și aceștia trei, sunt amintiți doar pentru că reprezentau o facțiune a școlii care susținea uneori poziția hileliților.

Șammai și creștinismul

Controversele dintre urmașii lui Șamai și Hillel fac parte din istoria creștinismului primar. Episodul în care Mântuitorul Iisus în vârstă de 12 ani a fost găsit în Templu alături de învățații poate fi un moment în care Șamai sau Hillel – ori cel puțin unii dintre ucenicii lor apropiați – se aflau printre acești învățați. Învățătura Mântuitorului rezonază în multe privințe cu învățătura blândă a hileliților. Îndemnul Mântuitorului: „Și precum voiți să vă faceți vouă oamenii, faceți-le și voi asemenea” (*Lc* 6:31) pare a fi o variantă parafrazată a regulii pe care o promova Hillel ca esență a Torei. De asemenea, stilul Mântuitorului de a comprima Legea și Profeții în scurte învățături esențiale se apropie de modul de gândire al lui Hillel: „Învățătorule, care poruncă este mai mare în Lege? El i-a răspuns: Să iubești pe Domnul Dumnezeul tău, cu toată inima ta, cu tot sufletul tău și cu tot cugetul tău. Aceasta este marea și întâia poruncă. Iar a doua, la fel ca aceasta: Să iubești pe aproapele tău ca pe tine însuși. În aceste două porunci se cuprind toată Legea și proorocii” (*Mt* 22:36-40).

S-a speculat posibilitatea ca fariseii cărora Iisus le adresa cuvintele: „Vai vouă, cărtu-rarilor și fariseilor fățarnici” (*Mt* 23) ar fi fost următorii lui Șammai, care ar fi identificat cu ușurință multe greșeli în învățăturile Mântuitorului. În timp ce alți farisei, ca Nicodim, îl apărau pe Iisus de persecuția sanhedrinului (*In* 7:50-51). Iosif din Arimateea, ucenicul tainic (*In* 19:38) care l-a pus în mormânt, era, și el, un membru important al sanhedrinului (*Mc* 15:43).

În problema divorțului (*Mt* 5:32), însă, atitudinea Mântuitorului se înscrie mai

degrabă pe linia lui Șammai, dat fiind faptul că Hillel îngăduia divorțul dacă soțul era în orice fel nemulțumit de soția sa. Un pasaj din Predica de pe Munte rezzonează profund cu atitudinea specifică șamaiților: „Să nu socotiți că am venit să stric Legea sau proorocii; n-am venit să stric, ci să împlinesc. Căci adevărat zic vouă: Înainte de a trece cerul și pământul, o iotă sau o cirtă din Lege nu va trece, până ce se vor face toate. Deci, cel ce va strica una din aceste porunci, foarte mici, și va învăța așa pe oameni, foarte mic se va chema în Împărăția Cerurilor; iar cel ce va face și va învăța, acesta mare se va chema în Împărăția Cerurilor. Căci zic vouă: Că de nu va prisosi dreptatea voastră mai mult decât a cărturarilor și a fariseilor, nu veți intra în Împărăția Cerurilor.” (Mt 5:17-20).

După moartea lui Iisus, ucenicii săi s-au împărțit, și ei, în două direcții. Iudaizanții insistau ca neevreii să fie circumciși înainte de a fi primiți între creștini, ecou al atitudinii șamaiților care refuzau însoțirea cu neevrei. Pe de altă parte, învățătura Sf. Apostol Pavel că iudeii și neamurile ar trebui să trăiască ca frații pare să fie în acord cu învățăturile lui Hillel (Gal 2:11-13), chiar întrecându-l pe Hillel în atitudinea liberală. Mențiunea pe care o face Pavel referitor la învățătura primită de la Gamaliel, nepotul lui Hillel, este deosebit de interesantă (Fapte 22:3). Gamaliel însuși este prezentat ca apărător al drepturilor iudeo-creștinilor în sanhedrin (Fapte 5:33-39).

În timpul perioadei premergătoare revoltei iudaice împotriva Romei, șamaiții au fost probabil cei care i-au persecutat pe iudeo-creștini, atât pentru atitudinea lor liberală față de neamuri, cât și pentru disponibilitatea lor de a „da Cezarului cele ale Cezarului” (Mc 12:17). Asocierea lui Iisus cu vameșii și păcătoșii (Mt 11:19) era probabil foarte deranjantă pentru ucenicii lui Șamai. Consemnările pedepselor asupra iudeo-creștinilor din partea conducerii iudaice locale (Mt 10:17) pot fi înțelese ca făcând referire la dominația casei lui Șamai în timpul acela.

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PROCREAȚIA ȘI CIRCUMCIZIA

Stelian PAȘCA-TUȘA

Continuăm prezentarea instituției familiale din perspectiva culturii iudaice introducând, în acest număr, două probleme fundamentale care marchează începutul vieții, procreația și circumcizia. Am apelat, ca și în numărul precedent, la lucrarea semnată de Menachem Hachohen, Cartea vieții omului (traducere din ebraică de Rodica Amel, Ed. Hasefer, București, 2005, 26-45).

Sarcina și femeia care naște

- sarcina era un motiv de speranță, de încredere în fericire și reușită;
- transformările trupesti erau însoțite de transformări sufletești;
- femeia însărcinată avea un statut aparte în societatea iudaică;
- în timpul sarcinii femeia avea nevoie de multă înțelegere și protecție;
- după naștere urma o perioadă de curățirea care dura 40 sau 80 de zile în funcție de sexul copilului (pentru băieți era de 40);
- după încheierea acestei perioade femeia aducea o jertfă numită *ola ve-iored* (ofrandă fluctuantă) care se stabilea în funcție de statutul social al femeii.

Moașa (meialedet)

- moașa numită și *hahama* (înțeleapta) era femeia care ajuta pe cea însărcinată să nască;
- rolul ei este acela de a o întări și de a o liniști pe femeia care naște;
- moașele erau numite și viețuitoarele fiindcă erau comparate cu viețuitoarele sălbatice care aveau grijă de noul născut.

Circumcizia (brit-mila)

- circumcizia este un ritual prin care prepuțul organului masculin este tăiat;
- tăierea împrejur este semnul legământului încheiat de Dumnezeu cu Avraam;
- încălcarea acestei practici era pedepsită cu excomunicarea;
- circumcizia a fost asemănată cu ciupitul plantelor de vlăstarii neproductivi;
- dacă acest ritual punea în pericol viața pruncului, el era amănat sau chiar interzis (în cazul în care din pricina lui au murit frați ai celui ce urmează să fie circumscrisi);

circumcizia avea trei etape:

- tăierea pieluței care acoperă partea superioară a organului masculin;
- dezlipirea membranei, adică înlăturarea porțiunii de piele din locul respectiv;
- aspirarea sângelui produs de rana, pentru a opri sângerarea (scopul acestei etape e unul profilactic).

Cel care execută circumcizia (moel)

- *moel*-ul trebuia să fie un bărbat cu însușiri bune, un om evlavios și drept;
- acesta trebuie să fie el însuși circumscris;
- în cazuri excepționale chiar și femeia putea să taie împrejur pe nou născut cu condiția să împlinească toate cele trei etape;
- *moel*-ul era socotit membru al legământului (alături de tată și de naș) și trebuia cinstit.

Nașul (sandac)

- nașul este persoana care ține pe genunchi pe copil în momentul în care acestuia i se face circumcizia.
- în anumite situații, tatăl copilului putea fi chiar nașul copilului;
- nășitul era considerat o mițva și mulți râvneau să îl împlinească;
- nașului i se acorda o cinste mai mare decât *moel*-ului fiindcă i se dădea să citească din Tora;
- rabinii îl asemănau pe sandac cu preotul care tămâiază înaintea Domnului.

Răscumpărarea primului născut (Pidion ha-ben)

- porunca răscumpărării are origine în vremea exodului din Egipt;
- suma răscumpărării era de 5 șekeli de argint pur;
- cel care făcea răscumpărarea era tatăl copilului;
- dacă un om avea mai multe neveste, el trebuia să răscumpere pe fiecare întâi născut;
- preoții (*cohanimii*) și leviții era scutiți de această poruncă.

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KOL NEȚER

Paula Bud,
Ierihonul – poarta de intrare în Pământul Făgăduinței

Stelian Pașca-Tușa,
Arheologie biblică – repere cronologice (1900-1939)

IERIHONUL – POARTA DE INTRARE ÎN PĂMÂNTUL FĂGĂDUINȚEI

Paula BUD

- **Denumire:** יְרִיחוֹ (*Ieriho*), lit. „orașul lunii sau locul miresmei”
- **Localizare:** La 40 km nord-est de Ierusalim.
- **Istoric:** este considerat cea mai veche așezare urbană și prima așezare cu fortificații din lume. Este populat din aproximativ 9000 î. Hr. A fost primul oraș cucerit de poporul ales la intrarea în Țara Făgăduinței.

Ierihonul în Sfânta Scriptură

În Pentateuh, Ierihonul este invocat ca reper în relatările anumitor momente esențiale din viața lui Moise, precum și în relatările unor evenimente majore din istoria poporului ales. Le vom aminti în ordinea apariției lor în Sfânta Scriptură. Astfel, un prim moment este biruința asupra amoreilor (Nm 22:1). Numărătoarea poporului s-a făcut, din poruncă divină, „în șesurile Moabului, la Iordan, în dreptul Ierihonului” (Nm 26:1-3; 26:63). În repetate rân-duri, poporul și-a așezat tabăra în fața Ierihonului (Nm 31:12; Nm 33:48-50). În același loc, Dumnezeu a vorbit robului Său Moise (Nm 33:50-56; 35:1-2), prin care a descoperit poporului Israel porunci și așezăminte (Nm 36:13).

Ierihonul, poarta de intrare în pământul făgăduinței, apare, cum era și firesc, cel mai frec-vent în cartea Iosua. Cartea relatează trimiterea iscoadelor în Ierihon (Ios 2:1-4). Ierihonul servește ca reper pentru fixarea locului în care evreii au trecut Iordanul: „în fața Ierihonului” (Ios 3:16), în partea de răsărit a Ierihonului – unde și-au așezat tabăra – (Ios 4:19). Cucerirea Ierihonului este primul pas în ocuparea pământului făgăduinței (Ios 5:9-6:5), iar biruința este a Domnului (Ios 24:11). Cetatea servește ca reper și la cucerirea Canaanului (Ios 7:2; 8:1-2; 9:3-6; 10:1-2; 10:28-30; Ios 12:7-9), precum și la împărțirea Canaanului între semințiile lui Israel (Nm 34:15; Ios 13:15; 13:32; 16:1-7; 18:10-12; 18:21-28; 21:34-37; 1 Par 6:77-78).

Alte consemnări istorice menționează cetatea Ierihonului: locul batjocoririi slugilor lui David (2 Rg 10:4-5; 1 Par 19:4-5); trimiterea proorocului Ilie (4 Rg 2:4-5) și a proorocului Elisei (4 Rg 15-18), prinderea regelui Sedechia în șesul

Ierihonului și biruința caldeilor (4 Rg 25:5; Ier 39:4-5; Ier 52:8); luptele Macabeilor (1 Mac 9:47-50; 1 Mac 16:11-14; 2 Mac 12:13-16); locuitorii Ierihonului – ierihonienii (Ezd 2:1-2; 2:34; 3 Ezd 5:8-9; 5:44; Nem 3:1-3; 7:36; Jud 4:1-4). Iosua a aruncat un blestem asupra Ierihonului (Ios 6:26), a cărui împlinire o confirmă un alt text vechitestamentar (3 Rg 16:33-34).

Ierihonul este numit într-un singur loc „cetatea finicilor” (2 Par 28:15). Tot o singură dată apare o referire la trandafirul de Ierihon: „Și m-am înrădăcinat în popor mărit; în partea Domnului, a moștenirii Lui. Ca un cedru în Liban m-am înălțat și ca un chiparos în munții Ermonului, Ca un finic la țarmuri m-am înălțat și ca răsadurile trandafirului în Ierihon.” (Sir 24:13-15).

Rahab, desfrânata din Ierihon, care înlesnește pătrunderea iscoadelor în cetatea Ierihonului și, prin aceasta, cucerirea ei, va fi amintită în genealogia Mântuitorului Hristos (Mt 1:5).

În Noul Testament, Ierihonul apare în relatările Evangheliilor sinoptice în relație cu episo-dul vindecării orbului / orbilor (Mt 20:29; Mc 10:46-52; Lc 18:35-43). Sf. Ev. Luca consemnează și o vindecare sufletească săvârșită de Mântuitorul în Ierihon, asupra lui Zaheu vameșul (Lc 19:1-10). Pe drumul dintre Ierusalim și Ierihon este localizată și pilda samarineanului milostiv (Lc 10: 29-37). În sfârșit, Sf. Ap. Pavel amintește de episodul cuceririi Ierihonului, arătând că numai credința le-a adus evreilor izbânda asupra cetății (Evr 11:30).

Ierihonul în Tradiția Bisericii

Faptul că ziua cuceririi Ierihonului era o sâmbătă este remarcat de Sfântul Ioan Gură de Aur, care arată că pentru anumite pricini binecuvântate se îngăduie uneori încălcarea prevederilor legislativ-cultice (Sf. Ioan Gură de Aur 1994, 476). Sfântul Chiril al Alexandriei este îndeosebi preocupat de momentul căderii zidurilor Ierihonului, moment pe care îl exploatează conferindu-i multiple semnificații simbolice și teologice. Căderea zidurilor „numai prin strigare” este unul dintre argumentele pe care le invocă împotriva necredinței acelora care pun la îndoială atotputernicia lui Dumnezeu: „Cum, deci, va zice cineva, n-ar fi împovărați de vini grele cei ce îndrăznesc să necinstească prin necredință pe Dumnezeu, cel mai bun Meșter în toate, nereținându-se să întrebe cum, referitor la cele pe care le face, măcar că Îl cunosc pe El ca Dătătorul a toată cunoștința și știu că toate le poate, învățați fiind prin toată dumnezeiasca Scriptură? [...] Cum s-a oprit iarăși Iordanul? Sau cum s-a dărâmat numai prin strigare

zidul de netrecut al Ierihonului? Și nu vei înceta să întrebi despre acestea cum.” (Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei 2000, 283). Elementul central al episodului este chivotul, despre care spune Sfântul Chiril că „avea în el pe Dumnezeu drept conducător”, de aceea „el a fost purtat de preoți și împrejurul Ierihonului și a surpat zidul lui înalt, nefolosindu-se unelte de dărâmare și berbeci, ci mai mult trâmbițe și glasuri” (Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei 2000, 307). Zidurile Ierihonului au fost surpate prin puterea lui Dumnezeu, iar evenimentul are și o dimensiune tipologică evidentă, fiindcă aceeași putere o vom afla iarăși și în Hristos Care, „purat de sfinții bărbați [...] surpă toată puterea diavolului, nu cu arme, ci cu strigare și trâmbiță, adică prin propovăduirile apostolice și evanghelice și prin consimțirea întregului popor, care mărturisește, prin dreapta credință, pe Stăpânul său. Aceasta o vedem împlinindu-se și prin doxologiile tainice ce răsună înaintea poporului ca o trâmbiță preoțească, prin care se înțelege glasul liturghisitorului care face să cadă și să se surpe puterea vrăjmașilor” (Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei 2000, 308).

Pentru Origen, Ierihonul este, în mod figurat, chipul acestui veac, pe care îl va birui învățătura Mântuitorului: „Chiar și diferitele opinii ale filozofilor și cele mai remarcabile învățături ale școlilor lor, care fuseseră socotite ca niște metereze nebiruite se vor prăbuși deodată cu venirea Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos, a cărui sosire a preînchipuit-o fiul lui Navi, trimițând preoții săi, Apostolii, purtând «trâmbiți de argint», adică învățătura măreață și cerească a propovăduirii lor” (Origen 1981, 247). Dacă la sosirea lui Isus (Iosua), zidurile Ierihonului s-au prăbușit, „la venirea lui Iisus, Domnul meu, lumea este cucerită” (Origen 1981, 250). Mai mult, dacă discursul filosofilor și ereticilor poate cuceri prin frumusețea cuvintelor, Origen îi identifică pe toți aceștia cu „oameni din cetatea Ierihonului, adică oameni ai acestui veac” (Origen 1981, 255), cu alte cuvinte, oameni care nu lucrează în perspectiva veșniciei, ci în cadrele stricte ale acestei lumi materiale și stricăcioase. Pentru Origen, cucerirea istorică a Ierihonului, dar și cucerirea lui în sens figurat ca simbol al sălășluirii păcatului are ca unic scop readucerea făpturii umane în cadrele împlinirii legii divine: „Să ținem minte, dar, că dacă Isus a zdrobit pe regele Ierihonului, pe regele din Ai, pe regele din Lebna, pe regele din Lachiș și pe regele din Hebron, a făcut-o pentru ca toate acele orașe, care trăiau într-o lege a păcatului, sub regi nevrednici, să trăiască de acum în legea lui Dumnezeu” (Origen 1981, 265). În sfârșit, în contextul pildei samarineanului milostiv, Origen identifică, într-o interpretare simbolică, cetatea Ierihonului cu lumea aceasta: „Un bătrân oarecare voind a interpreta pilda cu omul care cobora din Ierusalim spunea că acesta ar fi Adam,

Ierusalimul raiul, Ierihonul lumea, tâlharii puterile vrăjmașe, preotul Legea, levitul proorocii, iar samarineanul Hristos” (Origen 1982, 125).

Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul propune o înțelegere duhovnicească a Ierihonului și a ele-mentelor implicate în episodul cuceririi lui: înconjurarea cetății, chivotul, trâmbița. În viziunea lui, aici este prefigurat Însuși Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu care Se arată biruitor al lumii acesteia și al stăpânitorului ei: „Prăbușind apoi prin șapte înconjurări și tot atâtea trâmbițări, împreunate cu strigarea tainică, cetatea Ierihonului, socotită ca fiind greu de cucerit, sau. de necucerit, a indicat tainic pe Același Cuvânt al lui Dumnezeu ca biruitor al lumii și desăvârșitor al veacului prin minte și rațiune, adică prim cunoștință și virtuți al căror tip erau chivotul și trâmbițele. Căci celor ce-I urmează Lui le arată veacul sensibil ca fiind ușor de cucerit și de dărâmat și neavând între bunătățile lui nimic în stare să facă plăcere iubitorilor de cele dumnezeiești, fiind împreunat cu moartea și cu stricăciunea și pricinuitor de mânie dumnezeiască” (Sf. Maxim Mărturisitorul 1983, 118).

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ARHEOLOGIE BIBLICĂ – REPERE CRONOLOGICE (1900-1939)

Stelian PAȘCA-TUȘA

Pentru acest număr, vă propunem o continuare a prezentării cronologice rezumative din istoria arheologiei, de la începutul secolului XX până în anul 1939, extrasă din E.M. Blaiklock și R.K. Harrison (eds.), *The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, 1982).

Arheologia biblică între 1900-1939

- 1900 George L. Robinson a descoperit locul sacrificiului de la Petra (G.L. Robinson, *The Sarcophagus of an Ancient Civilization*, 1930).
- 1902 R.A.S. Macalister a început excavațiile la Gezer. Warren investigase deja situl, localizat inițial de Clermont-Ganeau în 1871-74. Săpăturile au durat șapte ani, iar rezultatele lucrărilor au fost publicate în trei volume (apărute în 1912). Datele oferite de acestea au trebuit verificate și reinterpretate. Francezii au descoperit Codul lui Hammurabi. Ernst Sellin a început un studiu asupra Taanach-ului cu rezultate modeste, din cauza neglijării stratigrafiei. Totuși, aceasta a fost prima excavație făcută în vechiul regat al lui Israel.
- 1903 G. Schumacher, arhitect, format de Sellin, a fost numit la conducerea unor investigații la Megiddo timp de doi ani, de către Deutscher Palastina Verein și Orient Gesellschaft. În acest răstimp, a fost descoperită binecunoscuta pecete a lui Ieroboam.
- 1904 David C. Hogarth a studiat sanctuarul lui Artemis din Efes.
- 1906 Hugo Winckler (1863-1913), un asirolog german care lucrase deja la Sidon (1903-1904) a început săpăturile la Boghazkoy, locul anticei capitale hittite Hattusa, aflată la 160 km est de Ankara. Literatura descoperită aici era scrisă într-o limbă care a fost descifrată numai zece ani mai târziu.
- 1907 Hermann Thiersch, Herman Kohl, Carl Watzinger și Ernst Sellin au încheiat cercetările asupra sinagogilor din Galileea. Kohl și Watzinger au publicat *Antike Synagogen in Galilaea* în 1916. O expediție mixtă germano-austriacă a început o cercetare importantă de doi ani la Ierihon, sub conducerea lui Ernst Sellin și Carl Watzinger.
- 1908 Un punct de cotitură în cercetările arheologice din Palestina a fost marcat

de săpăturile făcute în acest an și în 1910-11 în Samaria de către D.G. Lyon, C.S. Fisher și G.A. Reisner.

- 1909 Duncan Mackenzie a fost invitat de Palestine Exploration Fund să conducă săpăturile de la Beth Shemesh, unde a identificat cantități importante de ceramică filistină.
- 1910 Din acest an până în 1914, Howard C. Butler a condus o expediție importantă în Sardis, vechea capitală a Lydiei.
- 1913 Situl de la Sichem a fost investigat în ultimii doi ani dinaintea primului război mondial de către Sellin and Watzinger pentru German Society for Scientific Research. Lucrările au fost reluate în 1926-28, 1932 și 1934.
- 1917 Cucerirea Palestinei de către englezi în primul război mondial a inaugurat o epocă de aur a arheologiei. A fost fondat Departamentul Palestinian de Antichități, condus de John Garstang de la Liverpool University.
- 1918 Distinsul asirolog R. Campbell Thompson a început săpăturile la Eridu (Tell Abu Shahrain) pentru British Museum.
- 1909 H.R. Hall lucrează pe arheologia sumeriană la Tell Al Ubaid. Clarence Fisher a continuat munca lui Petrie la Memphis, vechea capitală a Egiptului.
- 1920 Pierre Montet a descoperit la Byblos (Geba, în Siria), mormântul regelui Ahi-ram.
- 1921 S-au făcut săpături la Tell el Amarna (Woolley, C.S. Fisher, A. Rowe) și la Beth Shan (G.M. Fitzgerald din partea Oriental Institute de la Universitatea din Chicago).
- 1922 W.F. Albright a început două sezoane de cercetări arheologice la Gibeah (Tell el-Ful) și Kiriath Sepher (Debir). S-au adus contribuții importante la cunoașterea ceramicii din epoca fierului. A fost descoperit mormântul lui Tutankhamon în Valea Regilor (Teba). Au început lucrările arheologice la Ur. Cercetările arheologice în Mesopotamia au debutat la Al-Muqayyer, ruinele orașului lui Avraam.
- 1923 Săpăturile de la Kish (Tell El Uheimir) la 13 km est de Babilon au scos la lumină informații importante despre istoria sumeriană. W.J. Pithian-Adams și John Garstang au făcut cercetări la Ashkelon.
- 1924 David M. Robinson a întreprins cercetări arheologice la Antiochia Pisidiei.
- 1925 Documentele descoperite la Nuzi (la 240km nord de Bagdad) au oferit noi informații cu privire la epoca patriarhală. E.K. Sukenik a făcut cercetări

preliminare asupra zidurilor Ierusalimului. S-au făcut progrese importante în cunoașterea preistoriei palestinene, prin descoperirea a două peșteri lângă Marea Galileei păstrând urme ale omului preistoric. Au început lucrările la Megiddo, desfășurate timp de 14 ani sub conducerea lui C. S. Fisher.

- 1926 American School of Oriental Research din Ierusalim (fondată în 1900) a început săpăturile arheologice la Tell en-Nasbeh (Mizpah). M.G. Kyle și W.F. Albright au studiat Tell Beit Mirsim, la sud-vest de Hebron, posibil vechiul Chiriat Sefer (Debir).
- 1927 J.W. Crowfoot a depus o muncă importantă în Samaria, unul din rezultatele acesteia, împreună cu cercetările realizate de Kathleen Kenyon, fiind realizarea unei cronologii a Palestinei.
- 1928 Elihu Grant a început o serie de cinci campanii la Beth Shemesh, ajutat de C.S. Fisher. Munca lor a acoperit perioada ocupației israelite din sec. XII până în sec. IX. 1929 Dorothy Carmel și-a început cei șase ani de cercetări asupra peșterilor Palestinei, îndeosebi pe Carmel. Iezuiții au început și ei cercetările la Teleilat Ghassul în Valea Iordanului.
- 1930 John Garstang, directorul Departamentului Palestinian de Antichități, a început șase ani de cercetări la Ierihon. Cercetările fuseseră inițiate de Sellin și Watzinger în 1913 și continuate în 1952-1958 de Kathleen Kenyon. Garstang a descoperit prima cultură neolitică urbană.
- 1931 Ernest Herzfeld a lucrat la Persepolis, iar A. Maiuri la Pompei și Herculaneum. O.R. Sellers și W.F. Albright au lucrat la Beth Zur, un sit cu ruine macabeene, situat pe drumul dintre Ierusalim și Hebron. M.E.L. Malowan a început săpăturile la Ninive, unde și-a continuat activitatea timp de treizeci de ani. Au început săpăturile în agora Atenei, lucrări încheiate în 1939.
- 1932 G.E. Ederkin a lucrat la Antiohia Siriei, săpăturile au continuat aici până în 1939, fără a aduce informații consistente despre perioada apostolică. J.L. Starkey a început săpăturile la Lachish, o descoperire majoră din timpul celor patru ani de cercetări fiind Epistolele de la Lachish, cu informațiile lor despre perioada lui Ieremia. A fost descoperită aproape intactă sinagoga de la Dura Europos (244 d. Hr.), de către o expediție franco-americană.
- 1933 Judith Marquet-Krause a început săpături importante la Ai. Rabinul arheolog Nelson Glueck a început munca sa de cercetare de 14 ani în Transiordania de la Aqaba la granița siriană, identificând și datând siturile dintr-o zonă aproape

neatinsă. Rezultatele cercetărilor au fost publicate în cartea sa, *The Jordan*, apărută la Londra în 1946.

- 1934 Hetty Goldman a început cercetările de patru ani la Gozlu Kule (vechiul Tars). Săpăturile la Bethel au fost conduse în acest an de J.L. Kelso și W.F. Albright.
- 1935 S-au făcut săpături în Samaria (J.W. Jack), Persepolis (Erich Schmidt) și Megiddo (Gordon Loud). C.H. Roberts a publicat fragmente de papirus din Evanghelia Sf. Ioan, aflate acum în Biblioteca John Rylands din Manchester, Anglia.
- 1936 Marele oraș Bethshearim a fost subiectul unor cercetări conduse de B. Mazar, aici s-a descoperit un important cimitir evreiesc.
- 1937 Nelson Glueck a scos la lumină un cimitir Nabatean la Jebel-et-Tannur, la sud-est de Marea Moartă.
- 1938 Au continuat lucrările la Lachish.
- 1939 Chiar înainte de începerea celui de-al doilea Război Mondial, s-au încheiat cercetările la Megiddo, deși Yigael Yadin a lucrat în 1941 la acest sit și, de asemenea, în zona Hazor. Yadin a fost fiul lui Sukenik, care lucrase deja atât de mult în Palestina, îndeosebi pe mormintele antice evreiești și sinagogi.

Între 1925 și 1940 s-au făcut cercetări asupra locației celui de-al treilea zid al Ierusalimului, care fusese descoperit de Robinson cu un secol înainte. Anii de tulburări care au precedat instituirea statului Israel au întârziat lansarea proiectelor postbelice în Palestina, cu excepția unor săpături făcute de francezi în 1946 la Tell el-Farah, nord-est de Nablus.

Al Doilea Război Mondial a făcut imposibilă desfășurarea cercetărilor arheologice, de aceea există acest hiatus din 1939 până în 1946, sau, mai degrabă, 1947. Ne rezumăm aici la perioada 1900-1939 având în vedere faptul că anul 1947 a constituit un punct de referință în dezvoltarea cercetărilor arheologice din Țara Sfântă, prin descoperirea primelor informații privitoare la manuscrisele de la Qumran. De aceea, am considerat oportun ca evenimentul ieșirii la lumină a acestor manuscrise să inaugureze prezentarea istoriei arheologiei din numărul următor.

KOL YHWH

Pr. Ioan Chirilă,
Reflecții filologice – Facere 1:1

REFLECȚII FILOLOGICE – FACERE 1:2-5 (ZI UNA)

Pr. Ioan CHIRILĂ

Minunăția zilei întâi, faptul că ea este kairos-ul întâlnirii, nu al despărțirii dintre timp și eternitate, este frumos surprins de Sf. Vasile cel Mare atunci când remarcă modul de nominalizare a acestei zile, o numește Moise ziua unu/ una, adică unica, ea nu face parte din categorialele repetiției. Iar despre repetiție se poate vedea ceea ce zice Sf. Maxim Mărturisitorul: „Cine, cunoscând prin rațiune și înțelepciune că lucrurile au fost aduse din nimic la existență de către Dumnezeu, și îndreptându-și cu judecată puterea contemplativă a sufletului spre nesfârșita deosebire și varietate a lucrurilor, și distingând cu o rațiune cercetătoare rațiunea după care au fost create toate, nu ar cunoaște Rațiunea cea una, ca multe rațiuni, ce stă împărțită în chip neîmpărțit în varietatea fapturilor, precum arată însușirea lor de a se referi una la alta și totuși de a rămâne fiecare ea însăși în chip neamestecat? Și (nu ar cunoaște) iarăși multele rațiuni ca una, prin referirea tuturor spre ea, care există pentru sine în chip neamestecat, fiind Cuvântul ființial și ipostatic al lui Dumnezeu și Tatăl, ca obârșie și cauză a tuturor? Pentru că în El „s-au zidit toate, cele din ceruri și cele de pe pământ, fie văzute, fie nevăzute, fie scaune, fie domnii, fie începătorii, fie stăpânii, toate în El și prin El s-au zidit” (Col 1:16).” (Sf. Maxim Mărturisitorul 1981, 116)

Facerea 1:2

וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תוֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ
אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם

„Și pământul era netocmit și gol și întuneric era peste fața adâncului/abisului și Duhul lui Dumnezeu/respirația Sa era purtându-se peste fața apelor.”

תוֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ: *tohu vabohu* – o expresie care creează multe probleme traducătorilor. De fiecare dată mi se opresc ochii pe litere ca pe niște simboluri pictografice, marcat fiind de paradigma creștină a existenței mele, și văd acel tau de la „Tohu” ca pe tau-ul din Iezechiel (Iz 9:1-7), iar betul de la „vabohu” ca pe un „întru”, adică prin tau ajungi întru

El. Am rămas, totuși, la traducerea „netocmit și gol”, adică fără a avea rațiunea/ nomosul relevat din ea, nu lipsă, ci nu în lumină. Poți să optezi și pentru sensul de „abis”, dacă faci aceasta te vei întâlni cu zicerea Psalmistului care spune „abis pe abis cheamă în vuietul apelor” (Ps 41:9) și astfel vei avea o nouă perspectivă de interpretare și înțelegere, căci dacă se cheamă înseamnă că nu își sunt necunoscute una celeilalte și nici despărțite.

Purtarea Duhului/ respirației/ vânt-suflării lui Dumnezeu este exprimată metaforic de Sfântul Vasile: „Cuvântul se purta, se interpretează prin încălzirea și dădrea viață apelor, după chipul găinii, care clocește și dă putere de viață ouălor. Acesta este înțelesul pe care îl au cuvintele: Duhul se purta, adică pregătea apele pentru nașterea vieții. Încât din acest text se poate vedea ceea ce se căuta de unii, anume că nici Duhul Cel Sfânt nu este lipsit de putere creatoare” (Sf. Vasile cel Mare 1986, 92) și despărțitoare (nu în sens de individualizare, ci de subiectivizare). Noi vrem să remarcăm faptul că surprindem o nuanță de antropomorfizare ce indică o temă fundamentală a teologiei biblice vechitamentare, cea a lui „YHWH hai – Dumnezeu cel Viu”. Mai există chestiunea lui „paneh” – față, suprafață. Prin acest concept se exprimă o totalitate și nu doar un mod sau o structură de arătare. În Vechiul Testament, avem tema teologică a „feței lui Dumnezeu” și spunem că ea exprimă adâncul ființei. Deci acest abis, acest gol nu este unul nedefinit în sine, dar rămânerea în registrul de individualizare pentru a putea exprima mai bine comuniunea părților, generează părerea că este ceva inform, ireal, ori nu este așa. Acest întineric poate fi surprins în chiar culminarea izbăvirii în Cruce: cutremur, haos, întineric (Mt 27:45.51-54; Mc 15:33.38-39; Lc 23:44-45).

Facerea 1:3

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי-אוֹר

„Și a zis Dumnezeu: Să fie lumină și a fost lumină”

וַיְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי-אוֹר – „Fie lumină, fie, ia de la Mine”, și acest gol a început să se umple de lumină și din umplere să-și reveleze substanța nomosică, grăitoare și doxologică. Ele prind chip, în chipul luminii Lui, lumină bună în care, cuprinse, sunt arătate și ele în bunătatea lor ca participatie. Nu poate fi ceva bun prin individualizare, totdeauna bunătatea este o stare *koinonikă*.

Facerea 1:4

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאֹר כִּי־טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר
וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ

„Și a văzut Dumnezeu că lumina e bună și a despărțit Dumnezeu lumina de întuneric”

וַיַּבְדֵּל: *vaiavdel* – chestiunea despărțirii este marcată de verbul „badel”, el va apărea ca nume propriu obținut prin deformare fonetică în cuvântul Babel, opozitul său, căci daletul poate fi cu ușurință confundat cu beith, dar iată ce generează opozitul. Acțiunea de despărțire fiind exprimată la hifil, are o notă de forță, exprimă o intervenție conștientă, premeditată și fermă, ducându-te cu gândul la existența paradigmatică din veci în Dumnezeu a tuturor, dar în forma lor desăvârșită.

בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: *bein haor uvein hahosekh* – acest pasaj trebuie pus în legătură cu verbul „badel” și totuși rămâne un mister al lui bein consecutiv, acel „între” care, prin natura sa grafică, este deschis lui „a fi într-un...”.

Facerea 1:5

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאֹר יוֹם וּלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב
וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד

„Și a chemat (a numit) Dumnezeu lumina zi și întunericul l-a chemat noapte, și a fost seară și a fost dimineață, ziua unu.”

Verbul **קָרָא** (*kara*) poate fi tradus și cu a chema, poate fi și a boteza, dar nu aceasta doresc acum să surprind, ci faptul că el consfințește ceea ce deicticul *ki* a introdus o bunătate așezată și manifestată „în” ca telos. Iar a chema mai însemnează, la om cunoaștere, la Dumnezeu atotștiință, și din acestea comunicare/ con-știință sau, de ce nu, καλέω – ca și chemare – Biserică (Friedrich 1965, 487-536).

Despre seară și dimineață voi vorbi atunci când vom ajunge la Ziua cea neînserată, la Șabat.

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FRAGMENT
DE
MĂRTURISIRE

Pr. Ioan Chirilă,
Pergamentul inimii

IGNIS REDIVIVUS

Pr. Ioan CHIRILĂ

A mai rămas în mijlocul grădinii pomul vieții spre care arată sabia de foc a heruvimului. Omul nu mai aude suflarea Duhului vieții, i s-au îngroșat timpanele și nu mai are finețea necesară auzirii șoaptei sau suspinului Duhului. Altfel, ar fi mult mai sensibil la suflarea de duh ce izvorăște din celălalt, dar el nu mai poate să-i audă decât sforăitul, năduful greului pământului. E departe de rădăcina firescului propriu făpturii umane, de firescul naturii!

M-am tot întrebat pe mine însumi: ce poate fi focul acela vestit de Apocalipsă și au fost momente în care am optat pentru îngăduință, am optat pentru altceva decât „firescul” lucrurilor, parcă voiam să nu fie literal, dar oare ce spune natura?

M-a șocat o știre lansată de media: doi pinguini erau homosexuali și creșteau un pui care nu era al niciunuia dintre ei. Prima senzație a fost de stupeoare, îmi ziceam: cum poți ști că doi pinguini sunt homosexuali, chiar poți? Nu mi-am răspuns, nu-mi voi răspunde... deoarece al doilea gând a fost legat de Apocalipsă. Ceva îmi spunea: va fi într-adevăr foc, un foc curățitor, va fi „ignis redivivus”, Sodoma și Gomora, va fi... și chiar va fi. Ne zice psalmistul că ne va cerca precum aurul în topitoare, iar Evanghelistul spune că zidirea noastră va fi cercată prin foc, iar ceea ce este aur, argint și diamante rămân luminate de foc, iar celelalte (paie, lemne, crengi uscate...) vor arde, vor fi adunate și arse în foc... unde este milostivirea Ta, Doamne?

Milostivirea lui Dumnezeu nu se împlinește decât acolo unde încep în concret metanoia omului și a făpturii. Dar ei spun că nu greșesc, că ei iubesc și de aceea mă întreb: poate fi iubire adevărată fără zămislire de viață? Voi răspunde înspre final, acum să cugetăm la ziua de azi, la întunericul de fum al acesteia.

M-am născut greșit, eu am în mine însumi alte sentimente decât cele proprii genului reflectat de carcasă, spun ei, cei care cred că noi nu suntem firești. Cât de mult se depărtează de gândirea creștină, trupul este doar o carcasă ce poate fi îmbunătățită plastic prin turnare, e o închisoare a feminității sau masculinității lor. Dar de ce zic că sunt departe de gândirea creștină? Pentru că nu iau în calcul faptul că voința noastră este cea care, în unitate cu voința divină, are menirea de a reaseza sensul sentimentelor/afectelor noastre, din căzute, spre înălțarea cea mântuitoare. Căci, dacă ar ști aceasta, ar înțelege că nu trupul este cel conducător, ci sufletul, ca nepieritor, este cel care te ține

în unitate cu iubirea veșnică, cu viața veșnică și că astfel, trupul, trebuie să slujească împreună cu sufletul pentru spiritualizarea făpturii. Îi privesc totuși cu iubire slujitoare și știu, precum Avraam, că trebuie să mijlocesc pentru ei la Dumnezeu, dar nu în afara dreptății Sale, cea care zice că nu se va întoarce de la pocăința nimănui. Se îngijesc, se sulemenesc, se arată oamenilor și-i îmbie ca să le placă ceea ce este plăcerea lor, cer cununie și drept de înfiere, uită că rostul nostru este zămislirea, că noi, părinții, suntem coloanele ce trebuie să susțină creșterea dreaptă a mlădițelor firave. Și atunci ce cer? Dreptul naturii, dreptul natural, dreptul de a iubi pământul. Oare aceasta e o iubire mântuitoare, aceasta este rădăcina iubirii? Vă spun că nu. Rădăcina iubirii este în cer, iar noi trebuie să cerem dreptul de a iubi cerul pentru ca în noi să se așeze rădăcina iubirii și atunci se va zămisli din noi viața și nu doar trupul ca obiect de satisfacere a plăcerii, a durerii și a idolatrizării.

Iubirea cea adevărată este cea care scoate din însingurare, restaurează ontologic unitatea firească a făpturii și se încununează cu zămislirea vieții. Aceștia sunt fiii iubirii: care cresc drept din rădăcina iubirii, din Treimea cea de o ființă și nedespărțită.

Focul a început să coboare, dar deocamdată icnește din patima trupurilor noastre ca fumegare, va veni vremea de va pogori din cer ca cercare a fapturilor noastre, va veni... vedeți, fulgerul acela este precum *ignis redivivus*.

Săptămâna Patimilor, 2009