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DIVERSITÉ ET IDENTITÉ CULTURELLE EN EUROPE

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I. FONDAMENTS

HOW DO WE READ IN THE AGE
OF INTERTEXTUAL DIGITALISM?
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND WEBOGRAPHY

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Abstract

The study is a reflection about how reading practices, habits, attitudes and methods changed in the most recent context of digitalism. This type of digital globalization has many consequences on humanistic studies. The shift to Digital Humanities is uncertain due to the lack of critical approach. Digitizing is not the same as digitalizing. The literary critics and historians, the textual scholars, the researchers of manuscripts and rare books need to redefine their status. Reading with proficiency may be their opportunity to engage into debates. But there are voices who claim that computers are able to perform the same task. Literary reading extended its meaning since the beginning of digital fiction. The aim of Digital Humanities would be the progress of knowledge, neglecting that objective data is an intellectual construct. Every notion is debatable and fluid. It seems there is no cardinal point. The next question might be whether AI is endowed with volition and dubitative attributes.

Key-words
Digitalism, Digital Humanities, reading, knowledge, AI.

The answers to the question from the title would form a polyhedron in a world founded on a system of values. However, as we have decisively entered the era of post-truth/post-authenticity, in which antagonisms cohabit, we will offer some provisional proposals. We have left the sign of finite, rounded things, but also of mass-produced products, made according to models. In literature, it is increasingly difficult to talk about masterpieces,

with the so-called democratization of literary genres produced by postmodernity. In the cavity of digitalism, a notion that is already widespread, sources of information have developed fractal manner, at an uncontrollable, unpredictable and impossible to hierarchize rhythm. Without necessarily referring to the umbrella word of digitalism, but clearly amazed by the historical moment he was living in his old age, the Jesuit priest Roberto A. Busa (1913-2011) – the pioneer of cross-sections carried out through philology, hermeneutics, theology and computer science – suggested, in the preface to the first book where the phrase Digital Humanities was assumed, that the technical progress involved is an indication of divine providence:

> *"I am full of amazement at the developments since then; they are enormously greater and better than I could then imagine.* **Digitus Dei est hic***! The finger of God is here!"* (Roberto A. Busa, 2004, online)[1].

This optimism, that is displayed without any reservation, is a recurring attitude in the history of mentalities. Progress remains a natural aspiration, stemming from humanity's desire to broaden its cognitive horizon and enhance its civilizational comfort. However, the pulverization of science (things verified through experiments) and of the specific fields of sensitivity directs us towards the ways of searching, recovering and restoring the meaning of the world. Divided into ever narrower fractions, the knowledge stored by the Internet exists in interdisciplinary portions, and the danger of their superficial coverage is imminent.

1. Digitalism, Digitality, Digitization, Digitalization

The attenuation of mastery learning, by stimulating training in the shadow of a few models, has also dampened the desire of potential apprentices to ask scholars where the valid data is. The spread of platforms loaded with various sources (compilations, so-called essays, improvised

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[1] Roberto A. Busa, "Foreword: Perspective on the Digital Humanities", in *Companion to Digital Humanities*, edited by Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens and John Unsworth, Blackwell Publishing, 2004: https://companions.digitalhumanities.org/DH/?chapter= content/9781405103213_foreword.html.

commentaries, rumors, uncertain and controversial data, hoaxes, blogs, magazines, newspapers, digitized manuscripts and books, e-books, memoirs, historical and literary sources uploaded to the Wikisource platform), some built in contrast to the norms of citation and academic integrity, severely tests the discernment of anyone venturing into an uncharted no man's land:

> *"In the miscellanized world, knowledge is at most one click away from everything else that is not knowledge. Often they share the same page. Does knowledge retain its privileged position?"* (David Weinberger, 2007, p. 201).

Moreover, at the time of its appearance in 2001, Wikipedia paradoxically brought back to attention a series of strategies more closely related to oral culture, despite the progress for which it was invented. It avoided notions such as authority, paternity or originality, preferring features of the folk mentality. Anonymity, collaboration between unidentifiable people, peddling and, not least, amalgamation – understood as an alloy between mercury (the liquid, toxic metal) and gold (the rare, precious metal) – are consistent practices. Although *Wikisource* and *Wikipedia*, components of the *Wikimedia* portfolio, constitute only a large intersection, in which the symbolic power of cultural personalities is limited, they offer an opportunity to those who are well-trained but not recognized as specialists, not integrated into universities or research institutes, to demonstrate the value of their training effort outside a schooling system.

It seems that immersion in the unstable environment of the internet paradoxically guarantees a way of integration into a validation system, into an intellectual community, because everything that is non-homogenized and simultaneously impossible to decant has no identity, so it is not subject to classification criteria. In the absence of proximate genres and specific differences, heterogeneous areas – born of collaborations – generate chaos. They are the intellectual property of everyone and no one. In the online media library, anyone has the right to add, correct, delete, reformulate. Thus, fragments of knowledge are at the mercy of propaganda and controversial statements, for which we do not have clear answers, surfacing through collective digital efforts, sometimes incompatible. Of course, the economic

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resources necessary to access *Wikimedia* are extremely limited. Located in close proximity to the user, the pool of intellectual resources circulating on the *World Wide Web* contributes to polishing an autodidact profile, one that is easily recoverable if we refer to the media explosion in Romania after 1989. However, it is undeniable that, upon complicit contact with the internet, the universe of information, despite the inflation of written sources, is enriched by taking on the features of folklore: orality, anonymity, syncretism and collective character. An anthropologist identified this robot-portrait of the consumer of cultural and technical-scientific rudiments through the "Pelican Man" (Irina Nicolau, 1998, p. 8), the one who accumulates, without discernment, what the book, press, television and radio markets offer him. Romania has caught up with the West, synchronizing itself in terms of using mobile phones instead of mass media. The risks of connecting humans to the internet have been highlighted on various occasions:

> *"Digitalism is a sort of modern, egalitarian and cheap gnosis, where knowledge fetishism has been replaced by the cult of a digital network."* (Matteo Pasquinelli, 2010, p. 673).

Thus, the consequences of the famous assertion "the medium (channel) is the message", formulated by one of the great philosophers of culture of the 20th century, are current. Marshall McLuhan made a series of adjacent considerations that are now valid in behaviors, in the labor market, in social attitudes. With the ineluctable transition to the Internet civilization - meaning the connection of the inhabitants of the "global village" (Marshall McLuhan & Bruce R. Powers, *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st century*, 1989) to various electronic devices, increasingly small in physical size but offering unlimited access to the ever-expanding databases of the *World Wide Web* – we observe that the digital identity of the (literary) reader, assuming the role of a user navigating a fluctuating graphic and visual convention, becomes entangled in a web of cross-references, tapping the keyboard or even the screen to leap from one link to another:

"In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium – that is, of any extension of ourselves – result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology. Thus, with automation, for example, the new patterns of human association tend to eliminate jobs, it is true. That is the negative result. Positively, automation creates roles for people, which is to say depth of involvement in their work and human association that our preceding mechanical technology had destroyed." (Marshall McLuhan [1964, 1994], 2013, p. 14).

Any innovative process has two contradictory facets. Caution and enthusiasm, natural attitudes in such circumstances, will gradually be verified. An appropriate reaction is to observe the mutations that have arisen as a result of human-cybernetic interaction. Sometimes, it happens that we repeat the reading of the same passage, which we consider essential, and, although we feel a turning point in our personal consciousness, of adaptation to the virtual environment, we do not strive to get out of the vicious circle of Internet addiction, disguised as a passion for reading. Using the Internet is a way of becoming superficial:

"The influx of competing messages that we receive whenever we go online not only overloads our working memory; it makes it much harder for our frontal lobes to concentrate our attention on any one thing. The process of memory consolidation can't even get started. And, thanks once again to the plasticity of our neuronal pathways, the more we use the Web, the more we train our brain to be distracted—to process information very quickly and very efficiently but without sustained attention. That helps explain why many of us find it hard to concentrate even when we're away from our computers. Our brains become adept at forgetting, inept at remembering. Our growing dependence on the Web's information stores may in fact be the product of a self-

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perpetuating, self amplifying loop. As our use of the Web makes it harder for us to lock information into our biological memory, we're forced to rely more and more on the Net's capacious and easily searchable artificial memory, even if it makes us shallower thinkers." (Nicholas Carr, 2010, p. 170).

Digitalism, a hybrid term with a spongy, all-encompassing power, has spread to intellectual communities everywhere, transcending linguistic boundaries. Over the past three decades, we have witnessed a shift from the creation of tangible but perishable art objects, such as (printed) paper and disks in the case of written/spoken (read/recited) literature, to the transformation of matter into information that is stored in electronic units – in other words, into bits. Yet, etymologically, literature exists through graphic signs arranged on a material support: "The change from atoms to bits is irrevocable and unstoppable" (Nicholas Negroponte, 1995, p. 4). It is an ambitious operation, known as digitization, which keeps proportions and resembles a campaign of inclusion, followed by one of marginalization, risking the suppression of printed culture, potentially retrievable only in a virtual "memory"/ a database/ a digital library.

With the diminishing concern for a particular humanistic field, the difficulty of researching and procuring sources, and the erosion of the mentor-disciple relationship, the preservation of books within the cybernetic brain is reminiscent, to a certain extent, of the ideological and linguistic monopolization measures employed by dictatorships. However, if we pay attention to the relationship between layout and the printed book, we observe that, even in Romanian culture, the text destined to be bound between covers originated from a digital file, created from scratch by typing on the computer:

> *"...almost all print books are digital files before they become books; this is the form in which they are composed, edited, composited, and sent to the computerized machines that produce them as books. They should, then, properly be considered as electronic texts for which print is the output form."* (N. Katherine Hayles, 2008, p. 43).

Digitalism comes as a consequence of the slumber of the critical spirit, the intensification of postmodern relativism and the numbing of historical consciousness. Not infrequently, after 2010, discussions have emerged about a rupture between culture, understood as a coherent system of values, and the digital environment, which is erected into a factor of intellectual emancipation only on the grounds that it has become the main channel for transmitting information and, consequently, the dominant ideas of art, knowledge or civilization. *Mutatis mutandis*, the absorption of printed matter into the online environment constitutes, in a pessimistic scenario, a functional equivalent of the secret/special collection of titles once banned by various political regimes. It seems that the methodological emphasis has shifted from the dissection of the text itself to data collections drawn from the literary area:

> *"But block quotations have a different status in the digital humanities. Either they drop out of perception entirely because text analysis focuses on microlevel linguistic features (e.g., word frequencies) that map directly over macrolevel phenomena (e.g., different genres or nationalities of novels) without need for the middle level of quoted passages; or they exist as what hypertext theorists, originally inspired by Roland Barthes, call 'lexia' – that is, modular chunks in a larger network where the real interest inheres in the global pattern of the network."* (Alan Liu, 2012, online)[2].

At the same time, paradoxically, interdisciplinary readings located at the intersection of philology and rhetoric, of genesis and variant studies, of history with ideology and politics, and of biography with critical reception, have been marginalized. Digital Humanities detach themselves from the quotation as a form of argumentative support. Beyond the explicit practical and financial reasons, the compression of books implicitly leads to isolation, if not even gradual elimination from public life. To draw an analogy with the period of Romania's Stalinization, we cite from an interview conducted by

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[2] Alan Liu, "Where Is Cultural Criticism in the Digital Humanities", in Matthew K. Gold (editor), *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press, 2012, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled-88c11800-9446-469b-a3be-3fdb36bfbd1e/section/896742e7-5218-42c5-89b0-0c3c75682a2f#ch29.

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Adrian Păunescu with poet Nina Cassian, who, voicing Soviet propaganda, recalled the context of full adherence to the official theme:

> *"[Nina Cassian] What does the proletcultist think?*
> *That the world begins with him! We believed that the world*
> *begins with us. Our era, we said, begins with us on a vacant*
> *lot: the break in continuity (we would realize it later), was one*
> *of the most harmful phenomena in culture. You see? It's not*
> *that we didn't know who Baudelaire was.// [Adrian Păunescu]*
> *– Yes, indeed, many people ask that.// But we considered him*
> *a great poet of a finished time. We had to do something else.*
> *I'm not saying this to get absolution from the young people."*
> (Nina Cassian, Adrian Păunescu, 1969, p. 6).

Emerging from an undeclared intention to radically transform culture, its access and modes of consumption, digitization has become the instrument for reshaping the sense of belonging to a community, facilitating the transition toward integration into the category of Internet users, called netizens in English, by analogy with citizens: Michael Hauben, Ronda Hauben, *Netizens: on the history and impact of Usenet and the Internet* (Washington DC, IEEE Computer Society Press, 1997). We are in a network that agglutinates artistic content in bits. Apparently, we are discussing the distinction between form and substance, as though only the medium of transmission has changed. But the issue extends far beyond that - in the long run, even beyond the imagination of a scholar unfamiliar with the effects of digitization and digitization (including digital-born creations). It involves the inoculation of a mentality, a *modus vivendi* known as digitality. The encounter with the text becomes an interaction, and reading is only one facet of current civilization. The innovations of the past have been brought together in a pedagogy that aims to multiply a civic pattern:

> *"This conversion is not only technical but ontological;*
> *it changes the way we perceive and interact with the world*
> *through the lens of 'Digitality', which is a state of culture, a*
> *state of mind, a metaconcept which encompass all others –*
> *'digitization', 'digitalization', 'digital transformation',*
> *'online services', 'interconnection', 'i-renovation', 'digital*

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life', 'i-interaction', and all other concepts we use to explain a single aspect of the digital turn – a model, a filter through which we interpret the whole of existence, reducing complexity and nuance to simple units of information. Digitality is 'the' substantial viewpoint." (Spina, 2024, p. 7).

2. Digital Humanities

This results in a sense of epistemic blockage whenever one attempts to ignore another lexical frontier, namely the Digital Humanities labyrinth. In order to approximate the contours of this protean body, which we strive to render in geometric terms, it is necessary to limit ourselves to the online interaction between the reader and an entity with literary functions. There are, of course, a lot of bibliographic resources and, in the case of the present work, an abyss of webography: links, PDFs (e-books or digitized books), HTMLs, X-HTMLs, and born-digital materials. Digital Humanities pose unpredictable challenges and generate antagonisms among researchers. In the absence of a potential consensus, researchers in the field seek answers to questions that have transformed text criticism into a discipline with relatively stable principles.

In this paper, we are concerned with the area of digitized humanities, focusing on philological and critical editions, based on texts with literary valences. We will also pay attention to the expansion of the area of digital humanities, seeking to nuance the relationship between printed books – where one can only officially intervene by issuing a corrected edition – and online environments (*Wikisource*), which function as digital libraries hosting works by writers who have escaped the incidence of copyright legislation. The dialogue between bibliography and webography cannot be systematized for the time being, but we have the opportunity, in this extensive process of decantation, to observe the following layers of a definition:

> *"The term 'digital humanities' may be understood in three different ways: as 'digitized humanities', by dealing essentially with the constitution, management, and processing of digitized archives; as 'numerical humanities', by putting the emphasis on mathematical abstraction and the development of numerical and formal models; and as 'humanities of the digital',*

by focusing on the study of computer-mediated interactions and online communities." (Camille Roth, 2019, 616).

The amount of information is constantly increasing, accumulating amorphously within a fluid environment, much like the gradual formation of coral reefs. Another suggestive image is that of Mount Mauna Kea in the American State of Hawaii, which, although rises 4205 meters above the sea level, has a total height of about 10,100 meters. The relationship between the digital environment and the humanities resembles that of symbiosis between algae and fungi, forming together a new organism, i.e., the lichen. Thus, Digital Humanities, already known by their acronym DH, is, to some extent, an amphibian organism:

> *"Symbiosis and mutualism are central concepts of the post-authentic framework that I propose in this book, a theoretical framework for knowledge creation in the digital. If collaboration across areas of knowledge has so far been largely an option, often motivated more by a grant-seeking logic than by genuine curiosity, the digital calls for an actual change in knowledge culture. The question we should ask ourselves is not 'How can we collaborate?' but 'How can we contribute to each other?'. Concepts such as those of symbiosis and mutualism could equally inform our answer when asking ourselves the question 'How do we want to create knowledge and how do we want to train our next generation of students?"* (Lorella Viola, 2023, p. 32).

Our option remains complex, subject to an interim status, because, in recent decades, the literariness of a text has acquired an extension that is difficult to grasp. This is largely due to the atomization of the system of genres and species, which – through the postmodern proliferation of stylistic and parodic blends – appears to return to the ancient, literal meaning. This semantic transition occurs against the obvious tendency to compete and even substitute handwriting on paper with electronic digitization within an input–output system, whose product, finished or otherwise, is kept only on hardware or microchips. Over the past three decades, a vulgate has been formed at the

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edge of the digital (literary) text, which, despite some wary positionings, shows signs of gradual distancing from the condition of the printed page:

> *"...when the excitement leads to the idea that the computer alters the ontology of texts and makes possible new kinds of reading and analysis, it has gone too far"* (G. Thomas Tanselle, 2006, p. 3).

Modes of "Reading". The Act of Reading. Types of Readers

Cautious considerations such as those in the previous quote have become anachronistic. In the context of digitalism and, to be specific, in Digital Humanities (an underlying field that, however, does not delimit its territory, preferring to explore beyond predictable boundaries), the text deconstructs its own fabric, becoming entangled. The need to know as many details as possible about the object of study has led to extensive, computational approaches. Philology and hermeneutics have taken the mission of analyzing the virtual reality constructed from manuscripts and books, in the desire to elaborate digital editions. The interfaces developed accordingly, for gadgets that use either touchscreen technology (iPad), allowing the reader to manipulate text, imagery and graphics through touch, or to reproduce the layout of a traditional book page (Kindle), has created new habits in the cognitive-sensory relationship between subject and object:

> *"Als Resultat davon haben wir heute zwei verschiedene Modelle von «lesen»: Für das eine ist die menschliche Interpretation der Beginn jeglichen geisteswissenschaftlichen Schaffens, für das andere ist genau diese Interpretation der Endpunkt, der so lange wie möglich aufgeschoben werden soll, während Maschinen Muster identifizieren und hervorheben"* [As a result we now have two models of 'reading'. One says that human interpretation should be the starting point in our humanistic investigations; the other says that human interpretation should be the end point, delayed as long as possible while we use machines to identify and highlight patterns. Once that's done, we can make sense of the patterns]" (Tara L. Andrews, 2015, p. 18).

However, it is clear that, for time-consuming reasons, the counterpart to literary factors, namely reading driven by passion, holds an increasingly lower share among everyday activities. Yet, as argued in some current experiments, pleasure is only one of the lenses whereby one can approach a literary text displayed on a digital screen. The critical perspective of professionals remains relevant, involving ideological interpretations (such as extrapolating the "oppressors–oppressed" binary from Marx's theory of class struggle), aesthetical approaches (referring to intertexts and stylistic facts) or moral readings (looking for a system of values: love, goodness, truth, dignity, freedom). These approaches often imply an engagement with the alleged intentionality of the author. But there is also an intersection meant to close the triangle of literary reading, which is called, albeit somewhat clichéd, personal development. Books and/or electronic sources are thoroughly explored for the fulfillment of a desire related to the inner goals of each conscience. Renouncing selfishness, cultivating empathy, and daily living in harmony with one's own weaknesses and those of others, along with discernment, are all bridges built in literature, which become indications of *eudaemonism*:

> *"Eudaimonic motives, that is, the search for meaningful (media) experiences that can con tribute to personal growth and insight, are typically contrasted with hedonic (pleasure-seeking) motives, where readers look for more short-term, immediately gratifying and, above all, pleasurable experiences in their engagement with media and texts."* (Frank Hankemulder, Anne Mangen, 2024, p. 2).

As digital humanities experiences the impact of data extraction and systematization, the treatment of text is less a representation and more an interpretation created by an algorithm. We will stop here to acknowledge this last reality, because it illustrates the an important fact: that progress, however significant, has not decisively altered the reader's attitudes towards the text. First, we return to the idea that the object exists only when received by a consciousness, that is, by a reader: "there are no texts but only interpretations" (G. Thomas Tanselle, 1989, p. 4).

We propose to examine, in the context of what may be called digitalism, some mutations that have occurred in the way we read or - seeking to observe the process in its multiple realizations - in the way we approach a literary text (through close reading), as well as nonfictional or paraliterary texts. Before addressing the key term from the article's title - a current one in the Euro-Atlantic space - we will summarize some understandings of the notion of "literary reading".

Contaminations represent one of the most fruitful legacies of postmodernity, promoting the blending of literary genres, the fluid movement between pop culture and the major register, the oscillations between high-culture and mass-culture or the shift from consumerism to the nostalgia for autotelic art. The connection, both in form and spirit, with the North American mentality that has fostered the promotion of a subversive wave of public manifestations, remains eloquent, especially through its embrace of positions considered marginal from a civic, religious and aesthetic point of view.

There once existed, perhaps until the mid-1990s, a philological, slow, sloppy reading, concerned with sources, centered on deepening the bibliography, but also constrained by the library schedule. Hallmarks of this practice includes the awkward posture of the body sitting on a chair and the writing of cards. The reader's working tool were the pencil, pen or stylus. The value system it illustrated was rooted in the master-disciple relationship. A counterpart of this modality, an extension of the Benedictine hypostasis in globalism, would be reading at home – both physically and chronologically more relaxed , marked by alternating the body postures, and taking frequent breaks, yet accompanied by the feeling of imminent return to some issues of interest. It is a concern that has not completely fallen into disuse, centered on underlining passages considered essential and inclined to bookmark sections in the preparation for writing a chronicle or a review. The reader still works with manual tools, although the typewriter – once central - has largely been replaced by the PC, laptop, electronic tablet, and smartphone.

It is difficult to systematize, within the limits of this study, the types of readers in the literary world: academics, teachers from all levels of education, literary critics and historians, scholars, researchers, philologists in

the broad sense of the term, publishers, students, book lovers. It is nevertheless clear that several reading habits have survived: skimming, scanning, close reading, aesthetic reading, new historicism, postcolonial studies, cultural studies, recreational reading, etc. It is also evident that the transition from manuscript to typescript, to printed book, to the computer screen and finally to the luminous surface of the mobile phone has brought about a series of indelible mutations. Visual strain, diminished attention and concentration span, and the constant temptation to immerse ourselves in an unmanageable universe – by opening links that divert us from the initial goal – are all undeniable consequences. In addition, it is very attractive, though risky, the idea that by opening multiple files simultaneously, the time allocated to accomplishing tasks or objectives is reduced. Furthermore, we must also take into account the fact that we relate to two different tactile interactions: the sensory act of touching paper versus the act of touching plastic, glass and electronic devices:

> *"The tactility of a mouse click, of touch screen page turning or of a click with the e-book page turner bar is very different from that of flicking through the print pages of a book. The feeling of literally being in touch with the text is lost when your actions– clicking with the mouse, pointing on touch screens or scrolling with keys or on touch pads– take place at a distance from the digital text, which is, somehow, somewhere inside the computer, the e-book or the mobile phone. Because of this ontological intangibility of the digital text, our phenomenological experience– reading– of the digital text will differ profoundly from that of a print text. The print text is tangible– it is physically, tactilely, graspable, in ways that digital texts are not (until they are printed out and hence no longer digital). Such a difference is phenomenologically distinct, meaning that it will have significant– if theoretically overlooked– consequences for our reading of the different texts."* (Anne Mangen, 2008, p. 408-409).

Thus, the cautious option expressed by G. Thomas Tanselle (2006) about the ontological rupture generated by the transition from print to digital

was quickly contradicted. What is the status of literary reading, which is often associated with reading for pure pleasure and reading for leisure? Does it still have a place in today's polemics? If we still believe in educating the physiological senses to the point of acquiring a sixth faculty, namely aesthetic taste, then we receive a more than eloquent answer in a book whose title refers to Marshall McLuhan's famous work *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic* (1962): "A book is solitude, privacy; it is a way of holding the self apart from the crush of the outer world" (Sven Birkerts, 1994, p. 164). Therefore, it is a manifestation of the deep self, full of aspirations, with unrepressed escapist tendencies. The pleasure of reading involves long-term cognitive-affective engagement. Here we return to the eudaemonic component of literary reading. Understanding the message and attempting to explain text levels are relative, educable, perfectible processes, subject to reinterpretations. Encountering the same literary work represents the opportunity to verify a set of criteria. This is not the time to insist on the notion of "digital fiction"/ "born-digital literature", especially since, following the COVID-19 pandemic, we have crossed a threshold of change that remains is difficult to assimilate:

> *"What we define as the fifth generation of digital fiction, app fictions such as Steve Jackson's (2014) Sorcery! and Tender Claws' (2015) Pry, are experienced on smartphones or tablets with readers navigating these texts using the touchscreen. Much like pre- web and web- based hypertext fiction, readers navigate the fictional world via text-based multiple choices and/or as an avatar navigating a 3D space. App fictions can also come in a variety of aesthetic, technological and transmedial forms."* (Alice Bell, Astrid Ensslin, 2024, p. 4).

At this point in our study, we will not avoid the questions that concern the entire society, with the explosive rise of AI agents. Are digital software programs reading in place of humans? Will computers replace humans? Is the posthuman revolution at the core of this accelerating progress, advancing each day at a geometric pace? For whom were printed books digitized? What is the role of the humanities researcher who has not adapted to the

mechanisms of Digital Humanities? We are beginning to understand that reading is what gives meaning to human languages. While animals can communicate through sounds and onomatopoeia, the fact that we strive to decode a world beyond words keeps the human antenna open to metaphysical inquiry:

> *"The machines are fallible too, of course—bugs, errors, and processing mistakes abound—but they are mechanical failures, not the inflected expression of individual thought projected onto and entwined in a work that is produced anew through every interpretative act. The distinction between mechanical and hermeneutic reading, between machine processing and cognitive engagement, between the automatic and the interpretative, between unmotivated and motivated encounters with texts, is essential. Processing is not reading. It is literal, automatic, and repetitive. Reading is ideational, hermeneutic, generative, and productive. Processing strives for accuracy, reading for leniency or transformation."* (Johanna Drucker, 2017, 630).

The Internet has familiarized us with a vast mythology of opening access to information. However, instead of promoting an ethics of dialogue, plurality has often become an argument for the fluidization of landmarks. We are confronted with a heterogeneous reality, in which gold and mercury coexist, through amalgamation – a space in constant expansion that generates infinite confusions of plans. The Internet, a heterogeneous reticular system, creates multiple confusions especially due to the complicity links between man, time and machine. Digital globalization is an unavoidable reality. Our being has created an incorruptible connection with the Internet, through the mediation of portable objects such as the mobile phone or the laptop. This everyday character, who wants to accumulate general culture, is called *Homo-Loggatus* (Salvatore Spina, 2023, p. 432-437). But can this being – connected to the memory of the internet, detached from the cultural memory in which they were educated, and also impervious to emotional memory - still embody the scholar devoted to professional ethics that Marshall McLuhan talks about in *Understanding Media*?

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In an effort to provide cohesion to our observations in this third section, we will point out that, although we were familiar with certain procedures, such as skimming/"global informative reading" (Paul Cornea, 1998, p. 120) and scanning/"exploratory reading" (Paul Cornea, 1998, p. 120), these habits have intensified after the contact with the screen. In general, our mnemonic, comprehensive and analytical capacities diminish as we increase the time spent on the digital canvas. In the Digital Humanities universe, reading becomes increasingly rare. Bibliography is turning into webography. More and more books, once their print format is exhausted, continue to exist in the public space in the electronic HTML version, rather than as PDFs that preserve the visual integrity of printed pages. Reading is replaced by procedures for selecting and combining data and information sources:

> *"Looking at the design of each page, we ask questions like: how does the text hang together? Is the text large or small, are the margins wide or slim? Are there page numbers, running headers, gauffered edges, or indices? What are the mechanisms for moving through the book? Collate, map, scan, navigate, explore – these are the verbs that explain what we do with an old book. Not, typically, read."* (Cassidy Holahan, Aylin Malcolm and Wittney Trettien, 2024, online)[3].

If specialists in the field express multiple reservations about Digital Humanities, then it means that the discerning power of philology – established as a science of the text (textual scholarship) – will not be absorbed by the idea of transversal fields. At this point, any type of reading presupposes a rapid accumulation of webography which, according to current times, is just a click away. Knowledge might be as well split into different disciplines, but the most deceiving result would reveal itself in the digital technologies, because one cannot control the incompatibility between old software and the shared information as *open access*. The aftermath of this tension could be

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[3] *Futures of Digital Scholarly Editing*, Matt Cohen, Kenneth M. Price, and Caterina Bernardini, Editors, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London, 2024: https://manifold.umn.edu/read/futures-of-digital-scholarly-editing/section/65cfbb0a-d98e-4d9e-8e19-593ab7d059cb#ch09

described as a potential vanishing of the cultural text in a peculiar and paradoxical folklore of the internet.

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II. BRANDS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

„NATHAN DER WEISE" ALS FREIMAURERISCHES SYMBOLSPIEL: DIE SPRACHE DER TOLERANZ UND AUFKLÄRUNG ("NATHAN THE WISE" AS A MASONIC SYMBOLIC PLAY: THE LANGUAGE OF TOLERANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT)

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Abstract:
This article examines the Masonic symbols and specific Masonic language in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's play Nathan the Wise. While the work is often understood as a plea for tolerance and interfaith dialogue within the context of the Enlightenment, less attention has been given to its deliberate use of symbols and terminology rooted in Masonic traditions. These elements emphasize universal brotherhood and moral ethics. The analysis highlights how Lessing subtly integrates these aspects into the narrative and dialogues to convey the core principles of Freemasonry—humanity, reason, and equality—in literary form. Particular attention is given to the imagery and metaphors that allude to Masonic rituals and values. The article demonstrates how Lessing's embedded messages promote an ethical worldview that transcends religious boundaries, making the play a seminal text of the Enlightenment.

Keywords:
Freemasonry language, Enlightenment, Freemasonry Symbolism, *Nathan der Weise*

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) gilt als einer der bedeutendsten Schriftsteller der deutschen Aufklärung, als Wegbereiter des modernen Theaters und als Verfechter humanistischer Werte. Als Mitglied der Freimaurerei nahm Lessing die Grundgedanken der Organisation wie

Toleranz, Gleichheit und Rationalität in seine Werke auf. Werke wie *Nathan der Weise* spiegeln seine Vision einer Gesellschaft wider, die über religiöse und kulturelle Unterschiede hinweg durch gemeinsame Werte geeint ist. Die Freimaurerei war nicht nur ein thematischer Einfluss, sondern auch ein symbolischer Rahmen, der sich in der Struktur seiner Stücke und in der Wahl seiner Figuren widerspiegelt. Durch sein literarisches Vermächtnis trug Lessing dazu bei, die Verbindung zwischen der deutschen Kultur und den freimaurerischen Idealen zu stärken und ein Modell für den interkulturellen Dialog zu schaffen.

James Andersons[1] Konstitutionenbuch erschien 1723 in England und wurde etwa zwanzig Jahre später ins Deutsche übersetzt. Das Buch enthält neben einer mythischen Geschichte des Ordens (über die Entstehung der Welt, den Bau der ägyptischen Pyramiden, den Bau des Salomonischen Tempels und der St. Paul's Kathedrale in London) einen Abschnitt über die so genannten *Alten Pflichten* (Old Charges).

Im ersten Kapitel der *Alten Pflichten* mit dem Titel „Über Gott und Religion", das sich mit dem wichtigsten Thema befasst, das den deutschen Schriftsteller Gotthold Ephraim Lessing besonders interessierte, hält J. Anderson (zitiert nach Bahnson:157) fest:

> *„Der Maurer ist als solcher verbunden, dem Sittengesetze zu gehorchen, und wenn er die Kunst recht versteht, wird er weder ein dummer Gottesleugner, noch ein Wüstling ohne Religion sein. Aber, obgleich in alten Zeiten der Maurerei vorgeschrieben war, sich in jedem Lande zu der jedesmaligen Religion des Landes oder der Nation zu bekennen, so hält man doch jetzt für ratsamer, sie bloß zu der Religion zu verpflichten, in welcher alle Menschen übereinstimmen, und jedem seine besondere Meinung zu lassen, das heißt: sie sollen gute und treue Männer sein, oder Männer von Ehre und Rechtschaffenheit, durch was für*

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[1] James Anderson (geb. etwa 1678 in Aberdeen/Schottland; gest. 28. Mai 1739 in London) war ein schottischer Prediger der schottisch-presbyterianischen Kirche in London, Freimaurer und Verfasser der ersten Konstitution („Alte Pflichten") der Ersten Großloge von England.

Benennungen oder Glaubensmeinungen sie auch sonst sich unterscheiden. Hierdurch wird die Freimaurerei ein Mittelpunkt der Vereinigung und das Mittel, treue Freundschaft unter Personen zu stiften, welche sonst in beständiger Entfernung geblieben wären."

Der prinzipielle Objektivismus der Freimaurerei ist einer der Gründe, die G.E. Lessing dazu brachten, sich diesem Prinzip zu widmen und sich ihm zeitlebens mit uneingeschränktem Interesse zu widmen.

Die Erforschung der Biographie Lessings hat einen hinreichend klaren Einblick in das Leben des Autors gegeben. Was jedoch seine Tätigkeit als Freimaurer betrifft, gibt es Lücken, da sein literarischer Nachlass von der Großloge von Dänemark verwaltet wird und dem Logengeheimnis unterliegt. Lessing wurde am 14. Oktober 1771 in der Loge „Zu den drei Rosen" in Hamburg, die damals von Georg Johann von Rosenberg[2] geleitet wurde, in die Freimaurerei aufgenommen. Seine ursprüngliche Matrikelnummer war 56, und er war gleichzeitig als Lehrling, Geselle und Meister[3] eingeschrieben. In späteren Jahren erhielt er verschiedene andere, niedrigere Matrikelnummern, aber ab 1780 verschwand sein Name aus dem Register der Loge[4].

Lessing war seit 1751 mit dem Freimaurerorden vertraut. In seinem Gedicht *Das Geheimnis*[5] macht er sich über den Orden lustig, dessen Geheimnis, so Lessing, darin bestehe, dass er kein Geheimnis habe. Doch schon bald muss sich die Einstellung geändert haben, denn dieses Gedicht wurde nicht in die zweite Auflage der *Ersten Gedichte* aufgenommen. Wie es zu dieser Änderung kam, lässt sich nicht rekonstruieren, aber man vermutet, dass Lessing in Berlin mit der Freimaurerei bekannt geworden war (Hillen 1979). Aber erst nach dem Siebenjährigen Krieg[6], als Lessing sich in

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[2] Johann Georg Rosenberg, auch Jean Rosenberg (geb. 1739 in Berlin; gest. 7. September 1808 ebenda) war ein deutscher Maler, Radierer und Kupferstecher, Gründer der Hamburger Loge „Zu den drei (goldenen) Rosen".

[3] Die drei Grade der Freimaurerei heißen Lehrling, Geselle und Meister: https://www.freimaurerorden-nuernberg.de/lehrling-geselle-und-meister/

[4] https://freimaurer-wiki.de/index.php/Gotthold_Ephraim_Lessing

[5] Gedichttext unter: https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/lessing/fabelerz/chap015.html

[6] Im Siebenjährigen Krieg von 1756 bis 1763 kämpften alle europäischen Großmächte jener Zeit um ein Mächtegleichgewicht und territoriale Gewinne in Europa, um Kolonien und

Hamburg niederließ, begann er, sich ernsthaft für die Freimaurerei zu interessieren. Seine Freundschaft mit Johann Joachim Christoph Bode[7] begünstigte seine Begegnungen mit verschiedenen Freimaurern. So traf er beispielsweise Mathias Allardus de Chantier, Legatsrat der Diözese Lübeck, und den Schauspieler Konrad Eckhof. Christoph Bode schien jedoch die beste Person zu sein, um Lessing den Eintritt in die Freimaurerei zu erleichtern. Er warnte ihn jedoch, dass das System der „strengen Observanz" viel zu schwerfällig und undurchsichtig sei, um einem Geist wie dem von Lessing gerecht zu werden. Bode warnte ihn auch davor, das Freimaurergeheimnis zu verraten. Dies führte zu einem Konflikt zwischen Lessing und Bode, war aber nicht der entscheidende Grund, warum Lessing die Aufnahme in die Freimaurerei zunächst verweigert wurde. 1765 war die Loge, der Bode angehörte, vom rationalistisch-englischen System auf das mystische System der „strengen Observanz" umgestiegen. Dies führte zu so viel Verwirrung innerhalb der Loge, dass sie im Herbst 1767 ihre Arbeit einstellte. Bode war als Meister vom Stuhl[8] nicht einmal mehr in der Lage, Lessings Aufnahme in die Loge zu vollziehen (Bahnson 1926).

Nach seinem Amtsantritt als Bibliothekar in Wolfenbüttel setzte Lessing sein Studium der Freimaurerliteratur fort, die in der kurfürstlichen Bibliothek gut vertreten war, da die meisten Mitglieder des Königshauses hohe Positionen in deutschen Logen innehatten.

Bei Hildebrandt (Hildebrandt 1979) liest man, dass Lessing auf einer Reise nach Hamburg und Berlin im Jahr 1771 ein Manuskript mit dem Titel

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Einfluss in Nordamerika, Indien und Afrika, um die Herrschaft über die transatlantischen Seewege sowie um Handelsvorteile. Im Wesentlichen standen Preußen und Großbritannien einer Allianz aus der Habsburgermonarchie mit dem Heiligen Römischen Reich sowie Frankreich, Russland und Spanien gegenüber; https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siebenj%C3%A4hriger_Krieg

[7] Johann Joachim Christoph Bode (geb. 16. Januar 1730 in Braunschweig; gest. 13. Dezember 1793 in Weimar) war ein deutscher Journalist, Verleger und einer der bedeutendsten Übersetzer in der Zeit der Aufklärung. Der Freund und Verlagsbuchhändler Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstocks und Gotthold Ephraim Lessings war selbst Aufklärer und führende Persönlichkeit in der Freimaurerei sowie bei den Illuminaten; https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Joachim_Christoph_Bode

[8] Vorsitzender einer Freimaurerloge

Papiere zu Ernst und Falk gehörig dabeihatte. Lessing hatte die Absicht, diese Schriften zu drucken, um sie später, nach seiner Aufnahme in eine Loge als Freimaurerbruder, auf ihren Wahrheitsgehalt zu überprüfen. Zum zweiten Mal wendet er sich an Bode, wird aber ein zweites Mal abgewiesen. Auf seiner nächsten Reise nach Berlin traf Lessing den Münzmeister Otto Heinrich Knorre[9], der ihn mit der Großen Landesloge von Deutschland in Kontakt brachte. Diese Loge trug den Namen „Zu den drei goldenen Rosen" und war der Hamburger Zweig der Großen Landesloge und ein Gegenspieler der Bode-Loge.

Nach seiner Aufnahme in die Hamburger Loge am 14. Oktober 1771 erkannte Lessing die Möglichkeit, Mitglied einer Art Ideengemeinschaft zu werden, in der er ein Universum geistiger Ideen und Werte zu finden hoffte. Leider musste er feststellen, dass seine Erwartungen zu hochgesteckt waren. Er äußerte seine Enttäuschung gegenüber einem Freimaurerbruder, der betont hatte, dass es in der Loge keine Taten oder Reden gegen den Staat oder die Religion gebe, worauf Lessing erwiderte: „Ha, ich wollte, ich hätte dergleichen gefunden – dann hätte ich wenigstens etwas gefunden" (Schneider 1961: 293).

Lessing nahm an den Logensitzungen nie teil, informierte sich aber ständig über die Geschichte und das Wesen des Ordens. Er sah darin im Kleinen, was er im Großen für die ganze Menschheit wünschte: dass die Menschen durch eine ununterbrochene, qualitätsvolle Erziehung die Tugend kennenlernen, um durch die Tugend zu Freiheit und Gleichheit zu gelangen. Wie bereits erwähnt, war Lessing von Bode gewarnt worden, kein Werk zu veröffentlichen, das das freimaurerische Geheimnis enthüllen könnte. Dennoch veröffentlichte er kurz vor seinem *Tod Ernst und Falk. Gespräche für Freimaurer*. Neuere Forschungen (Schneider 1961 und von Düffel 1992) zu Leben und Werk von G. E. Lessing haben gezeigt, dass die Umstände seines Todes im Dunkeln geblieben sind. In einem Brief des Freimaurerbruders Johann Anton Leisewitz[10] heißt es dazu: *„Lessings Tod*

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[9] Geb. 23. März 1727 Clausthal im Harz, gest. 4. Juni 1805 Hamburg
[10] Johann Anton Leisewitz (geb. 9. Mai 1752 in Hannover; gest. 10. September 1806 in Braunschweig) war ein deutscher Schriftsteller und Jurist.

war auf gewisse Art unerwartet und hat daher wenig innere Merkwürdigkeit.
Der Mann, der ihn starb muß ihm Merkwürdigkeit geben, und ich denke, daß
er das tun wird" (Endres 1961: 471).

Diese freimaurerischen Worte, die für die Laienwelt nichts anderes als
einen absoluten Widerspruch in sich enthalten, werden wie folgt übersetzt:
Lessings Tod hatte keine natürlichen Ursachen; er kam in dieser Hinsicht
unerwartet. Aber gerade weil es sich nicht um einen natürlichen Tod (an Alter
oder Gebrechen) handelte, stellt er für den eingeweihten Freimaurer keine
Merkwürdigkeit dar. Leisewitz wusste nämlich, dass Lessing das
Schweigegelübde gebrochen und den Vierten und Fünften Dialog an Dritte
zur Veröffentlichung gegeben hatte. Freimaurerbruder Leisewitz schließt
dann mit dem Gedanken, dass der große Kulturschöpfer Gotthold Ephraim
Lessing, der einen solchen Tod erlitt, seinen eigenen Tod in ein Geheimnis
hüllen würde, was bedeutet, dass die Nachwelt eines Tages sein Werk,
ausgehend von seinem Todesurteil, enthüllen würde.

Lessing galt zu seiner Zeit als der bedeutendste deutsche Dramatiker
und Literaturkritiker. In Norddeutschland gab es im Jahr seines Todes keinen
berühmteren Kulturschaffenden, und in Österreich, Bayern und Italien wurde
er mit königlichen Ehren bedacht. Zum Zeitpunkt seines Todes stand er als
Beamter in den Diensten des Großherzogs, was bedeutete, dass er Anspruch
auf ein aufwändiges Begräbnis wie Johann Gottfried von Herder oder Johann
Wolfgang von Goethe hatte. Ein unbestreitbarer Beweis für das Geheimnis
um die Umstände seines Todes ist die Tatsache, dass er nach
freimaurerischem Ritual diskret beigesetzt wurde, ohne Grabstein und ohne
Beteiligung von Familienmitgliedern oder engen Freunden (Endres 1961).

Nathan der Weise

Das Stück spielt in Jerusalem zur Zeit des Waffenstillstands während
des Dritten Kreuzzugs (1189-1192). Im Mittelpunkt steht der jüdische
Kaufmann Nathan, der mit seiner Adoptivtochter Recha und ihrer
Gesellschafterin Daja lebt. Als Nathan von einer Reise zurückkehrt, erfährt
er, dass Recha von einem christlichen Tempelritter aus einem Feuer gerettet

worden ist. Das konnte passieren, weil der muslimische Sultan Saladin den Tempelritter zuvor begnadigt hatte.

Währenddessen steckt Sultan Saladin in finanziellen Schwierigkeiten. Seine Schwester Sittah schlägt ihm vor, den reichen Nathan um Geld zu bitten. Aber er tut es nicht und fragt stattdessen Nathan, welche der drei großen Religionen - Judentum, Christentum und Islam - die wahre sei. Nathan antwortet mit dem Gleichnis vom Ring, der sogenannten Ringparabel, und der Sultan erkennt die Moral der Geschichte: Alle drei Weltreligionen sind gleich wertvoll. Lessings Drama symbolisiert somit Toleranz, Menschlichkeit und gegenseitigen Respekt. Es zeigt, dass verschiedene Religionen nicht unvereinbar sind und dass Menschen unterschiedlichen Glaubens in Frieden zusammenleben können.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing verstand sich selbst als polemischer Denker, sein Diskurs war also eher antithetisch als dogmatisch. Daher kann man seine Schriften nur verstehen, wenn man seinen Gegner kennt, dem er sich entgegenstellte. Dies war in den meisten seiner Schriften die lutherische Orthodoxie mit ihrer Lehre und Predigt, deren Hauptvertreter der Pfarrer Johann Melchior Goeze[11] war. Lessings Polemik kommt am beredtsten in 11 direkten Briefen gegen den Pfarrer zum Ausdruck, die Lessing veröffentlichte, vor allem aber in seinem Hauptwerk *Nathan der Weise*. Friedrich Schlegel[12], der von anderen Exegeten von Lessings Werk zitiert wird, pflegte zu sagen, dass derjenige, der Nathan wirklich versteht, auch Lessing versteht, und sagte, dass Nathan Lessings Lessing ist, die Fortsetzung der Polemik gegen Goeze: „Wer den Nathan recht versteht, kennt Lessing. […] Nathan ist, wie mich dünkt, ein Lessingisches Gedicht, es ist Lessings Lessing, […]es ist die Fortsetzung vom Anti-Goetze, Numero zwölf" (Lessing 1992: 125).

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[11] Johann Melchior Goeze (bekannt als Zionswächter; (geb. 16. Oktober 1717 in Halberstadt; gest. 19. Mai 1786 in Hamburg) war ein lutherischer Theologe, der in Hamburg wirkte und Gotthold Ephraim Lessings Hauptgegenspieler im Fragmentenstreit war:

[12] Friedrich Schlegel, (geb.10. März 1772 Hannover, gest. 12. Januar 1829 Dresden, Schriftsteller, Philosoph, Kunst- und Literaturwissenschaftler.

So wie sich die Freimaurer im Logensaal treffen, um über Fragen der Religion, der Gesellschaft, der Moral, der Ethik und der Geschichte zu debattieren, so treffen sich auch die Figuren in Lessings Stücken auf der Bühne, ihrem Ort der Debatte, um dieselben Themen zu diskutieren. Es ist kein Zufall, dass Lessing für seine Hauptwerke die Form der Tragödie wählte, denn er glaubte, dass der Zuschauer nicht die Angst vor dem dramatischen Helden, sondern vor seinem Schicksal empfindet, wobei die Angst das Mitleid mit sich selbst ist, daher die Katharsisfunktion der Tragödie: die Umwandlung von Leidenschaften in Tugenden.

Lessings Dramen zeigen die Aufgaben und Taten, die Freimaurer erfüllen sollen, und sind weit mehr als bloße literarische Werke. Seine Kunst ist nicht Selbstzweck, sondern dient der „königlichen Kunst", einer Umschreibung für die Freimaurerei.

Nathan der Weise enthält zwei Grundgedanken. Der erste ist die Polemik gegen eine restriktive Theologie (das Gleichnis vom Ring), der zweite ist die Polemik gegen alles Unnatürliche und die menschliche Dummheit in Bezug auf Gott. Durch *Nathan* unterstützt Lessing die Idee der Humanisierung der Religion, insbesondere durch die Forderung nach allumfassender Toleranz, einem der Grundprinzipien der Freimaurer. Betrachtet man die historischen Quellen, die als Inspiration für dieses Stück dienten, so wird deutlich, dass der Autor geschickt über die natürliche Chronologie hinausgegangen ist. Er benutzte Namen oder Ereignisse, um die Motivation für die Handlung des Stücks zu untermauern. Es ist kein Zufall, dass er das Stück in die Zeit der Kreuzzüge gelegt hat, als im Namen der christlichen Religion viel Blut vergossen wurde.

Die Auswahl der Personen folgte der gleichen Logik. Der Sultan Salah-ed-Din[13], der Syrien, Arabien, Mesopotamien, Armenien und Jerusalem eroberte, genoss den Respekt und die Liebe aller seiner Untertanen. Die Verehrung, die ihm entgegengebracht wurde und die er sich aufgrund seiner herausragenden Tugenden erwarb, machten ihn zu einem wahren

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[13] geboren 1137/1138[3] in Tikrit; gestorben am 3. März oder 4. März 1193 in Damaskus war ab 1171 der erste Sultan von Ägypten und ab 1174 Sultan von Syrien. Als kurdischstämmiger Führer gründete er die Dynastie der Ayyubiden

Freimaurer seiner Zeit. Er war als besonders gerechter Fürst bekannt, der alle willkommen hieß, unabhängig von Rang, Alter, Nationalität oder Religion: Muslime, Christen, Juden, Untertanen, Ausländer, Arme oder Reiche. Seine Barmherzigkeit war so groß, dass er niemals ein Vergehen oder eine Beleidigung gegen seine eigene Person bestrafte. Nach der Eroberung Jerusalems zeigte er größte Toleranz und Großzügigkeit gegenüber Christen und Juden und gab die Grabeskirche den Christen zurück.

Die Figur des Patriarchen von Jerusalem steht im Gegensatz zu der Figur des Sultans. Das historische Vorbild war der Patriarch Heraklius[14], der im Jahre 1187, als Jerusalem von Salah-ed-Din erobert wurde, die Stadt verließ und den Schatz des Heiligen Grabes mitnahm. Dieser Patriarch stellt in Nathan das genaue Gegenteil des Freimaurers dar. Lessings Absicht war es keineswegs, den Islam oder das Judentum zu verherrlichen oder das Christentum zu verteufeln, er hielt zu allen eine gleichmäßige, ausgewogene Distanz.

Im Vergleich zum Sultan verkörpert Nathan noch mehr den wahren Geist der Freimaurerei. Er erkennt die Prämissen der Religion und kann sie verwirklichen. Nathan erzieht Recha nicht in der jüdischen Religion, sondern im Geiste eines ehrlichen und aufrechten Menschen. Er zwingt ihr keine Religion auf, sondern bringt ihr nur die Lehre des Humanismus bei. Dieser Grundsatz findet sich auch in der Verfassung der Freimaurerei und wird von Lessing in den *Ernst-Falk* - Dialogen aufgegriffen: In der Antike war der Freimaurer verpflichtet, sich zur Staatsreligion des Landes zu bekennen, in dem er lebte. Mit der Zeit kam man zu dem Schluss, dass die Freimaurer nur die Religion anerkennen und befolgen sollten, in der alle Menschen gleich sind: die Religion der Gerechtigkeit und der Ehre.

Ein weiteres wichtiges freimaurerisches Symbol ist die Figur des Tempelritters. Nach Lessing hat die Freimaurerei ihre Wurzeln in der Gemeinschaft der geistlichen Soldaten, d.h. dem Orden der Tempelritter.

Nathan der Weise ist als literarisches Werk durch andere spezifische Symbole mit der Freimaurer-Institution verbunden. Es ist kein Zufall, dass der Autor das Gleichnis vom Ring als Kernstück seines Werks wählte, das in

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14 Heraclius von Caesarea († 1191 bei Akkon) war Erzbischof von Caesarea und Patriarch von Jerusalem.

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der deutschen Literatur zuvor nicht bearbeitet worden war. Lessing ließ sich von einem Roman von Boccaccio inspirieren, in dessen Mittelpunkt das Gleichnis von den drei Ringen steht, das jedoch umfassend und exklusiv behandelt wird. Das Ringsymbol ist ein bekanntes freimaurerisches Motiv: das Auge im Dreieck. Der im Ring eingelassene Opal lässt sich mit der Darstellung auf der Kanzel über dem Meister vom Stuhl in Verbindung bringen, der die freimaurerischen Arbeitstreffen leitet. Diese Darstellung zeigt ein Dreieck mit einem Auge im Inneren. Das „Auge im Dreieck" oder „Auge des Lichts" ist ein Motiv, das seinen Ursprung in der ägyptischen Kunst hat und den freimaurerischen Ritus inspiriert hat. Als Symbol findet es sich auch in vielen anderen alten initiatischen Gesellschaften wieder, deren spirituelles Ziel vor allem darin besteht, die „Augen zu öffnen" und eine erweiterte Wahrnehmung aller Dinge zu erlangen. Der Opal des Rings, das Auge des Lichts, klärt unaufhörlich die Arbeit der Freimaurer und bringt sie in Kontakt mit den intensivsten schöpferischen Kräften.

Lessing hat das alte Gleichnis jedoch strukturell verändert. Er spricht nur von einem Ring, im Gegensatz zu den früheren Quellen, in denen von drei verschiedenen Ringen die Rede ist, die jeweils eine andere Religion symbolisieren. Für Lessing findet sich die Verwendung eines einzigen Rings als Symbol für eine einzige Religion in den religiösen Überzeugungen der Freimaurer wieder. Für die Freimaurer hat jede Religion ihre eigene, genau definierte Funktion in der Geschichte und ist nur insoweit nützlich, als sie sich selbst definiert, um ihre eigene spezifische Wahrheit mit der universellen Wahrheit zu verbinden. So ist die Idee des Christentums als Universalreligion ausgeschlossen, da sie nicht falsch ist, sondern nur einen Teil der Wahrheit enthält, und als Teil kann sie nicht als Religion an sich existieren, da auch andere Religionen ihren Teil der absoluten Wahrheit enthalten.

Um die Analyse der freimaurerischen Symbole in *Nathan der Weise* fortzusetzen, sollte auch die Symbolik der Zahlen erwähnt werden, so wie diese beispielsweise bei Peregrinus (Jahr unbekannt:24) erläutert werden. Das Stück ist (wie auch alle anderen Stücke, *Emilia Galotti*, *Minna von Barnhelm*, *Miss Sara Sampson*) in fünf Akte gegliedert, von denen jeder zehn Personen hat. Die Zahlen fünf und zehn haben eine besondere freimaurerische

Bedeutung (Peregrinus). Die Zahl fünf steht für die Anzahl der menschlichen Sinne, die Temperaturgrade (heiß, warm, lauwarm, kühl, kalt), die Anzahl der Finger, die architektonischen Ordnungen (dorisch, ionisch, korinthisch, etruskisch und römisch), die architektonischen Stile (byzantinisch, maurisch, romanisch, gotisch und Renaissance) sowie die Anzahl der Grundvokale.

Die Zahl Zehn hat aus freimaurerischer Sicht einen magischen Wert. Sie ist die Summe von eins, zwei, drei und vier. Die Eins steht für die Einheit der Dinge, die Zwei verweist auf die Ambivalenz der Einheit, d.h. die aktive und die latente Seite. Die Zahl drei verweist auf die drei Sequenzen der Zeit und des Lebens: Vergangenheit, Gegenwart, Zukunft, die drei Teile einer Handlung: den Anfang, den Inhalt und das Ende, die drei Lebensabschnitte: Geburt, Leben und Tod, die drei Raumkoordinaten: Länge, Breite und Höhe/Tiefe, die drei Grundfarben: Rot, Gelb und Blau; die Dreifaltigkeit[15]; die drei freimaurerischen Säulen: Weisheit, Stärke, Schönheit; die drei großen Lichter der Freimaurerei: das Buch des Heiligen Gesetzes, der Winkelmaß und der Kompass[16] (beim Betreten der Loge macht der Lehrling drei Schritte). Die Zahl vier steht für die vier Himmelsrichtungen, die Urelemente (Erde, Wasser, Luft, Feuer), die vier Evangelisten und die vier Temperamentstypen (Choleriker, Sanguiniker, Phlegmatiker und Melancholiker).

Alle diese Elemente sind in der Zahl Zehn enthalten. Die zehn Personen können mit diesem Schema oder mit dem Schema der zehn Gebote des christlichen Glaubens in Verbindung gebracht werden. Sie können auch mit den zehn freimaurerischen Offizieren übereinstimmen, die die Loge leiten. Sie symbolisieren die Harmonie schlechthin: der Ehrwürdige Meister vom Stuhl (Nathan), der von zwei Aufsehern unterstützt wird, von denen der erste die Lehrlinge unterrichtet und der zweite die Gesellen. Neben dem Meister stehen der Redner und der Sekretär. Dann folgen ein Schatzmeister

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[15] Hinter Abkürzungen werden im freimaurerischen Schrifttum die drei Punkte gesetzt, bei Bezeichnung der Mehrzahl zumeist verdoppelt. Daher auch die Bezeichnung der Freimaurer als Dreipunktebrüder (Fréres-Trois-Points). Sie werden zumeist als Symbol für die drei Lichter gedeutet: https://www.freimaurer-wiki.de/index.php/Drei_Punkte

[16] Das Buch steht für die Vorstellung einer ewigen Schöpfung und ritueller Führung. Der Kompass symbolisiert die Notwendigkeit, sich der Arbeit zu widmen, während das Winkelmaß die Überprüfung der Harmonie der Welt repräsentiert.

und ein Musikmeister, gefolgt von einem Zeremonienmeister und einem Archivar, wobei der letzte Amtsträger der Überwacher ist (Bahnson 1926).

Die Botschaft des Werkes von Lessing entspricht voll und ganz der freimaurerischen Botschaft. Es ist das Bestreben, die Gesellschaft auf den Weg der Ethik und der Wahrheit zu führen. Durch die Ringparabel zeigt der Autor, dass jeder Mensch von den gleichen Voraussetzungen ausgeht, mit dem entsprechenden moralischen Verhalten und Handeln, das ihn zum höchsten Ziel führen kann. Nicht die statische, feststehende Wahrheit ist wichtig, sondern der Weg, den man einschlägt, und das Engagement, das man bei der Suche nach der Wahrheit an den Tag legt. Lessing (Lessing 1994:75) meinte:

> *Nicht die Wahrheit in deren Besitz irgendein Mensch ist oder zu sein vermeint, sondern die aufrichtige Mühe, die er angewandt hat, hinter die Wahrheit zu kommen, macht den Wert des Menschen. denn nicht durch den Besitz, sondern durch die Nachforschung der Wahrheit erweitern sich   seine Kräfte, worin allein seine immer wachsende Vollkommenheit besteht. Der Besitz macht ruhig, träge, stolz". Und weiter: Wenn Gott in seiner Rechten alle Wahrheit und in seiner Linken den einzigen regen Trieb nach Wahrheit, obschon mit dem Zusatze, mich immer und ewig zu irren, verschlossen hielte und spräche zu mir: 'Wähle!', ich fiele ihm mit Demut in seine Linke und   sagte: 'Vater, gib! die reine Wahrheit ist ja doch nur für dich allein!`*

Diese Worte des großen Lessing sind eine Analogie für den Initiationsritus des Freimaurernovizen. Beim Eintritt in die Loge muss der Neuling in Anwesenheit aller Brüder eine Reise simulieren, eine Reise, die jedoch für einen wahren Freimaurer niemals enden wird. Während seines ganzen Lebens darf er nie das wesentliche Ziel seiner Reise vergessen, das ewige Licht.

Die Freimaurerei hatte seit dem 18. Jahrhundert einen bedeutenden Einfluss auf die deutsche Kultur und Literatur, als die Grundsätze der Aufklärung - Toleranz, Gleichheit und Vernunft - in die Werke von Schriftstellern wie Gotthold Ephraim Lessing Eingang fanden. Mit Werken wie Nathan der Weise veranschaulichte Lessing die Ideale der Freimaurer und

warb für Humanismus und Harmonie zwischen den Religionen. Viele andere bedeutende Literaten der Weltliteratur wurden von der freimaurerischen Symbolik und Ethik beeinflusst, und diese Tradition inspiriert auch heute noch das literarische Schaffen und fördert den kulturellen Dialog, so dass die Freimaurerei bei der Erforschung universeller Werte bis zum heutigen Tag von Bedeutung ist.

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PLASTIC AND SYMBOLIC ASPECTS OF BYZANTINE PAINTING IN THE CONTEXT OF SACRED ICONOGRAPHY. EVALUATING THE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ARTISTIC ANATOMY AND THE STRUCTURES OF COMPOSITIONAL GEOMETRY

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Abstract

The geometric constants in Byzantine iconography represent a particularly fertile interdisciplinary field of research, situated at the intersection of artistic, historical, philosophical and theological dimensions of visual expression. The correlation between poetry and mathematics, between art and geometry, is not coincidental; rather it arises from the fact that these domains each participate, in their own way, in a shared horizon of symbolic thought and intellectual contemplation. They belong to the higher order of spiritual exercise, wherein perception converts into understanding, and formal intuition acquires cognitive value. In the context of the Byzantine icon, geometric constants do not function as mere elements of aesthetic composition but as structures mediating transfigured historical realities, bearing profound theological meaning. They synthesise, through a specific visual language, the full complexity of Revelation, transcending the boundaries of mimetic representation of sacred events and assuming an integral hermeneutic function: historical, moral, dogmatic and eschatological. This iconic presence, although distinct from the empirical reality of the represented subject, cannot be reduced to a mere symbolic recollection. Discussing the harmony of the transfigured body in iconography undoubtedly means affirming an ontological truth specific to the theology of the image. However, it remains imperative to investigate the fundamentals and internal logic that govern this transfiguration, in order to adequately comprehend the ontological and epistemological status of the icon within the Orthodox ecclesial paradigm.

Keywords

Iconography, Byzantine painting, compositional geometry, golden ratio, sacred image.

Introduction

In his *Guide to Byzantine Iconography*, Constantine Cavarnos identifies a series of defining features for the aesthetic canon of the icon: simplicity, clarity, measure (restraint), grace, symmetry (balance) and appropriateness. These characteristics, far from being purely decorative, reflect a profound theological vision of the representation of the sacred, subsumed under a transfigured anthropology and cosmology. The canon of proportions is supported by the use of the modular system, a geometric principle that allows the structuring of the human body in fixed harmonic ratios, obtained by multiplying or dividing a fundamental unit of measure. In the context of ecclesial iconography, this modular unit is pre-established and consistently applied, so that all saint figures, regardless of their placement in the iconographic programme, maintain proportional coherence, possibly adjusted to the distortions induced by the visual angles specific to each painted surface.

This methodology, which became normative in Byzantine workshops, has a notable Western counterpart in the famous *Manuscript of Villard de Honnecourt*, preserved at the National Library of France, which demonstrates a similar concern for relating the human figure to a universally valid geometric matrix.

Although the human figure has a common structure in all cultures, with variations determined by ethnic particularities, in the great religious traditions it is subjected to theological stylisation, which transcends naturalism and aims at an iconic representation of the person in an ontological sense. Thus, in Byzantine iconography, the form of the human body is not altered in its essence but rendered in accordance with its internal structure, maintaining a correct relationship between parts and the whole. This fidelity is not naturalistic but transfigurative, aiming at resemblance to the Prototype – Christ, the God-Man, in whom the hypostatic union of divine and human natures was realised.[1]

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[1] Kordis Georgios, *Ritmul în pictura bizantină*, Editura Bizantină, București, 2008, p. 72.

In this sense, George Kordis observes that "*we can say with certainty that, in figurative representations, Byzantine art largely follows the natural aspect*," but this "natural" is theological, eschatological, marked by participation in the uncreated energies of God. The icon is not a mere image but a pictorial theophany, in which the bodies of the saints are rendered in their transfigured, spiritualised state, where corporeal weight disappears and individuality is flattened to make room for a pneumatic presence. As the evangelical text states: "At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30).

This tension between representation and transfiguration is finely thematised by Leonid Uspensky, who emphasises that "there are no words, nor colours, nor lines, which could represent the Kingdom of God." In this sense, both theology and iconography necessarily fail, but it is precisely in this insufficiency that their value lies: both reach the limits of human language and indicate, through the failure of expression, what transcends any expression. Thus, the iconographic representation of the Kingdom can only be symbolic, analogical, using the figurative language of the parable, not of realistic reproduction.[2]

In terms of composition and form treatment, the continuous presence of the person in God is suggested through an interior perspective, often inverted or centred, which contradicts the logic of profane spatiality. This inversion also has a formal correspondence in the flattening of space, especially in the abdominal area – the widest part of the body – which is reduced to suggest the spiritualisation of matter. At the same time, volume is not completely eliminated, being preserved through the roundness of limbs and the luminous modelling of facial features. In plastic terms, joints and articulations are simplified to cylindrical forms, musculature is discreet but anatomically intelligible, and rarely accentuated. This treatment reflects an ascetic anthropology, in which the body is freed from any trace of carnality or seduction, with silhouettes often rendered in fusiform shapes, symbolising the purification of passions and orientation towards God.[3]

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[2] Uspensky Leonid, *The Meaning of Icons*, Editura St Vladimirs Seminary Pr, 1999, p. 27.
[3] Kordis Georgios, *Ritmul în pictura bizantină*, Editura Bizantină, București, 2008, p. 59

At the expressive level, Byzantine iconography systematically avoids excessive affective manifestations: pathos, eros and paroxysmal psychological states are absent. The facial expression conveys spiritual restraint, corresponding to a spiritual vision of the human person.

Regarding iconographic composition, two fundamental patterns can be distinguished:

- The composition of presence, usually static, in which the saint is depicted standing, in a vertical and sober posture, establishing a direct and personal relationship with the viewer – a presence that transcends historical time.

- The eventful composition, dynamic, intended to bring a salvific event into the present – a visual anamnesis that makes present what once was.

The way in which the direction of bodily movement signifies a theological reality is also significant: movement from left to right signifies coming, manifestation, while movement from right to left suggests departure, withdrawal. In representations with a single figure, the iconographic canon stipulates that the body should be oriented to the right, the head slightly turned to the left, and the gaze fixed to the right. According to Kordis, this asymmetrical arrangement, with tensional balance, is the most effective in creating the impression that the saint's gaze is directed straight at the viewer, thus establishing a personal relationship of communion between the one represented and the one contemplating the icon.[4]

1. The geometric structure of Byzantine composition in relation to the golden ratio

The cross occupies a central place in Byzantine theological and artistic imagery, constituting not only a sign of recognition of the Christian faith but also a fundamental anthropological and ontological principle. It signifies the renunciation of the "old man", marked by sin and disorder, and the assumption of the "new man", transfigured in Christ, in accordance with Pauline theology. The symbolism of the cross is latently present from the Old

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[4] Gusev Nikolai, Dunaev Mihail, Karelin Rafail, *Îndrumar iconografic*, Editura Sophia, București, 2007, p. 105.

Testament, where it is typologically prefigured by the bronze serpent raised by Moses in the wilderness (Numbers 21:8-9), and is perfected in the eschatological vision of the Second Coming of the Saviour, when "the sign of the Son of Man" will appear in the clouds of heaven (Matthew 24:30).

In Byzantine iconography, the cruciform shape is present not only explicitly but also symbolically, through the gesture of the Orans – the human figure with arms raised laterally at shoulder level – configuring a bodily expression of openness to transcendence. This representation can be correlated, in an analogous plane, with Leonardo da Vinci's famous "Vitruvian Man", where the human body is inscribed in a square and a circle – an image of the balance between material and spiritual, between rationality and mystery.

The same symbolic-theological logic governs the planimetry of Byzantine ecclesial buildings. The plan structure of churches, especially in the typology of the inscribed Greek cross, visually and liturgically renders the shape of the cross, having a central nave and two lateral arms, intersected at the level anterior to the altar. This architectural arrangement reflects, on the one hand, the mystical reality of the Church – whose Head is Christ, and whose members are the faithful – and, on the other hand, configures the theological space of the Eucharistic epiphany, in which the Saviour is given to the community through the Holy Mysteries.[5]

In smaller churches, the ratio between the longitudinal axis of the nave and the transverse axes generates, in the centre of the construction, a square inscribed in a circle. In elevation, this structure translates into a dome, a circular form that signifies eternity and the uncreated energies of God, in symbolic contrast with the square, a representation of the material world. Thus, the liturgical space becomes a synthesis between the transfigured cosmos and the deified human, an image of the macrocosm in the mirror of the human microcosm.

This theological articulation of space and form is rigorously reflected in Byzantine iconography, where proportions and geometry play an essential

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[5] *Ibidem.*

role in configuring the sacred image. Nicolai Gusev's studies on Romanian icons reveal the application of canonical ratios between the length and width of the panel, as well as between the different planes of the composition. The deliberate flattening of the short side creates effects of symmetry, concentricity and a visual rhythm that guides the viewer's gaze towards an implicit theological centre.[6]

In this context, we should mention Egon Sendler's contribution, who systematised the theory of the "three circles" – the halo, the head and the face – arranged in ratios constructed based on the golden section. These proportions are not purely decorative but participate in the theological economy of the icon, revealing a transfigured anthropology and a sacralised cosmology.

An illustrative example is the icon of Christ Pantocrator from the 16th century (1570–1580), in the collection of the National Museum of Art of Romania, Bucharest (Fig. 1). The format of the icon is defined by the 2:3 ratio, and the composition is structured by inscribing the torso in a square generated by folding the base. This geometric operation leads to the drawing of an equilateral triangle, whose apex corresponds to the sternal bifurcation – the point where the vertical axis of the halo intersects.

The halo does not follow a banal arc of a circle but is deliberately oversized to emphasise the divine uniqueness of the represented person. Its radius (OC = C'M) is obtained by intersecting the $\sqrt{2}$ arc traced from the base with a median line projected at the height of a module (half the base of the icon). The circle of the head is concentric with the halo, and its dimensions are also regulated by the golden section. The circle of the face, with a radius equal to the length of the nose, has its centre slightly shifted to the right and downwards, near the tear gland. This is geometrically determined by the segment between the tip of the middle finger (on the S'S'4 side) and the S'4M point, obtained by the semicircular retraction of the base.

The pupil circle, finally, is defined by a radius equal to the width of the decorative band that separates the figure of the Saviour from the lateral

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[6] Kordis Georgios, *Ritmul în pictura bizantină*, Editura Bizantină, București, 2008, p. 59.

characters and is tangent to both the eyelid and eyebrow contours. This construction gives the face an expression of concentration and solemnity, accentuating spiritual sobriety.

The gesture of blessing, according to Kordis's observations, consists of two movements in balanced tension: raising the palm to a higher point (P) and arching the fingers, inscribed in a circle with a diameter identical to the radius of the halo. The little finger traces the vertical axis, and the ring finger, through its specific bending, refers to the cross imprinted on the Gospel held in the left hand.[7]

The ratio between the size of the Gospel and the overall structure of the icon is regulated by dividing the base into the golden section (the SS' segment). The thickness of the frames is uniform on three sides, and the height corresponds to a √4 arc projected from the base on the vertical R'S'[1]. The narrower lower edge is defined by a line connecting point C' (the centre of the base arc segment) with point S'[2], thus establishing the sacred proportion of the entire composition.

The geometric structure of the Pantocrator icon from the Monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai, dated to the 15th century (Fig. 2), follows the same proportional logic. The 2:3 ratio is maintained, and the radius of the head circle is derived from the golden division of half the base. The same unit of measure is used to determine the length of the Gospel and the distance between the sleeve and the book. The radius of the face circle corresponds to the major segment of the golden section (DE), while the body is framed within an equilateral triangle with its apex at the chin. The arc of the circle generated by folding the large sides marks the armpit area, suggesting the inner dynamism of the figure through linear tension.

In relation to the entire composition, the height of the head circle is tangent to the intersection point I, defined by the √2 arc of the base and the vertical line that connects the centre of the head circle with that of the face. This geometric rigour, far from being a purely decorative exercise, reflects a

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[7] *Ibidem.*

theological vision of the cosmos and man, where proportion, harmony and transfiguration meet in a sacred visual language.

2. Surpassing the articulatory paradigm towards a concentric organisation

Deisis icons from the Russian tradition stand out for their deeply symbolic theological and aesthetic composition, in which the representations of the Mother of God and the saints, inclined towards Christ, adopt a volute perspective, seemingly contrary to the naturalistic conventions of three-dimensional representation. The lateral and even posterior planes are deliberately brought to the forefront, contrary to Renaissance optics, yet in full consonance with Byzantine iconic logic. This stylistic approach, far from being perceived as a visual dissonance, integrates into a coherent and expressive compositional ensemble.

In this regard, Pavel Florensky notes that the most radical violations of perspective rules are found in the works of the great iconographers, while those more aligned with realistic logic are generally characteristic of authors with lesser technical skills. Thus, the deliberate transgression of geometric perspective does not constitute a deficiency but rather reflects a conscious choice, stemming from a spiritual understanding of sacred representation.[8]

One of the defining principles of reverse perspective is polycentricity – that is, the distribution of multiple visual centres, intended to avoid subordinating the entire composition to a single vanishing point. This option generates forced foreshortenings, through which the characters, even those in the background, are oriented frontally towards the viewer, in a gesture of liturgical communion. In this context, heads are often depicted in semi-profile, suggesting a movement of bowing, yet without disrupting the direct iconic relationship with the contemplator.[9]

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[8] Florenski Pavel, *Perspectiva inversă și alte scrieri*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1997, p. 27.
[9] *Ibidem.*

The consequences of this perspective are also found at the level of represented anatomy, where muscular or skeletal structures are often abstracted, surpassing fidelity to the physical body to express spiritual realities. An emblematic example is the icon of the Holy Trinity by Andrei Rublev (Fig. 4), in which the table and house are constructed based on reverse perspective, and the feet of the two lateral angels are projected towards the viewer, with knees suggesting an ascensional tension. The entire composition is inscribed in a rigorous geometric organisation, founded on the circle – a symbol of divine perfection. This "intellectual perspective", sometimes called the "perspective of turning from the axis", finds a secular but structurally comparable analogue in Leonardo da Vinci's famous Vitruvian Man, although the latter serves an anthropometric, not theological, endeavour.

The lack of concern for faithfully reproducing human anatomy in Byzantine iconography is explainable by the prohibition of dissection and the rejection of a materialistic approach to the body. Instead of an analytical investigation of bodily structure, Byzantine iconographers adopt a synthetic vision, governed by spiritual intuition and a critical sense oriented towards the ensemble of theological meanings. The logic of movement and muscular tension is expressed in an abstract manner, and the representation of the skeleton is generally symbolic and unrealistic. For example, the head is often constructed based on a circular shape, emphasising the spiritualised character of the person.

This disinterest in the concrete description of the body does not denote anatomical ignorance but reflects a profound theological attitude: death is not perceived as an absolute biological event but as a passage to eternal life. In this key, the biblical formula "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" is complemented by the belief in the soul's ascent to God. Detachment from the body's impotence and participation in the fullness of divine grace are iconographically rendered through the serene expressions of martyr saints, whose depiction transcends physical suffering and anticipates the eschatological state of glory.[10]

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[10] *Ibidem.*

3. The dimension of gender and age in iconographic discourse

In the light of God, the human being transcends all the immanent coordinates of created existence: space and time, birth and death, differences in gender, age, social or hierarchical status, and any other type of determination specific to the fallen world. The path of life and its ultimate purpose remain identical for all people, regardless of these conditions. Saint Basil the Great clearly emphasises this truth, stating that "virtue is one and the same for both man and woman; for just as the creation of both was honoured equally, so too should the reward be the same honour for both."

The scriptural reference from the Book of Genesis ("So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" – Genesis 1:27) confirms the ontological equality of the two sexes, as both are made "in the image of God" and thus share the same human nature.

From the perspective of Byzantine iconography, man is represented not in his ephemeral biological condition but as a transfigured being, participating in divine life. Although in earthly life man goes through different stages – childhood, youth, old age – and manifests physiological traits specific to these ages, Byzantine art expresses them in a symbolic, not realistic manner, to convey the eschatological dimension of the human person. Iconography does not illustrate the body subject to corruption but the deified body, freed from biological limits and transfigured by grace.[11]

Thus, the icon depicts the face of man restored to his true nature and led to its fullness. Hence the impression of "strangeness" felt by the profane viewer in front of an icon, as the elements represented are both recognisable and foreign to the fallen world. Faces and bodies no longer reflect the "carnal" traits of human nature but express, through their forms, the spiritual state of the transfigured person.

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[11] Arhim. Sofronie Boghiu, *Viaţa şi învăţăturile stareţului Siluan Atonitul*, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 1996, p. 186.

In the icon, a new world is revealed, one in which "the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). Saints are depicted at the spiritual age of the "perfect man", not according to the chronological age at which they died. Young martyrs or saints who passed to the Lord in childhood are depicted in icons at the age they were at their death, but with expressions of spiritual maturity. Physical age is treated symbolically: the elderly are not shown with signs of physical degradation, but with bodies ennobled by the grace of incorruptibility. Signs of age are reduced to stylised elements, such as a white beard or grey hair, and the bodily marks of ascetic life are discreetly suggested through the expressive modelling of the face.[12]

Even the Christ Child, in iconographic representations, bears the gravity and wisdom of maturity in His features. The icon depicts not only historical reality but theological truth, which is why Christ and the Mother of God appear at different ages, depending on the dogmatic content expressed in the image.

In the scene of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Christ Child is depicted with proportions that combine anatomical elements of both a child and an adult. The head fits eight times into the total height of the body, the torso is proportionally enlarged, and the vertical line from the chin to the heel is symmetrically divided by the pubic symphysis – a proportion specific to an adult body. Thus, a stylised figure is created, in which the dimensions of childhood and maturity coexist harmoniously.

The halo, with a radius twice that of the head, is slightly displaced downward, intersecting the edge of the left eye. Its lower edge descends to the level of the sternum, at the junction of the clavicles. The width of the shoulders is twice the radius of the head, a proportion frequently used, including in the scene of the Baptism of the Lord painted by Panselinos.[13]

The dimensions of the face coincide with the diameter of the head, and in the Christ Child, the distance between the forehead and the root of the nose

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[12] Sf. Vasile cel Mare, *Scrieri partea întâi. Omilii la Hexaemeron. Omilii la psalmi. Omilii și cuvântări*, Editura IBMBOR, București, 1986, p. 186.
[13] *Ibidem.*

matches the length of the head and the size of the foot. The hand is the same length as the face, extending to the level of the forehead. There is also a tendency to flatten the chest: the ribs no longer follow the natural spherical shape but visually open towards the viewer, suggesting a gesture of offering. The opposite movement of the sternum, although anatomically inaccurate, contributes to the balance of the composition, adhering to a symbolic logic. The gesture of the lowered hand, oriented towards the head, expresses the vocation of sacrifice and offering of the Son of God.

4. Clothed individuals, captured in the dynamics of movement

The garments represented in Byzantine iconography are constructed through line and colour, often covering large portions of the human body and giving the composition its own a rhythmic dynamic, imparting a specific energy to the entire visual ensemble. Colour is shaped and supported by line, which, as G. Kordis states, aims at defining the hypostasis of the Byzantine plastic tradition. Byzantine culture is one of hypostasis: it privileges the communion of energies over the faithful rendering of visible nature, reflecting a reality transfigured by divine grace. Nature is not annulled but preserved and clarified to the extent that it is assumed and perfected by divine energy.[14]

This orientation translates iconographically into a style where movement is not rendered as a temporal succession, but as an expression of inner order, inspired by theology. The continuous movement of creation, understood as an aspiration towards divine peace, is visually expressed through a harmony of forms, in which each element retains its individuality within a dynamic interpenetration.

Particularly, garments become the privileged space for expressing this inner rhythm. The lines that contour them do not merely serve a descriptive function; they impart a hypostasis to the forms – a transition from an inert state to a living one, animated by inner movement. This process transfigures

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[14] Jean-Claude, Larchet *Iconarul şi artistul, trad. de Marinela Bojin*, Editura Sophia, București, 2012, p. 83.

the representation of clothing, which is no longer a mere decorative element but a bearer of visual and theological energy.[15]

The relationships between figures are articulated through a play of energetic correspondences, illustrating the principle of perichoresis – that loving and reciprocal interpenetration of persons, visually expressed here through movements and gestures that seem to communicate with each other. The resulting rhythm organises itself around a centre of interest – a gesture, a gaze – that structures the entire composition and creates an organic dialogue between the icon and the viewer.

The lines that define the garments are clear, precise, modulated and rhythmic, evoking not only the contour but also the inner energies of the figure. Their fluidity is visible in the entire construction of the iconographic image, where forms flow and interpenetrate harmoniously. Specifically, Byzantine iconographers frequently use broken lines, especially in the representation of clothing, to suggest the dynamism of form. The curvature is thus analysed in distinct segments, later reunited in a coherent plastic synthesis. In this context, the broken line becomes an instrument for relating forms and creating rhythm – the supreme goal of the iconographic act.[16]

In many icons, details of garments and objects seem to float, suggesting a release from the laws of gravity. This representation symbolises the transfiguration of matter, which, like humanity, detaches from the determinism of the fallen world and participates in the spiritual reality, illuminated by grace.

Conclusions

This study has highlighted the profound theological, ontological and aesthetic nature of Byzantine iconography, revealing how geometric structures, transfigured anatomical treatment and symbolic composition contribute to the articulation of an integral vision of the human person and the sacralised cosmos. Byzantine iconography does not operate within the

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[15] Dionisie Pseudo-Areopagitul, *Numele divine, teologie Mistică*, Editura Institutul European, Iași, 1993, p. 135.
[16] Georgios Kordis, *Ritmul în pictura bizantină*, Editura Bizantină, București, 2008, p. 35.

logic of mimetic representation but within a symbolic epistemology, where the image does not depict the empirical world but a spiritual reality restored in the order of grace.

The harmony of proportions, the deliberate use of reverse perspective, the flattening of volumes and the abstraction of anatomical details do not reflect a technical deficit but a conscious choice, governed by the requirements of ecclesial anthropology and theological aesthetics. This visual paradigm, oriented towards the eschaton and founded on the dogmatic tradition of the Orthodox Church, confers upon the icon the status of a theophanic space, where the visual form becomes a vehicle of revealed truth.

Sacralised geometry, especially through ratios constructed based on the golden section, does not serve a purely ornamental role but represents the plastic expression of a transfigured cosmological order. This order is not arbitrary but intrinsic to the theological reality that the icon mediates. Thus, between corporality and spirituality, between matter and grace, a visual synthesis is established with pedagogical, liturgical, and contemplative functions.

In conclusion, Byzantine iconography should be understood as an act of visual interpretation of Revelation, where the image not only represents but communicates the sacred, transfiguring perception and converting the gaze into an act of spiritual knowledge. This iconographic hermeneutics, situated at the intersection of art, theology and metaphysics, remains a paradigmatic reference for any contemporary reflection on the status and function of the sacred image.

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Fig. 1 – Jesus Pantocrator, icon on wood dating from the 14th century (1570–1580), in the collection of the National Museum of Art of Romania, Bucharest.

Fig. 2 – Jesus Pantocrator, icon on wood from the 15th century, in the Church of the Monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai (Egypt). Harmonious composition created based on arched modules used for determining the golden ratio.

Fig. 3 – The Martyrdom of Saint John the New of Suceava, exterior fresco on the wall of the Church of the Voroneț Monastery.

Fig. 4 – The Holy Trinity, icon on wood by Andrei Rublev.

Fig. 5 – Skeleton, detail from the exterior painting of the Church of the Sucevița Monastery.

Fig. 6 – Eucharistic Sacrifice, fresco in the Church of Panagia Olympiotissa, Greece.

THE THEOLOGICAL AND ICONOGRAPHIC DIMENSION OF CHRIST'S REPRESENTATION IN ORTHODOXY

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Abstract:

This text presents a systematic analysis of the icon in the Orthodox theological tradition, emphasising the dogmatic fundamentals of its veneration and the development of a Christological iconographic typology. Starting from the central premise of the Incarnation of the Son of God – the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15) – the icon is understood as a visible manifestation of a transcendent reality, being theologically legitimate by virtue of the eternal Word assuming human nature.

The work outlines the essential distinctions between latria and dulia, according to synodal and patristic teachings, and broadly reconstructs the historical course of the iconoclastic controversies that led to the formulation of a coherent ecclesiology of the sacred image. On an iconological level, the study proposes a thematic and functional classification of Christ's representations in Orthodox iconography, highlighting the dogmatic, liturgical and aesthetic aspects of sacred images. From the Pantocrator icon and Christ's archpriest representations to the Passion cycle and the illustration of the Holy Trinity, the approach aims to articulate a theological vision of the image, in which the aesthetic dimension is inseparable from its soteriological and ecclesial content.

In conclusion, the Orthodox icon is valued as a visual expression of Revelation, rooted in Tradition and inscribed in the liturgical dynamics of ecclesial communion.

Keywords

Orthodox icon, iconic theology, Christ Pantocrator, Christological typology, iconoclastic controversy, Byzantine sacred art.

Introduction

The foundation of the icon's presence in Orthodox theology lies in the ontological reality of the Incarnation of the Son of God, according to the evangelical assertion: "And the Word became flesh" (John 1:14). Since God

the Father is invisible and beyond any representation, iconography cannot depict Him. Instead, the Son, the eternal Word of the Father, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, incarnated, becoming truly human without ceasing to be truly God. Thus, He can be iconographically represented, as He assumed visibility, making Himself accessible to human senses. In this sense, the icon is the theological expression of the Incarnation, and Christ, *the image of the invisible God* (Colossians 1:15), constitutes the ontological model of any iconic representation.

The icon is characterised by a defining complexity, uniting archaeological, historical, theological, aesthetic-artistic and pedagogical dimensions. It does not belong exclusively to the realm of visual art but is fundamentally a constitutive element of Orthodox liturgical worship. Organically inserted into the theological and spiritual heritage of the Church, the icon joins holy relics, sacred books, liturgical vessels and other sacred objects that configure ecclesial space and life.[1]

Therefore, the icon cannot be reduced to the status of an ornamental object or a simple figurative representation. It constitutes a means of visual and spiritual communion between the believer and Christ, the One iconically represented. In the case of saints' representations, the icon does not reproduce realistic or photographic features but transfigures the face of the sanctified person, suggesting their participation in the eschatological reality of the Kingdom of God. Thus, the icon is a visual theophany, a space of grace-filled presence and encounter between man and God.[2]

Considering that the icon depicts the transfigured (perfected) face of man – that is, the image of one who has been deemed worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven – Orthodox iconographic art is distinguished by a series of defining features:

- Firstly, the iconic portrait of the represented saint is characterised by ascetic features, in evident contrast to the carnal realism specific to profane art. The predominance of elongated lines, large and penetrating eyes, a thin

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[1] Vladimir Lossky, *Teologia mistică a Bisericii de Răsărit*, Editura Anastasia, București, 1993, p. 89.
[2] *Ibidem.*

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nose and fine lips are visual expressions of the interiorisation and spiritualisation of the human being.

- The background of the icon, in the case of frescoes, is often blue, a colour symbolising the Kingdom of Heaven through its depth and transparency. Yellow is also frequently used, referring to divine light, to the imperishable and heavenly radiance.[3]

- The nature represented in the icon is also subjected to an iconographic transfiguration process. Mountains are depicted in a stylised manner, with a wavy inclination evoking the image of waves, constituting a visual allusion to the prophetic passage from Isaiah:

> *"In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain."* (Isaiah 40:3-4).

This visual representation symbolically reflects the process of transformation and spiritual preparation invoked by the scriptural text.

The cult of holy icons, as known today in the Orthodox tradition, was progressively constituted following a long process of theological and liturgical clarification, marked by numerous doctrinal controversies. The first signs of these tensions appeared in 720, when Patriarch Germanus I of Constantinople directly intervened in a dispute involving two Orthodox bishops from Asia Minor: Constantine of Nacolia (a locality in the Phrygia region) and Thomas of Claudiopolis. The two clerics rejected the practice of venerating holy icons, refusing to bow before them, considering this gesture equivalent to a form of idolatry. Thomas, in particular, went as far as removing icons from the churches under his jurisdiction, while Constantine emphasised that worship should be addressed exclusively to God.[4]

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[3] Dr. Bogdan Botezatu, *Cultul divin și imaginea. Teologia și funcția liturgică a icoanei*, Editura Andreiana, Sibiu, 2013, pp. 70-71.
[4] Leslie Brubaker, *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm*, Editura Bristol Classical Pres, London 2012, pp. 22-23.

In response to this challenge, Patriarch Germanus reacted through a series of epistles in which he defended the tradition of venerating icons, rigorously emphasising the distinction between idolatry – understood as the illegitimate worship of creatures – and the veneration accorded to icons, which has a relative character and refers not to the material of the representation, but to the prototype of the saint or sacred event illustrated. Germanus argued that this form of visual veneration, known in Greek as *proskynesis* 'adoration', does not contravene biblical commandments but is an integral part of the Church's tradition and a pedagogical and spiritual means of bringing believers closer to heavenly realities.[5]

This theological dispute was to open a broad doctrinal and political conflict within the Byzantine Empire, known as iconoclasm, which spanned over a century and had two distinct phases. The iconoclastic crisis was definitively concluded only in 843, with the official restoration of the veneration of icons, a moment celebrated in the Orthodox Church by the establishment of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, a feast that underscores the victory of the true faith over heresies.[6]

If desired, the analysis can continue with a detailed presentation of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, held in Nicaea in 787, as well as the dogmatic implications of the decisions adopted by this authoritative body of the Church.

One of the most significant theological aspects of this council was the reaffirmation of the legitimacy of the veneration of icons and the articulation of a solid dogmatic justification for their veneration. According to the synodal decision, the veneration directed towards an icon is not addressed to the material from which it is made – wood, pigment, colour or other materials – but to the prototype, that is, the person represented in the image. Thus, the veneration of the icon is not idolatry but a visible expression of incarnate faith, in accordance with the Christological reality of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

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[5] Shay Eshel, *The Concept of the Elect Nation in Byzantium*, Editura Brill, Leiden, 2018, pp. 77-78.

[6] Leslie Brubaker, *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm*, Editura Bristol Classical Pres, London 2012, pp. 23-24.

This understanding was vehemently contested by Emperor Leo III the Isaurian, who, although evoked by Patriarch Germanus as a *pious and Christ-loving emperor*, known for having erected an iconographic representation of the apostles, prophets and the Holy Cross in front of the imperial palace – a gesture interpreted by the patriarch as a public testimony of his iconodule faith – would later adopt an opposing position.

In 727, Leo III officially initiated a campaign against the veneration of icons, which he considered incompatible with the authenticity of the Christian faith. In 730, in the context of intensifying disputes between imperial authority and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, he deposed Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople – a convinced defender of the veneration of icons – and replaced him with a patriarch favourable to iconoclasm.

The iconoclastic policy reached a climax in 754 when his son, Emperor Constantine V, convened a local council at Hieria. This council, composed in the absence of representatives from the Church of Rome and the other Eastern Patriarchates, proclaimed iconoclasm as the official orthodox doctrine, explicitly anathematising the veneration of holy icons. However, this position was firmly rejected by both the Church of Rome and the Church of Jerusalem, which remained faithful to the iconodule tradition transmitted from the early centuries of Christianity.[7]

In contrast to the iconoclasts – opponents of the veneration of holy icons, supported mainly by the political-military authority of the empire – were the iconodules, promoters of the veneration of icons, coming especially from the ranks of monks, clergy and theologians. The iconoclastic controversy, which generated profound theological and ecclesial turmoil, was officially resolved in 787 by the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, convened at Nicaea, which reaffirmed the legitimacy of the veneration of icons in the Orthodox tradition. The full consecration of this decision took place in 843, with the council convened in Constantinople, which ordered the definitive restoration of icons in churches. The event, which took place on 11 March, a Sunday, was later consecrated under the

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[7] *Ibidem.*, p. 24

name of the *Sunday of Orthodoxy*. In memory of this decisive moment for the theological identity of Orthodoxy, the Church established that the first Sunday of Great Lent be dedicated to the triumph of the true faith, under the title of the Sunday of Orthodoxy.[8]

Based on the teachings formulated by Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople and Saint John of Damascus, Orthodox theology articulated a fundamental distinction between worship (latreia) and veneration (douleia), a distinction that has major theological consequences in the edification and structuring of the Church's cult. In this conceptual framework, the Romanian liturgist Ene Braniște emphasises that, although the external forms through which the worship of God and the veneration of saints are manifested may seem similar in the liturgical praxis, they are delimited by an essential theological difference. Thus, "although, in practice, both the worship of God and the veneration of saints are generally expressed through the same external forms, there is, nevertheless, an essential difference between the worship we give to God, on the one hand, and that given to angels, saints, relics and their icons, on the other hand."

To accurately convey this difference, theological language uses the concepts of latreia – designating the worship of adoration, expressing unconditional submission to God, the absolute Master – and dulia, designating the veneration accorded to sanctified creatures. Regarding the veneration of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, whose worthiness places her above all saints, this is designated by the term hyperdulia, indicating a superior form of veneration or worship.

This theological hierarchy of worship rigorously expresses the ontological distinction between Creator and creation, even when it comes to beings deified by grace, such as saints or angels. It faithfully reflects the dogmatic balance of Orthodoxy between legitimate veneration, circumscribed to the created condition, and worship reserved exclusively for God, the One in essence and triune in Persons.[9]

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[8] *Ibidem*., pp. 34-47.
[9] Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Ene Braniște, *Liturgica Generală*, vol. I, Editura București, 2015, p. 91.

Rightly, worship (latreia) – the supreme form of veneration – is reserved exclusively for God, in His capacity as the Creator of man, whom He created "in His own image" (Genesis 1:27). The veneration accorded to saints is grounded in the work of divine grace manifested in their existence, as well as in their free and conscious response to God's call, which makes them worthy of the spiritual gifts received. Therefore, the veneration of saints does not affect the theocentric nature of worship but, on the contrary, enhances it, as in the veneration of saints, the work of God in their lives is recognised and glorified. In this sense, Father Ene Braniște specifies: "The veneration of saints, therefore, refers to God Himself, Who is wonderful in His Saints" (Psalm 67:36). Thus, God remains both the object and the ultimate goal of the entire Christian worship, which originates in Him and is essentially oriented towards Him.[10]

The act of worship offered to icons by believers does not refer to the material itself – wood, canvas, stone or the artistic value of the representation – as such an approach would equate to idolatry. The veneration of the icon is directed not at the material support of the image but at the holy person represented, that is, the prototype. In this sense, the veneration transfers from the representation to the one depicted, and through the cult offered to the saint, God, as the source of holiness, is glorified. This theological conception is clearly and profoundly expressed in one of the liturgical prayers of the Orthodox Church: "We honour Your saints, who are Your image and likeness; and by honouring them, we honour and glorify You, as the original image."[11]

The bimillennial tradition of the Church attests to the existence of the first icons during the earthly life of the Saviour and the immediate period following, expressing the profound conviction that Christian revelation is not limited to the verbal dimension but also involves the visible manifestation of the Image of God, through which His likeness is made known.

As theologian Vladimir Lossky notes, iconography constitutes a true path of theology, a visual language with theological value, meant to express

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[10] *Ibidem*., p. 92.
[11] *Ibidem*, p. 92.

ultimate truths about God. The icon, in this understanding, is consubstantial with the very identity of Christianity from its origins, as the Christian faith is the revelation not only of the divine Word but also of the divine Image.

Throughout history, the preaching of Christianity has been realised through a harmonious articulation of word and image, both playing a fundamental role in transmitting and internalising the evangelical message. Regarding the iconographic representation of the Saviour, it progressively took shape. In the early centuries of Christianity, there was no particular interest in directly representing the face of Jesus Christ; instead, His presence was suggested through sacred symbols – such as the cross, the Paschal lamb or the image of the Good Shepherd – which expressed, in a coded language, profound theological realities.[12]

In the context of theological debates and the consolidation of the Christian iconographic canon, the Quinisext Council of the 7th century established the replacement of the symbolic representation of the Lamb with the anthropomorphic image of Christ. This decision marked a turning point in the history of sacred art, inaugurating the tradition of figurative representation of the Saviour.

The image of Christ crystallised over time into a recognisable *historical type*, characterised by long hair parted in the middle, a short beard, large eyes and a serene expression – a portrait that became normative in Byzantine and post-Byzantine iconography.

Depending on the iconographic theme in which it appears and its compositional role, the representation of Christ has differentiated into several typologies. Just as the visual discourse of an Orthodox church can be structured into dogmatic, liturgical and festal registers, so too can the iconographic representations of the Saviour be classified according to the following criteria:

- Dogmatic – Christ Pantocrator, Christ Archpriest, the Holy Trinity, the Last Judgement;

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[12] Dumitru A. Vanca, *Icoană şi Cateheză*, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba-Iulia, 2005, pp. 261-263.

- Liturgical – Christ in the chalice, on the disk, *the Man of Sorrows*, the Angelic Liturgy, the Communion of the Apostles, Christ the Vine;

- Festal – representations related to the great feasts: the Nativity, the Baptism, the Presentation, the Transfiguration, the Resurrection of Lazarus, the Entry into Jerusalem, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Assurance of Thomas, the Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

Another complementary classification scheme organises Christological iconography according to the theological emphasis of the representations:

- Christ in Glory – Archpriest, Angel of Great Counsel, Ancient of Days, Emmanuel, Judge (Deisis, Last Judgement);

- Christ Sacrificed – in the chalice, on the disk, the Man of Sorrows, Christ the Vine, as well as the entire iconographic cycle of the Passion: the Last Supper, the Washing of the Feet, the Prayer in Gethsemane, the Arrest, the Crucifixion, the Descent from the Cross, the Entombment;

- Christ of the Feasts and Miracles – representations related to theophanies and miraculous deeds.

Since none of these schemes manage to exhaustively encompass the entire complexity of the Saviour's iconography, the selection of analysed images was made based on theological, iconographic and compositional themes and issues, also considering formal criteria.

Thus, the iconographic corpus is structured into six thematic categories:

- Christ Pantocrator;

- Christ in Glory – Archpriest, Deisis;

- Particular Representations – Emmanuel, Angel of Great Counsel, Ancient of Days, Mandylion, the Sleepless Eye (the Reclining Child);

- Liturgical Christ – in the chalice, on the disk, the Man of Sorrows, the Angelic Liturgy, the Communion of the Apostles, the Vine;

- The Passion Cycle – the Crucifixion, the Descent from the Cross, the Entombment, the Lamentation of the Saviour.

The illustration of these themes is done through examples of icons, frescoes, mosaics and other forms of mural art, covering a broad chronology: from the sixth century to the eighteenth century for Byzantine and Byzantine-tradition art, extended in some cases to the post-Byzantine period, up to the nineteenth century.

1. Jesus Pantocrator

The iconographic representation of Christ as Pantocrator is relatively late compared to early Christian iconography, which predominantly featured images of the Saviour depicted humbly, in the form of the Good Shepherd. The established composition of the Pantocrator took shape in a canonical form only around the 12th century, becoming a central element of the Byzantine iconographic programme.

This representation is typically placed in the dome of the nave, where Christ dominates the liturgical space as Judge and Lord of the world. In parallel, numerous portable icons depicting the same typology were created: Christ is depicted with His right hand in the gesture of blessing, while His left hand holds the Holy Gospel. Significant biblical verses are often inscribed on the cover or pages of the Gospel, depending on the desired dogmatic or liturgical emphasis. Among these, notable formulations include:

> *Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. (Matthew 25:34), I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die. (John 11:25)*

or

> *I desire mercy, not sacrifice. (Matthew 9:13).*

The formulations change, therefore, depending on the emphasis placed on the Christological attribute – Judge, Giver of Life or Merciful.[13]

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[13] Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, Editura Crux Press, 2023, p. 26.

Formally, the face of the Saviour is characterised by idealised features: a mature man with an elongated face, wide-open and penetrating eyes, a straight and thin nose, lips covered by a moustache and a carefully stylised beard, in harmony with the entire portrait. His hair, long and wavy, falls in curls over His left shoulder, and His garments consist of a dark red tunic and a deep blue himation, colours laden with theological symbolism. The cruciform halo surrounding Christ's head typically contains the letters O, Ω, N (*He Who Is*), and the cross inscribed within it indicates His divine and sacrificial nature.[14]

Supporting this iconographic typology, two paradigmatic examples can be mentioned: the Christ Pantocrator icon from the 6th century, located at Saint Catherine's Monastery in Sinai – one of the oldest preserved representations of this type – and the Christ Euergetes icon from the 13th century, conserved in the church in Boyana[15], an eloquent example of the refinement of post-Byzantine art.

Fig. 1. *Christ Pantocrator*, encaustic, 6th century, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai. *Christ Euergetes*, fresco, 13th century, Boyana.

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[14] *Ibidem*, p. 27.
[15] https://cdn11.bigcommerce.com/s-8npwm6ltcj/images/stencil/1024x1393/products/1743/ 2462/pantocrator-100-1__83153.1722539493.jpg?c=1?imbypass=on, 10.04.2025, 10:10 p.m.

2. Jesus in Glory

In the representation of *The Lord of Glory*, Christ is depicted seated, blessing with His right hand, while holding the open Holy Gospel with His left. He is surrounded by cherubim, and His feet rest on winged wheels, evoking the vision of the prophet Ezekiel. In the four corners of the composition, the symbols of the four evangelists are depicted, in accordance with the images from the Book of Ezekiel and Revelation.

The entire scene presents itself as a theophany – a divine vision – an impression accentuated by the carefully constructed chromatic harmony.[16]

The icon with the theme of *The Lord of Glory* belongs to the renowned iconographer Andrei Rublev, who created several variants on this theme. One of these, dating from the 15th century, shows Christ seated on the Throne of Glory. In the background, three stylised geometric shapes can be distinguished: a rhombus and a rectangle with slightly concave sides, along with an oval in sober and dark shades, on the surface of which the face of the Saviour is outlined. He is dressed in a yellowish-brown chiton and himation, over which the drawing in darker tones is discreetly profiled.

Fig. 2. Andrei Rublev, *Christ in Glory*, tempera, 15th century, Vladimir.[17]

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[16] *Ibidem*, p. 28.
[17] https://www.artchive.com/artwork/christ-in-majesty-andrei-rublev-1408-vladimiro-aleksandrovskoye-alexandrovka-aleksandrovskoe-russian-federation/, 10.04.2025, 11:08 p.m.

Christ the Archpriest

The icon of Christ the Archpriest – also known as Jesus the Great Archpriest – is a relatively late theological and artistic expression in the iconographic tradition of the Orthodox Church. This representation emerged in the 16th century within the Cretan School, which, through an inspired synthesis of Byzantine and Western influences, produced a series of creations of profound expressiveness and spiritual refinement.

Iconographically, Christ is depicted either in a bust or standing position, oriented frontally towards the viewer, in an attitude of dignity and divine authority. He wears the liturgical vestments of an Orthodox hierarch: the sticharion, cuffs, epitrachelion, belt, sakkos, omophorion and mitre, the latter adorned with pearls symbolising heavenly glory. In His hands, He holds the open Gospel, on the pages of which two significant fragments may be rendered: *My kingdom is not of this world* (John 18:36), emphasising the transcendence of God's Kingdom, and *Take, eat; this is My Body* (Matthew 26:26), referring to the institution of the Holy Eucharist, central to the Church's liturgical life.

The scriptural foundation of this representation is found particularly in the Epistle to the Hebrews by Saint Paul the Apostle, a text of remarkable theological density, in which Christ is revealed as the supreme Archpriest of the New Covenant. The Apostle offers several revealing formulations, including:

> *A merciful and faithful high priest in service to God (Hebrews 2:17), A great high priest who has ascended into heaven (Hebrews 4:14), A high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 6:20), and A high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven* (Hebrews 8:1).

These statements highlight the uniqueness and superiority of Christ's priestly ministry, which fulfils and perfects all *Old Testament* typologies.

In some iconographic variants, the icon is accompanied by inscriptions extracted from the First Epistle to Timothy, in which the same Apostle proclaims the eschatological sovereignty of the Saviour: *"King of*

kings and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:14-15). This formulation emphasises not only Christ's absolute authority but also the kingly dimension of His priesthood.

The icon of Christ the Archpriest is in close theological and liturgical correspondence with another important representation: the icon of the Divine Liturgy, in which Christ is depicted as both Sacrificer and Sacrifice, communing the Holy Apostles with His Body and Blood. Together, these two icons visually convey the mystery of the Eucharist and show the continuity of the heavenly liturgy in the life of the Church on earth, where Christ is revealed to be, in a real and permanent way, the eternal Archpriest, serving from the heavenly altar and reconciling the world with God.[18]

In current iconography and liturgical practice, the icon of Christ the Archpriest is often placed on the episcopal throne, symbolising the unseen but real presence of the Saviour in the very work of leading and serving the Church. This placement has profound theological and sacramental significance: at the moment of a bishop's ordination, the icon reminds that the one called to the episcopal rank is not ordained solely by the gesture of another bishop, but first by the unseen hand of Christ, Who works through the visible hand of the consecrating hierarch. Thus, Christ remains the Archpriest par excellence, the One who confers grace and enacts apostolic succession in the Church.

From an ecclesiological and pastoral perspective, the icon of Christ the Archpriest serves as the supreme model for all those called to serve at the altar, whether as bishops or priests. It expresses not only the sacred authority of the ministry but also its deeply pastoral and sacrificial dimension. The archpriest and presbyter are called to reflect, in their own ministry, the image of the eternal High Priest – in humility, self-giving, spiritual discernment and tireless care for the salvation of the faithful, members of the great Body of Christ's Church.

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[18] Constantine Cavarnos, *Ghid de iconografie bizantină*, Editura Sophia, București, 2005, p. 177.

Fig. 3. *Christ the Great Archpriest*, tempera, 16th century, Athens.[19]

3. Christ Emmanuel

The iconographic representation of the Saviour Jesus Christ as Emmanuel finds its theological and scriptural foundation in the inspired account of Saint Matthew the Evangelist, who faithfully reiterates the messianic prophecy of the prophet Isaiah, stating:

> *"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us)"* (Matthew 1:23; cf. Isaiah 7:14).

This prophetic formulation is not merely a simple anticipation of the event of the Incarnation but essentially encapsulates the entire theology of

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[19]   https://www.dreamstime.com/ancient-icon-christ-great-high-priest-church-holy-trinity-corfu-greece-th-cent-cretan-workshop-ancient-icon-image184622400, 12.04.2025, 07:08 p.m.

God's descent into human history. By assuming human nature, the Word of God becomes in solidarity with all fallen creation, while remaining perfectly and unchangeably true God. Thus, the name Emmanuel profoundly and concisely expresses the ontological reality of the union of the two natures in the Person of Christ, underpinning the Church's Christological doctrine.

In Orthodox iconography, this theological dimension of the Incarnation is translated into a visual representation with distinct features: Christ is depicted as a young man without a beard, with a gentle and luminous face, symbolising purity, innocence and the presence of uncreated grace. This representation, known as Christ Emmanuel, differs from the more solemn and authoritative image of Christ Pantocrator, which expresses the dominion and omnipotence of the Son of God. The representation of Emmanuel emphasises God's closeness to humanity and the full assumption of the human condition in its original fragility.

In the sacred architecture of some Orthodox churches, the image of Christ Emmanuel is placed in the small dome of the diaconicon – a liturgical space designated for the preparation of the Eucharistic Gifts – surrounded by the figures of the Old Testament prophets. This iconographic placement underscores the revelatory continuity between the Old and New Covenants, highlighting that Christ is the perfect fulfilment of the ancient messianic promises. In this context, the image of Emmanuel becomes a point of convergence between liturgical symbolism, prophetic tradition and the theological reality of the Incarnation.

A frequently encountered iconographic variant depicts Christ Emmanuel holding an unfolded scroll (also known in the Eastern tradition as a *svitok*), on which is written a verse of profound theological and messianic value, taken from the Gospel of Luke: "*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor*" (Lukes 4:18). This passage, spoken by Christ in the synagogue of Nazareth, is a solemn declaration of His prophetic identity and His soteriological mission. By assuming this prophecy, Christ reveals Himself as God's Anointed One, sent to bring salvation and healing to all humanity, beginning with the marginalised, the poor and the suffering.

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The Orthodox Church has not only preserved the iconographic representation of Christ Emmanuel but has also integrated this theological image into its entire liturgical and hymnographic universe. Thus, during the Sunday Vespers, in Tone 1 of the Octoechos, we encounter a sticheron with a profound meditative and doxological character, reflecting the salvific dimension of Christ's presence in the world: *Behold, Christ our Saviour, on the Cross, took upon Himself our sins and, by killing death, granted us new life, raising Adam and all his descendants, as a lover of mankind.*[20]

This poetic-liturgical composition clearly expresses the centrality of the Cross in the iconomy of salvation, as well as the paschal victory of life over death. The sticheron emphasises the universal dimension of Christ's salvific work, in which the mystery of the Incarnation is inseparable from the mystery of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, and the image of Emmanuel attains the fullness of its theological significance – God Who becomes present in the world, in history and in the life of every believer.

Fig. 4. *Christ Emmanuel*, fresco, 16th century, Holy Mount Athos.[21]

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[20] *Ibidem.*

[21] https://russianicons.wordpress.com/2018/02/07/an-unusual-jesus-text/, 12.04.2025, 07:20 p.m.

4. Christ the Angel of Great Counsel

The iconographic composition presents Christ in a symbolic form of profound theological density, as a young man with angelic features, endowed with outspread wings, in an attitude of blessing with His right hand, while holding a phylactery in His left hand – an element that refers to the prophetic function and the revelation of the Word. On this phylactery, the text is sometimes represented: "*I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me,*" a doctrinally significant expression that evokes both the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father and His missionary dimension in the iconomy of salvation.

This representation belongs to an iconography established in the Eastern tradition under the name "Christ – Angel of Great Counsel" (Ὁ Ἄγγελος τῆς Μεγάλης Βουλῆς), which draws on a prophetic expression from the book of the prophet Isaiah (9:6 LXX) and offers a visual synthesis of the doctrine of the Incarnation. In this context, the term *angel* does not designate a spiritual creature from the angelic hosts but refers to the role of "sent one" (Gk. *angelos*, in the original sense of 'messenger') that the Son of God assumes in the plan of salvation, as the Revealer of the divine will and as the Archpriest of the new creation.

The iconography of the Angel of Great Counsel is based on a solid scriptural foundation, bringing together the prophetic dimension of the Old Testament with its fulfilment in the New Testament. In the book of the prophet Isaiah, the Messiah is announced with the words:

> "*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*" (Isaiah 9:6 LXX).

This prophecy is an anticipation of the Incarnation of the Logos and the full revelation of the divine plan. In the same sense, the Gospel of John emphasises the progress of divine revelation and the transition from symbolic language to the direct manifestation of divine truth:

"Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father." (John 16:25).

The iconographic representation of Christ as the Angel of Great Counsel thus combines artistic expression with theological reflection, in a form that visually expresses the fundamental dogmatic truths of the Christian faith. It functions not only as a decorative or symbolic element but as a true *theology in image*, rooted in the patristic tradition and the liturgical spirituality of the Church. Through this image, the meaning of the Incarnation is expressed in a condensed and profound way: the Son, sent by the Father, comes into the world to reveal the divine will to humanity, to restore communion with God and to bring about the fulfilment of the plan of salvation, determined *before the foundation of the world* (Ephesians 1:4).

Fig. 5. *Christ the Angel of Great Counsel,* fresco, 13th century, Church of Saint Clement, Ohrid.[22]

5. Christ the Ancient of Days

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[22]   https://orizontespress.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/6-Ο-Μεγάλης-Βουλής-Άγγελος-Μονή-αγίου-Κλήμεντος-Αχρίδα1295.jpg , 12.04.2025, 07:25 p.m.

The prophetic text from the Book of Daniel states:

> *"And the Ancient of Days took his seat; His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of His head was white like wool." (Daniel 7:9).*

This theophanic image, laden with apophatic symbolism, has been interpreted in the patristic tradition as a prefiguration of Christ in His divine glory.

In Byzantine iconography, this representation is depicted as an elderly man with white hair and beard, wearing a cruciform halo – an iconographic element reserved exclusively for the Saviour Christ. The facial expression in this representation is similar to that found in the Christ Pantocrator icon, emphasising the theological and visual continuity between the different modes of representing the Incarnate Logos.

Great Fathers of the Church from the early Christian centuries, such as Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Athanasius the Great and Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, supported the identification of the *Ancient of Days* with Christ, the Son of God. This interpretation is based on the teaching about the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father and the attributes of eternity and immutability of the divine nature, attributes that transcend time and space. In this theological logic, the appellation *Ancient of Days* designates not a biological age but an ontological reality of divine eternity, in which Christ is present as the uncreated Logos, "*without beginning and without end.*"

Thus, the prophetic image from Daniel is organically integrated into the theology of the icon, where the visible image leads to the unseen reality, and the venerable aspect of the One represented emphasises not decrepitude but divine eternity and glory. The iconographic representation of Christ as the *Ancient of Days* becomes, therefore, a visual expression of a profound theological intuition: that the Son of God is eternally with the Father, light from light, true God from true God, as professed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.[23]

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[23] Constantine Cavarnos, *Ghid de iconografie bizantină*, Editura Sophia, București, 2005, p. 174.
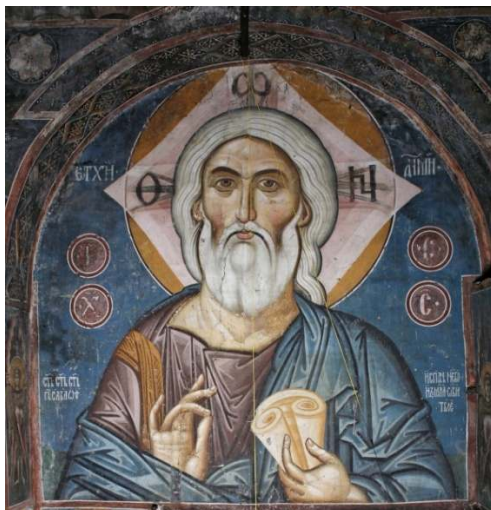
Fig. 6. *Jesus Christ the Ancient of Days, 14th century, Patriarchate of Peć.*[24]

Fig. 7. *Christ the Ancient of Days*, fresco, 16th century, Învierea Domnului Monastery, Sucevița.[25]

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[24]

https://www.blagofund.org/Archives/Pec/Narthex/Pictures/EasternNave/3rdBay/EastWall/IMG_3645.html, 12.04.2025, 08:34 p.m.
[25] https://dragusanul.ro/jupiter-pictat-drept-hristos-la-sucevita/, 12.04.2025, 08:41 p.m.

6. The Holy Mandylion

The iconographic representation of the Saviour's Face with a cruciform halo – inscribed with the Greek letters O ῶΝ (*He Who Is*) – expresses the reality of God's eternal and timeless existence. This formulation directly refers to the revelation of the divine name in the Old Testament (*I am who I am* – Exodus 3:14), while simultaneously reaffirming the divinity of Christ, consubstantial with the Father, as professed by the Orthodox tradition.

The physiognomy of the Saviour, as depicted in icons, is distinguished by an ideal harmony, reflecting not only physical beauty but especially a remarkable inner spiritual strength. This inner light, often described in the writings of the Holy Fathers, corresponds to the Taboric light seen by the apostles at the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, not Sinai, where the revelation of the Old Covenant took place. Thus, the icon becomes a window to the transfiguration of created reality and a means of access to the spiritual vision of divine glory.

In the work *The Meaning of Icons*, authors Leonid Uspensky and Vladimir Lossky refer to the Holy Mandylion under the names of the *Holy Face* or the *Holy Image*. This icon, also known as the Mandylion, presents only the Face of the Saviour, without other anatomical details such as the neck or shoulders. The long hair, falling in curls at the bottom, and the beard – sometimes represented simply, other times bifurcated – contribute to creating a sacred image, distanced from naturalistic representation. The features are rendered schematically, deliberately non-naturalistic, to express the transfigured reality of Christ's Person and to avoid any association with a purely carnal representation.

With the decisions formulated at the Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicaea, 787), the Mandylion icon gained a privileged place in the Church's cult, being solemnly integrated into the celebration of the Sunday of Orthodoxy. On this day, the Church celebrates the definitive triumph of icons over iconoclasm and reaffirms the essential role of sacred images in the spiritual life of believers. Thus, the Holy Face becomes not only a visual symbol of Christ's

presence but also a theological testimony of the Incarnation and the possibility of seeing God's glory through transfigured matter.[26]

Fig. 8. *Mandylion*, Visoki Dečani monastery, Kosovo, Serbia.[27]

7.　　The Crucifixion of the Lord

Fig. 9. *The Crucifixion,* fresco, 13th century, Church of St. Mary Peribleptos, Ohrid.[28]

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[26] Leonid Uspensky, Vladimir Lossky, *Călăuziri în lumea icoanei*, Editura Sophia, București, 2011, p. 98.
[27] https://full-of-grace-and-truth.blogspot.com/2010/08/holy-mandylion-napkin-of-christ-not.html, 12.04.2025, 14:00 p.m.
[28] https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/16/Crucifixion%2C_II_Half_of_XIII_Century%2C_St_Mary_Perivleptos_Church%2C_Ohrid_Icon_Gallery.jpg, 12.04.2025, 09:40 p.m.

The Feast of the Crucifixion of the Lord occupies a central place in the spirituality and theology of the Orthodox Church, being celebrated on Holy and Great Friday, the day before the Resurrection of the Lord. This day is dedicated to commemorating the Passion and death on the Cross of the Saviour Jesus Christ and is characterised by a special liturgical order, deeply marked by solemnity and reflection. Being a non-liturgical day, the Divine Liturgy is not celebrated, and complete fasting (black fast) is recommended until late in the evening, thus emphasising the character of liturgical mourning. Additionally, on this day, the Vespers Service, during which the Holy Epitaph is brought out, and the Service of the Lamentations of the Lord, which symbolically evokes the burial of Christ, are officiated.

The biblical foundation of the Crucifixion representation is solidly anchored in the Gospel texts, particularly in the accounts from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Thus, the Gospel of Matthew offers a complex presentation of the moments accompanying the Saviour's death: *At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split* (Matthew 27:51), followed by the mention of an extraordinary phenomenon with profound eschatological significance: *And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many* (Matthew 27:52-53). The reaction of the Roman centurion and those who were guarding, confessing the divinity of the Crucified One, reinforces the greatness of the event: *Truly this was the Son of God!* (Matthew 27:54).

The Gospel of Mark maintains narrative sobriety but captures significant details, such as the act of mockery: *And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His head* (Mark 15:17), highlighting the tragic irony of messianic kingship. Luke's account adds theological depth, emphasising both the humanity and divinity of Christ. At the place called *Calvary*, He is crucified between two thieves, one of whom attains salvation through a simple yet sincere prayer: *Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise* (Luke 23:43).

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Also in this gospel, the prayer of forgiveness uttered by Christ is recorded:

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34), as well as the disturbing cosmic phenomenon: "the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two" (Luke 23:45).

All this suggests the cosmic and salvific significance of His death.

The Gospel of John, without contradicting the synoptic accounts, provides additional theological details, emphasising the fulfilment of the Scriptures and Christ's sovereignty in His own sacrifice. Overall, the gospel accounts configure a complex, theologically profound image of the event of the crucifixion, which constitutes the foundation of the Christian faith.

From an iconographic perspective, the scene of the Crucifixion is frequently represented in the nave of the church, in visible places for the faithful, precisely to express the centrality of the Cross in the economy of salvation. The icon is not just an artistic illustration but a theological testimony, a call to contemplation and spiritual participation in Christ's sacrifice. It visually synthesises the salvific truth that through the Cross comes joy to the whole world and offers the Christian the essential image of sacrificial love that leads to eternal life.

In conclusion, the Crucifixion of the Lord is not just a historical event but a permanently current soteriological reality. It is found at the centre of the Church's liturgical and dogmatic life, as a testimony of perfect divine love, through which humanity is called to reconciliation with God and to attain salvation.

Conclusions

The theological and iconological approach undertaken in this work has aimed to highlight the ontological, dogmatic and aesthetic status of the icon in the tradition of the Orthodox Church, rooted in the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. From the perspective of Orthodox faith, the icon is not merely an artistic expression but a privileged means of communion with divine reality, a visual epiphany of grace and an authentic expression of Revelation. The fact that the Son, the eternal Logos of the Father, assumed human nature and became visible, legitimises His representation in

iconography. Thus, the icon of Christ is not a symbolic fiction but a depiction of the reality of the Incarnation, a visual affirmation of Christological dogma.

Through the icon, the Church professes a profoundly Christological vision of creation, in which matter is transfigured and becomes a vehicle of divine presence. This conception is validated by the entire patristic and synodal tradition, especially through the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, which clearly formulated the fundamental distinction between *latria* – worship reserved exclusively for God – and *dulia* – relative veneration of saints and their representations. In this framework, the icon is not worshipped for itself but honoured in relation to the prototype represented, in a gesture of recognition of God's work in history and in the lives of His saints.

The analysis of the iconographic typologies of the Saviour, from the Pantocrator icon to liturgical and eschatological representations, has highlighted the complexity of the Orthodox visual discourse, which never separates the artistic form from the dogmatic and liturgical content. The icon is thus an act of visual theology, an expression of revealed truth that participates in the sacramental dynamic of the Church. Each iconic image carries theological meaning, expressing in visual language the truths of faith, the transfigured reality of man and the cosmos, as well as the eschatological tension of the Church oriented towards the Kingdom of God.

In this sense, the Orthodox icon is a true *locus theologicus* – a place of manifestation and deepening of theology – being at the same time a testimony of the continuity of Tradition and an expression of a beauty that is not aesthetically autonomous but an irradiation of salvific truth. The beauty of the icon is not decorative but spiritual; it does not seduce the senses but elevates the soul towards the unseen reality it symbolises and makes present.

Therefore, the icon can only be understood in relation to the liturgical life, dogmatic teaching and mystical experience of the Church. It is an integral part of the Orthodox vision of the world, of man and of salvation, being at the same time a means of contemplation, a pedagogical instrument, a testimony of faith and a path to sanctification. In the icon, man does not contemplate a static image but participates in a living, transfigured reality that introduces him into the economy of grace and divine love.

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Thus, the beauty of the unseen face, revealed in the mystery of the icon, becomes a permanent call to deification, an invitation to the transfiguration of vision and existence, in the light of the One who became man so that man might become a partaker of His eternal glory.

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THE INTRICACY OF FAMILIAL STRUCTURES AND THE NOTION OF FATHERING IN CONTEMPORARY FAMILY SYSTEMS

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Abstract

Contemporary familial structures reflect increasing complexity that is reshaping traditional roles. Fathering now embodies emotional engagement, co-parenting, and adaptive identity within diverse configurations, challenging normative assumptions, and redefining paternal presence in evolving family systems. In this context, families are systems made up of subsystems and individuals. Problems experienced by one member of the system typically influence the entire system. In the 21st century, the family experienced disappointment and crises as never before, mostly owing to the fathering challenge. Modern family structures exhibit changing paternal responsibilities, with fathers being more engaged in caring, emotional support and everyday activities. This transition contests conventional gender stereotypes, advocating for equitable parental duties. Active paternal involvement enhances children's development, fortifies familial connections, and promotes equitable partnerships within varied and evolving contemporary families.

Keywords

Contemporary family, familial structures, fathering, parenting, systems

Introduction

In this paper, the author is convinced that it is crucial to understand that fathering influences and shapes children's growth and well-being, affecting family dynamics via emotional support, direction, protection, and active involvement in everyday activities. Freeks (2025:162-163) defines a family as a group of persons linked by blood, marriage, or adoption, who often reside together and have emotional and financial bonds. Kath (2021:15) explains that the term "family" originates from the Latin word "familia", signifying "household" or "household servant", and from "famulus", meaning "servant". The term "family" refers to a distinct social group whose primary function is to offer nurturing care for the development of all its

members (Kane, 2019:65-67). It serves as the principal institution for personal growth, support, and protection (Saikia, 2017:445).

From a Christian and pastoral viewpoint, the notion of family is significant in the biblical story and needs ongoing consideration. South Africa is currently poised for substantial advancements for children affected by HIV/AIDS, especially in connection to child-headed households, and the implications of stepfamilies, same-sex parents, single parents, and feminist perspectives (Freeks, 2011:83). As our society advances, the complexities and obstacles of familial life are, likewise, transformed (Freeks, 2025:vi). The extensive familial effect on the formation of values, beliefs, and interacting behaviours is significant (Kimmel, 2010:8). The term "family" evokes the idea of a conventional two-parent household with two children, a dog, and elderly grandparents, which represents a stereotypical American model that lacks relevance to the many family structures seen in Africa. Welch (2007:7-10) explains that a family comprises two or more individuals connected by birth, marriage, or adoption, living in a single household. The nuclear family comprises a biological father, a biological mother, and their biological or adopted offspring; however, this definition is inadequate owing to the complexity of contemporary family structures, as previously noted (Moore & Asay, 2008:28).

In 2005, Adams and Trost (2005:47-56) reported that the population of South Africa was nearly 45 million, encompassing a diverse array of ethnic groups. Meanwhile, the population has increased, with some estimates suggesting it may approach 50 million individuals. The scheduled census in October 2011 as an example, will provide a more precise representation. Like all civilisations, the family structure in South Africa is stratified by gender. Individuals perceive families as "sanctuaries in a callous world", offering solace from the harsh, indifferent, and bureaucratic external environment. However, families may also be environments where violence transpires, individuals perpetrate abuse against one another, and fathers neglect their paternal responsibilities. Despite the challenges confronting families over time, the family persists as the world's oldest relational structure – a universal phenomenon (Moore & Asay, 2008:4).

In recent decades, a substantial global discourse has arisen concerning the present well-being and future outlook of families, emphasising the escalating intricacy of familial transformations and the myriad of challenges they encounter, including occupational demands, financial pressures, marital discord, the quest for achievement, and contemporary stresses affecting children (Clinton, 2010:33). The family context is complex owing to the intricacy of familial structures. Welch (2007:2) asserts that individuals do not require formal education in family dynamics to engage as active family members; however, the author contends that while many parents participate actively, they must still be endowed with transformative qualities, such as values, and be cognisant of their significance and the methods of imparting these qualities to their children. White et al. (2009:xii-xiii) assert that children, including those born out of wedlock, inherit the transgressions of their parents and assimilate the values imparted by their upbringing or shown by their guardians. They also proclaim that the world is scrutinising the emotional impact of child abuse and rape, child poverty and homelessness, juvenile delinquency and violence, and illegitimacy and infanticide. Consequently, parents should serve as exemplars and mentors in their children's lives. In the next section, the author lays out, identifies, and elucidates the diverse family structures in the South African context.

Families in several configurations
Households led by children

Tsoaledi and Muruge (2022) point out that child-headed households in South Africa are an increasing issue, frequently arising from the HIV/AIDS epidemic and poverty. Children who undertake adult duties following the loss of their parents manage these households. In the absence of sufficient assistance, they encounter difficulties such as restricted educational opportunities, psychological distress, and exploitation. Meeting their needs is essential for disrupting the cycle of poverty and vulnerability (Tsoaledi & Muruge, 2022). In early 2004, about 840,000 children in South Africa lost their mothers, primarily owing to HIV/AIDS (Slot-Nielsen, 2005:1). Twenty-one years later, it is presumed that the statistics have significantly altered, as

projections indicate that there may be three million or even more AIDS orphans unless extensive health advances enable caretakers to extend their lifespans (Slot-Nielsen, 2005:1; Tsoaledi & Muruge, 2022). In South Africa, child-headed households are often defined as those where the primary caretakers are under 18 years of age, consistent with the definition of a child as an individual younger than 18 in the South African Constitution. Children under the age of 21 lack the legal competence to undertake specific actions (Slot-Nielsen, 2005:1), but subsequent law has amended this age to 18. Child-headed households consist of minors being cared for by their older siblings, who are themselves minors. Children raised in child-headed households encounter numerous challenges and deprivations, including difficulties in obtaining food and shelter, significant threats to their education owing to poverty, an elevated risk of sexual abuse by neighbours and relatives, increased instances of child prostitution and labour, and a greater propensity to live on the streets.

Homosexual males as carers (parents)

In South Africa, homosexual men are progressively acknowledged as competent and affectionate parents, bolstered by progressive legislation that allows same-sex adoption and surrogacy (Morison & Lynch, 2016). Despite encountering cultural stigma in certain regions, several homosexual couples are rearing children in secure, supportive situations. Their parenting experience exemplifies perseverance and dedication, fostering more acceptance and the growing concept of family in South Africa (Morison & Lynch, 2016).

Gay fathers are a heterogeneous population, differing in race, social class, age, ethnicity, aptitude, religion, and demographic characteristics, as well as in the methods by which they attained fathering. They consciously elect to assume the role of parents (Mallon, 2004:2-3). Gay and lesbian families comprise same-sex couples cohabiting in a single household, perhaps including biological or adoptive children (Welch, 2007:13-14). Her study asserts that homosexual men can be exemplary fathers and mentors with reference to morals, since they may perceive their parenthood as successful;

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nonetheless, they frequently encounter constraints imposed by society or familial expectations. The question that arises is, "Are homosexual fathers effective parents?" Some researchers assert that they are. In 2001, research indicated that homosexual men contemplating fathering tended to deliberate more extensively than their straight counterparts, believing they would effectively manage their families (McGarry, 2003:31). They perceived their decision to come out as homosexual men as a danger, although, ultimately, this choice led to greater emotional fulfilment as they embraced fatherhood, demonstrating their inherent parental instincts (McGarry, 2003:1). Nevertheless, the phrase "homosexual parent or father" triggers two alerts. The initial concern is sexism, defined as the persistent societal notion that parenting is exclusively and inherently the responsibility of women. The second concern entails ingrained heterosexuality and parenthood, which are so deeply interwoven in our culture that the notion of homosexual fathering seems foreign, strange, and even unattainable.

Divorce and blended families

According to Raley and Sweeney (2020:81-85), divorce and stepfamilies (blended families) are prevalent in South Africa, indicative of evolving societal norms and familial configurations. Numerous children have mixed families, where stepparents assume significant caregiving responsibilities. Despite problems such as transition and co-parenting, supportive relationships and effective communication may provide stability in such families. South African legislation prioritises the best interests of the child and informs choices on divorce and stepfamily configurations (Raley & Sweeney, 2020:81-85). Deal (2010:49) asserts that divorce and stepfamily dynamics have become increasingly prevalent. His study indicates that 42% of adult Americans, equating to 95.5 million individuals, maintain a step connection with a stepparent, step- or half-sibling, or stepchild. His study also indicates that divorce facilitates a series of familial transformations and does not inherently conclude family life. Regrettably, such statistics are not currently accessible in South Africa. Stepfamilies are inherently complex owing to their convoluted structure, intricate dynamics, and multifaceted

challenges; nevertheless, they represent the most rapidly expanding family configuration and have become so prevalent that they have emerged as the predominant family structure, especially in the United States (Berger, 1995:4-5). Stepparents represent a significant family structure that is expected to expand and gain increased visibility. They often encounter personal, marital, or familial issues that prompt them to get counselling (Welch, 2007:11).

Feminism

Feminism in South Africa confronts gender inequality influenced by apartheid, patriarchy, and economic disparities. It promotes women's rights, safety, and representation across society (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022:1-5). Initiatives such as #AmINext underscore gender-based violence, advocating justice and reform (Kiguwa, 2019:220-225). South African feminism is multifaceted, encompassing perspectives from all races and backgrounds advocating intersectional strategies to achieve equality and empowerment in both public and private domains (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022:1-5). The feminist objective is to enhance women's welfare by correlating their challenges and frequently unvoiced personal grievances with their societal position and standing (Dominelli, 2002:6). Feminists aim to enhance the living conditions of women from their own perspective. Furthermore, they assert that rights-orientated realist ethics is essential to safeguard women against abuse such as genital mutilation, employment and educational discrimination, and maternal and child starvation, while also emphasising the need for the reformation of marriage (Browning, 2003:166). Thus, they contest the inequitable social connections that have subjugated women for generations in various forms across all nations. Feminists are engaged in mobilising women who possess diverse perspectives on the reasons for women's oppression and the methods to eradicate it (Dominelli, 2002:3).

Similarly to the way the feminist movement ridicules conventional female behaviour, society also scrutinises the conduct and status of masculinity and masculine leadership. The leadership of men is characterised as "hypermasculine" (Dobson, 2003:95). Feminists emphasise the gendered characteristics of social connections throughout all domains of public and

private life. They assert that men enjoy privileges to the detriment of women across several facets of social existence, notably their exclusion from the paid labour sector and the prevalence of men in lucrative positions (Dominelli, 2002:5), exemplifying the widespread injustices faced by women.

Unmarried guardians (or single parents)

In South Africa, single-parent homes are common, with over 43% of children residing with only their mothers (Ahiaku & Ayodele, 2022:171-176). This tendency is particularly evident in areas such as KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga, South Africa, where more than 50% of children live in mother-led households (Ahiaku & Ayodele, 2022:171-176). Single mothers frequently encounter considerable obstacles, such as economic hardship, restricted access to daycare, and social shame (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023:14-19). Notwithstanding these challenges, numerous single mothers exhibit fortitude, endeavouring to create supportive settings for their offspring.

The onset of the new millennium has witnessed a rise in single-parent households (Ahiaku & Ayodele, 2022:171-176). Divorce, spousal death, or unmarried parenting are leading to an increase in single parents (Welch, 2007:10-11). Children are predominantly affected, especially those raised by single parents, who frequently have adverse emotional problems (Deal, 2010:50).

Parenting

As primary figures, the father and mother assume leadership roles within the family, thereby significantly influencing the tone, texture, mood, and quality of this interconnected, interactive, and essential unit (Austin, 2007:4; Brooks, 2008:7; Freeks, 2025). The position of a parent is the most esteemed and honourable vocation one can attain, and parents must recognise this status and demonstrate profound commitment and intentional proactivity (Hobart & Frankel, 2003; McGraw, 2004:10). Parents are the initial educators who impart essential knowledge and values to their children, fostering their development into effective individuals. Parenting encompasses both a relationship and an activity; if parents successfully navigate this familial

system, they can cultivate an exceptional family (McGraw, 2004:8). Within this structural-functional paradigm of parenting, the father is characterised as the instrumental leader of the family, while the mother is portrayed as the expressive carer who offers caring and support to both the father and his children (Neethling et al., 2005).

The mother guides, while the father supports the family. The upbringing, support, and safeguarding of children may and ought to impart values. In addition to nurturing, care, and provision, children require protection (Brooks, 2008:8). The socialisation process is perpetual and mostly occurs at home, where fathers, mothers, and children engage in everyday interactions that continuously influence one another (Roest et al., 2009:146).

Consequently, the most effective method to retain children at home is to provide a congenial environment (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:80-83, McGraw, 2004:245). Before parents can optimise their parenting abilities, they must prioritise their self-care (Morris, 2007:12). Each family possesses specific ideals to instil in children as a foundation for understanding what is significant. Dinkmeyer et al. (1997:27) contend that some values, although not explicitly articulated, remain apparent to every youngster, rendering their comprehension and observation rather ambiguous. It is essential for parents to exemplify positive behaviour, as their actions are likely to be emulated by their children. Values should be articulated vocally; otherwise, they may only manifest as behavioural patterns in children. A devaluation or disregard of values and parental figures may inflict harm and jeopardise children's well-being (Gupta & Theus, 2006:87). Moreover, parents should remain engaged and participate in all facets of their children's lives, addressing issues such as behaviour, negative influences, and moral dilemmas that threaten family integrity (Hart & Hart Frejd, 2010:19).

Fathering
The notion of fathering
God designed men with the specific notion and significance of fathering (Gen. 1:26-31). God created men as they are because He intended for them to be fathers (Munroe, 2008:23). The father often concurrently

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assumes the role of husband within the household, where heightened emotional engagement – such as warmth, care, and security – is crucial (Visagie, 2005:93), alongside the various other responsibilities fathers must undertake. In Western societies, fathering is typically defined by a man's act of impregnating a woman, whereas in numerous African contexts, the concept of fathering is more closely associated with kinship connections than biological paternity (Richter & Morrell, 2006:13).

According to Freeks (2025:53-54), fathering encompasses a somewhat larger definition than only the biological creation of offspring. Fathering is intrinsic to a man's nature, and scholars such as Munroe (2008:24) argue that for men, fathering is not a choice but an essential aspect of their identity. In addition, God has entrusted man with the responsibility of stewardship over His creation. Feminists contend that men are a luxury inside the family (Erickson, 1996:39); nonetheless, feminism has significant consequences for men and children owing to its emphasis on the gendered form of social connections. Munroe (2008:26) posits that the Creator selected the male as a father, suggesting that God had the concept of "father" in mind throughout the creation of man. Fathering is intrinsically linked to manhood, as a man is expected to assume the paternal role (Richter & Morrell, 2006:14-15).

The influence of paternal involvement

Fathers possess the distinctive capacity to make a lasting investment in their children's lives (Munroe, 2008:7; Williams, 2008:18); therefore, it is pertinent to assert that fathering may represent the most gratifying vocation for a man. Dienhart (1998:35) encapsulates the influence of fathering as the child-centric dimension that fulfils the child's needs via continuous efforts to establish and sustain the father–child bond. This indicates that fathers are significant to their children, and vice versa, and this engagement may lead to more contented families (Cohen, 2001:5). Dienhart (1998:4) expands on this influence by asserting that the majority of fathers possess the desire, capability, and feeling of duty to nurture the subsequent generation competently. Both authors underscore the significance of the father and his

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influence on the family. This conduct is not merely a secular obligation; it is also a divine mandate regarding the father's offspring throughout his lifetime.

Obligations, responsibilities, and accountabilities

Fathering encompasses various obligations, responsibilities, and accountabilities, including communication, establishing rules, managing children's behaviour, ensuring their health, providing education, offering guidance (physically, socially, and emotionally), and caring for and loving them (Blackthorn, 2004:4-5). The expectations imposed on women, regardless of whether they are single parents or co-parenting with the father, remain applicable. All these obligations, accountabilities, and responsibilities are not only beneficial but also pertinent to the parenting of children (Austin, 2007:4). The majority of these duties, responsibilities, and accountabilities are manifested through the father's practical and physical engagement with his children, including activities such as fishing, participating in games, sports, family outings, and educational endeavours (Coakley, 2006:153-161).

Many young fathers still require education regarding the purpose, principles, and functions of authentic fathering (Munroe, 2008:17). These principles transcend mere formulae; they are divine imperatives that establish the rules of life, and they are not acquired via any course but are implemented by the ideals upheld by the fathers themselves. In contemporary society, it is anticipated that fathers will engage more actively with their children, not only in a practical sense but also in an emotionally supportive manner, as their involvement is crucial in shaping the child's identity, including sexual identity, and influencing various outcomes such as depression, behaviour, and adjustment (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2011; Freeks & Lotter, 2009:530).

The father as a positive role model

Fathers serve as positive role models and fulfil numerous roles, including those of a parent, spouse, educator, community leader, and spiritual guide. This paper emphasises the father as a constructive role model and mentor in the transmission of values (see Freeks & Lotter, 2009:530). Children admire those they want to imitate and with whom they can identify. Any individual may function as a role model; this may be someone one wishes

to imitate or someone whose company one appreciates. Being a positive role model as a parent is essential, since children regard their parents as exemplars of appropriate behaviour. The actions and behaviours of parents significantly influence a child's personality development (Blackthorn, 2004:5).

A father can serve as an effective role model by embodying specific values, with Christian values being paramount, as they are relevant across various aspects of life and promote order, stability, and love (Van der Walt, 2010:215-219). A positive role model need not be flawless in every respect. Blackthorn (2004:5) posits that one may attempt actions deemed correct, some of which are identified as Christian principles. Freeks (2004:102) concurs with the aforementioned points and further underlines that the father serves as the quintessential role model for his children, as they may learn from his actions and demeanour. A father may also serve as a role model for other fathers by exemplifying how he assists and nurtures his children. Children who grow up without their father's engagement and presence may forfeit essential discipline and socialisation opportunities with him (Freeks, 2004:102). Moreover, parental actions and behaviours significantly influence the development of a child's personality (Blackthorn, 2004:5).

Research substantiates that children with the highest likelihood of success are those raised in households with both parents present (Dobson & Bauer, 1990:166). The paternal figure exemplifies the quintessential model for imparting Christian values owing to his role as the spiritual leader within the household (Munroe, 2001:122).

The father as parent and disciplinary figure

If the relationship between parents and children is constructive, a primary responsibility of the parent, as an authority figure, in instilling discipline is to set behavioural boundaries. Discipline is a crucial component of the father's mentoring process and a means of imparting positive values to his children. In conventional mentorship, such as in the corporate sector, discipline is not a component as it is in parenting. As this paper addresses familial structures and fathering, this problem warrants discussion.

Effective discipline necessitates wisdom, patience, and perseverance (Drescher, 1988:101). Discipline is a critical component in the training and education of a child. While it pertains to authority and tasks, it also necessitates responsibility and obligation from the child (Nel & Steyn, 1985:32). If parents, especially fathers, refrain from punishing their children, they forgo a potentially effective strategy in parenting (Faber & Mazlish, 2003:100). Munroe (2008:123) asserts that the father is responsible for discipline, which is not synonymous with punishment. Discipline elevates education, as the child is not just informed but also reprimanded and guided. This will contribute to the formation of a child's character, as discipline transforms into training (Munroe, 2008:123). According to Austin (2007:4), tenderness should be integrated into the disciplinary process, as parents ought to nurture and love their children while administering punishment (Larney, 2009:44). Munroe (2008) perceives discipline as a method of instructing and rectifying the child, while Henley (1997:118) regards discipline as comprising both guidance and correction. According to Henley, this discipline pertains to discipling, namely the process of cultivating disciples or adherents of virtuous behaviour and conduct. Discipleship is most effectively imparted and shown by the father, as children tend to emulate his actions and repeat his words (Henley, 1997:117).

Correction and direction suggest analogous results, as guiding children away from inappropriate behaviour simultaneously fosters their development into commendable disciples. This indicates that the child is transitioning from an erroneous path to a correct one. Parenting without effective guidance on discipline is unlikely to succeed; however, a well-defined disciplinary strategy may be the most effective approach for the father to achieve his objectives (Christophersen & Mortweet, 2003:65). The father is seen as an exemplary figure when he instructs and disciplines his children in reverence to the Lord (Freeks, 2004:102, Prov. 1:9).

Recommendations
The following key points serve as recommendations in this paper:
- Advocate comprehensive definitions of fatherhood.

- Broaden initiatives centred on paternal involvement in parenting.
- Promote paternal engagement in child welfare and educational frameworks.
- Engage in multidisciplinary research about the transformation of paternal roles.
- Confront structural impediments and societal stigmas.
- Parenting without effective advice on child discipline will be ineffective.
- A disciplinary technique will enable the father to achieve his objectives as a parent.
- Fatherhood is seen as an exemplary approach to parenting that promotes familial well-being.

Conclusion

This paper emphasises the intricacy of familial connections throughout society. The author examined the intricacies of familial units and their formations in reality. While these family structures are present in modern family systems, the concept of fathering and its influence may serve as a potential remedy and enhance family well-being. In today's changing environment, the concept of fathering has also evolved – extending beyond biological or financial responsibilities to include emotional involvement, co-parenting, and active participation in child development. As family systems evolve in response to cultural, social, and economic transformations, comprehending and facilitating the diverse manifestations of fatherhood are essential for fostering resilient and loving settings for all family members.

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PARTICULARITIES OF THE FORMULAIC ASPECT OF PROVERBS[1]

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Abstract:

For any researcher, examining a corpus of proverbs highlights a *schematic scenario* that ensures their resilience over time and their circulation across vast spaces, as well as their ability to (self-)regenerate in diverse contexts, altering details in accordance with ever-renewed reference systems and the changing possibilities of reception by an increasingly large audience. Universal conceptual data (life, death, good, evil, human qualities and defects, the universe, nature – mobilised to signify human nature) correspond to several patterns, several compositional characteristics that constitute the canvas for the arrangement of meanings. Practically, some researchers argue, the paremiological treasures of peoples rely on a vast action of compositional "calque" and the recurrence of certain ideas and images[1].

Keywords:

Proverbs, "formulaic style", stereotypy, compositional schemes, conciseness, symmetry, archaicity, Romanian language, Turkish language.

1. Conciseness and structural brevity procedures

All researchers who have delved into proverbs have discussed their common textual features, with a synthesis provided in J.-C. Anscombe's study, 1994.[2]

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[1] This study is part of the work *Romanian and Turkish Paremiological Structures: A Contrastive-Typological Analysis*, prepared to be defended as a doctoral thesis at "Ovidius" University of Constanța, Doctoral School of Humanities.

[1] N.T. Tecelli, 2016, p. 207, with references to Christine Michaux, 1999, and G. Kleiber, 1985.

[2] J.-C. Anscombre, 1994, "Proverbes et Formes Proverbiales...", in: *Langue Française*, 102, pp. 95-107.

1.1. The condition of accessibility

To achieve its epistemic goal, a proverb needs an easily accessible form, the first level of which is evidently quantitative in nature. It is no coincidence that paremiologists invoke, in the study of the anthropological bases of proverbs, the theories of generative grammar, such as those represented by Noam Chomsky[3] and Steven Pinker[4]. It so happens that in our case, we also consider an agglutinative language. We find that the authors of historical and descriptive-synchronic grammars of this language resort to arguments drawn precisely from generative theory to explain the defining concentration of statements in this language.[5]

Practically, the idea of "logical deposits" in the human mind, which are empty before people start speaking, is considered. Their filling occurs progressively, from the acquisition of sounds, to morphemes, then to words, and finally to word combinations. Only when essential data are stored that help a person say something about someone or something, i.e., to associate a predicate with a subject, can we talk about "articulated language" and "communication". Then, no matter how much speech skills evolve, reaching competencies and, finally, performances, the basic scheme remains the same throughout life: the foundation of communication, the structure through which we transmit anything to anyone is "Predicate" – with its complements + "Subject" – with its complements. Therefore, the vast majority of proverbs, which are ancestral and universal forms of learning, adhere to this elementary scheme. It is also found when we encounter extensive structures, as it actually involves a repetition of the initial scheme:

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[3] Naom Chomsky, 1975/2005, *The Logical Structure of Linguistic Theory*, Chicago: Plenum/Springer. Cf. and *Language and mind*, 1968/2011 etc.

[4] Steven Pinker, 1994/2007, *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*, New York: Harper Collins Publisher Inc. Our information about the innate foundations of linguistic acquisitions and the generative capacity, in the Chomskyan spirit, of logico-semantic schemes, morphosyntactic structures, within biolinguistically pre-established frameworks, is mainly taken from the syntheses gathered in the *Language, Cognition, and Human Nature: Selected Articles*, 2013, more accessible and up-to-date regarding research of this kind. For Romanian contributions in the field, see Alexandru Gafton, 2024, , *Biolingvistica*, Vol. 1-2, Bucharest: Bucharest University Press.

[5] Yüksel Göknel, 2012, pp. 13-16.

Calul moare:
Rămâne şaua.
Omul moare:
Rămâne numele.[6]

(i.e., 'The horse dies: The saddle remains. The man dies: The name remains.')

Cf. also:

Tk. *At ölür meydan kalır yiğit ölür şan/adı kalır.*

('The horse dies, the field remains, the brave man dies, his fame/name remains.')

Here we have a paradoxical example of extension (four simple statements) and maximum brevity (each statement is reduced to the Subject-Predicate relationship). It is true that the general meaning of the transmitted teaching, referential and symbolic at the same time – another example of syncretism here – can only be deduced from the whole of the simple statement-sentences, united by parataxis. But there are also more restricted grammatical-discursive associations.

Rom. *Aurul nu rugineşte.*

Tk. *Altın pas tutmaz.*

('Gold doesn't rust.')

The only additional load of the classic scheme is the adverb, which ensures the negative form, in Rom. *nu*, the postpositional enclitic *-az*. In the Turkish version, however, there is also an additional component, invisible on the surface (three lexical units – to three): *tutmaz* would mean "does not hold", as in Turkish the expression is "to hold rust", "to catch rust". But, the statement remains very concentrated, with the verb in the aorist.

Sometimes brevity goes further, through various other logical-syntactic procedures.

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[6] The Turkish proverb reminds of the mediaeval Latin quatrain *Stat nomen rosa* "The rose remains only in its name", in which U. Eco found his inspiration for his novel *The Name of the Rose*. Naturally, the rose stood for the complete man, the "beautiful and good" man, not "the flower with red and fragrant petals".

1.2. Ellipsis

The authors of the specialised dictionary *Petit Robert* consider that the proverb is an elliptical statement by definition:

"... *le proverbe est une formule elliptique généralement imagée et figurée*" (Petit Robert – *Les proverbes*, *Préface*, II).

The defining autonomy of the paremiological utterance does not suffer semantically or syntactically if the utterance is incomplete, under certain conditions. For example, copulative verbs, as well as many predicative verbs, can be absent from sentences, as can other parts of the sentence, for that matter.

Rom. *Bogat zgârcit – copac uscat.*

Tk. *Zengin cimri, kuru ağaç.*

('Rich miser, dry tree')

Rom. *Niciun trandafir fără spini.*

Tk. *Dikensiz gül olmak.*

('No rose without thorns')

We observe that small "compensations" appear, that is, additional elements born out of rhythmic necessities, one might say – negations, lexicosemantic oppositions.

Anyway, ellipsis itself contributes to the aphoristic prominence:

Tk. *Yuvayı dişi kuş yapar.*[7] ('The female bird makes the nest')

Rom. *După pasăre cuibul, după femeie gospodăria.* (literally 'After the bird, the nest; after the woman, the household')

In accordance with the syntax of the Turkish language, there is no nominal predicate here; there is *yuvayı* – direct object, then *dişi kuş* – subject/nominal group, formed of adjective + noun, then, at the end of the statement, according to the prototypical order, the verbal predicate, expressed by a verb in the indicative mood, aorist tense.

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[7] We should note that the editors did not use a comma between the two simple statements, i.e., between *dişi* 'woman' and *kuş* 'bird'. This means that the sentence is perceived as formed by simple parataxis (for which a comma is used in Romanian). The comma would have been almost obligatory if it had been about association through "pause + change of tone".

The four lexical units, distributed in two paratactically associated statements, under the umbrella of a comparison and easily decipherable symbolism, represent the syntactic concentration of a very rich sentence, if its prototypical structure were respected:

[Just as the (female) bird makes its nest useful and beautiful,

so does the woman arrange her household.]

The proverb becomes a mnemonic structure also through a figure of speech from the category of syntactic permutations, *chiasmus* (ABBA):

household /woman – bird/nest.

Sometimes, one of the languages does not respect the commandment of paronymic brevity, and when that is, unexpectedly, Turkish, the number of elements does not increase too much:

Rom. *Toate la timpul lor.* ('All in good time.')

Tk. *Demir tavında, dilber çağında*. ('Iron at its time, beauty at its age.')

In fact, there are two different structures, associated only by the central idea, concentrated in the term "time". The Romanian formula – without a verb-predicate (*se întâmplă*, *se petrec* 'happens', 'occurs' etc.) is generally referential, while the Turkish one, also without a verb-predicate, is expressive-symbolic.

Returning to the theory of generativists, we may say that the simple, concentrated forms of proverbs respond to inherent human needs:

a) The desire to learn;

b) The desire to communicate.

The two are united by Steven Pinker under the phrase *language instinct*. It manifests itself through the learning of interrogative concepts: first *what*? and *who*?, then *how*, *when*, *where*, and later, *why*? This form of tuning the instincts of learning and speaking, which fills the "empty spaces", the "deposits" of acquisitions in the human mind, serves to create statements that generate the simplest and most common proverbs, those of the type "A is B", "A has B", with extensions at the level of the type of complex sentence consisting of Subject clause and Main clause.

Rom. *Tăcerea **e** de aur*. ('Silence **is** golden.')

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Cine *ştie carte, are patru ochi*. etc. ('The learned man has four eyes' meaning 'Knowledge is power')

Tk. *Sessizlik altındır*. ('Silence is golden.')

Of course, there may also be extended forms, with various types of subordinates:

Tk. *Söz gümüşse sükünet altındır.* ('If speech is silver, silence is golden.')

But those that respect the law of brevity remain valid:

Tk. *Yerin kulağı vardır.* ('The earth has ears.')

Tk. *Öğrenen her şeye sahiptir*. ('He who has learned has everything.')

This explains why there are so many proverbs of this type. They respond to simple, concentrated, fundamental patterns of the manifestation of the "linguistic instinct" – knowledge and communication, at the same time[8].

1.3. Parataxis

Parataxis, syntactic dislocations and simple syntax have been the subject of many specialists in paremiology.[9] We have extensively discussed associations without connectors above, in the subchapter dedicated to the relationships between the constituents of a proverbial sentence. We have shown there that in the Turkish language it is structural, manifesting itself in three variants. However, we reiterate here that, on the one hand, parataxis is not absent from Romanian coordinations and even subordinations (cf. *Vrea, nu vrea, bea Grigore agheasmă!*, literally 'Willingly or unwillingly, Gregory will drink the holy water.'), and on the other hand, that the sentence formed by junction is also cultivated in Turkish, albeit less than in Romanian. Here we should perhaps recall the situations in which various relationships – of nominal determination or verbal complementation/governance – can also be realised at the sentence level, through simple parataxis. Thus, at the sentence

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[8] For the general issue of ellipsis and its Romanian concretisations, see Alexandru Nicolae, 2019.

[9] Cf. Peter W. Culicover, 2010, "Parataxis and Simplex Syntax", in: M.J. Béguelin; M. Avanzi & G. Carminboeuf (eds), *Macrosyntax*, Vol. 2, Berne: Peter Lang. See also Peter W. Culicover & Ray Jackendoff, 2005, *Simplex Syntax*, Oxford: University Press.

level, examples of coordination (copulative, disjunctive, adversative, but also conclusive, sometimes) are frequent:

Tk. *İt ürür kervan yürür.* ('The dogs bark, the caravan moves on.')

Rom. *Câinii latră, vântul bate.*[10] ('The dogs bark, the wind blows.')

At the level of sentences, parataxis can signify accumulation through repetition, etc.

Rom. *Frate, frate* 'Brother, brother' = Even if you are my brother

Tk. *Damlaya damlaya* 'Drop, drop' = Drop by drop.

Parataxis, therefore, contributes to strengthening the character of "fixed and concise form" of proverbs.

2. Formal symmetry

The formular, repetitive and memorable structure is also reinforced by a logic of balancing statements. Between compositional rigidity, on the one hand, and lexicosemantic and morphosyntactic flexibility, on the other hand, balance – in relation to key terms, grammatical organisation – and symmetry represent a sensitive, infrastructural contribution that ensures the discursive, mnemonic effect of the concise formulation.

Based on synonymous or antonymous associations, on morphemic plays, symmetry here pertains to what would be called *doxa* in classical rhetoric, of the Aristotelian type and passed through Quintilian's codifications,. The term should be taken in its metaphorical, secondary sense, meaning not "thought", but "common sense", the functionality of rhetorical argumentation based on the socially predominant representations of human communities. Practically, the proverb aims to transform an idea from the stage of uncertain truth to that of absolute, generally valid truth. The balance between antitheses, the balance through identification etc., satisfy the

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[10] As is known, in Romanian there is also the version – translated, transferred? – identical to the one in Turkish. In the context of discussions regarding the local/universal relationship in the generation of proverbs, it should be recalled that the referent *caravana* 'caravan' does not justify a local genesis of the proverb in the Romanian space, just as those with *cafeaua* 'coffee', with *seraiul* 'seraglio' etc. are not justified, nor do those with *porcul* 'pig' "work" for Turkish proverbs.

recipients' need for regularity, for the pleasant aspect of a flawlessly formulated judgement.

Let us give an example of an approximate pair, but with values illustrative of everything, we believe, we have said above:

Rom. *Omul trebuie să vorbească încet şi să mănânce repede.* ('The man should speak slowly and eat quickly.')

Tk. *Ağır ağır demeli, çabuk çabuk yemeli.*

Literally translated, the Turkish proverb looks like this:

"Slowly, slowly one should say it, quickly, quickly one should eat it."

The developed statement, a sentence formed by parataxis in Turkish, is very well balanced. The means of expression concentrate the possibilities of denomination to the maximum: the manner adverbials rendered by the superlatives of the adverbs placed in positions 1 and 3 are realised through rhetorical repetition (cf. Rom. *repede-repede! mult-mult!* 'quickly-quickly! a lot-a lot!' etc.)

> *1   3*
> *ağır ağır – çabuk çabuk*

The predicate verbs are also positioned symmetrically, in places 2-4

> *2   4*
> *demeli – yemeli*

The rhyme, the alternation of vowels (and consonants *d/y*; *b/ç*; *ğ/ç*), the rhythm of the syllables complete the symmetry.

And in the middle, integrated into a morpheme of the agglutinated form of the verb, is the mark for the aspectual nuance of "necessity" through the suffix - *malı/meli*, added to the root *de-*, the idea of moral and behavioural obligation.

The proverb is performed as advice aimed at forming "practical wisdom", that *sophrosyne*, from ancient Greek..

Other examples:

*veren candan – çok veren (*chiasmus, cf. *infra*)

"gives *little*" – "gives *much*"(cf. also <u>az</u> *veren* – <u>çok</u> *veren*)

Therefore, regarding the formal structuring guidelines – conciseness, logical and grammatical simplicity, as well as symmetry, we can say that the

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idea of preconstruct, advanced by many researchers, before and after the development of generative and biolinguistic theories, is confirmed.

3. Stability and stereotypy

The idea of "stability", which some researchers consider part of an equation where the secondary element is "stereotypy" and which results in the formulaic nature of proverbs, is based on the same preconstructed logical schemes:

> *"Proverbs have a preconstructed meaning that requires learning. Once this is achieved, they are associated with non-episodic conceptual representations."[11].*

In general, the similarities between proverbs in the two languages are largely due to the use of "lexical matrices", which ensure the idiomatic but also "fixed" formal character, easily "transferable" from one language to another, even if they are by no means translations:

Tk. *Öyle babanın, öyle oğlu.*

Rom. *Aşa tată, aşa fiu.*

Fr. *Tel père, tel fils.* and so on.

('Like father, like son.')

We understand, with the help of our corpus of examples, in its entirety, that the formal and logical fixity of the proverb does not mean rigidity, and grammatical-stylistic variations do not necessarily mean poetic character.

4. Archaicity

One of the features that give proverbs stability and unity/uniqueness in diversity is antiquity, which favours the decantation of words over time. Gradually, the anonymous users and propagators of "wise sayings" change a formal detail; they replace "*este*" 'is' with "-*i*", change "*viață*" 'life' with "*trai*", add a more expressive epithet than the determinant, and these can

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[11] Christine Michaux, 1999, "Proverbes et structures stéréotypes", in: *Langue française*, 123, pp. 85-102. See also J.-Cl. Anscombre, 2011, "Figement, idiomacité et matrices lexicales", in: Le *figement linguistique: la parole entravée*, Paris: Honoré Champion, pp. 17-40.

replace a verb: "*gura mută*" 'silent mouth' – for "*a tăcea*" 'to be silent'. The result is then seen in the cadence of the syllables that make up the words of the statement. It is not so important whether, through these permanent refinements, the statement is shortened or lengthened. In any case, it cannot exceed the limits imposed by the principle of brevity, nor can it fall below the limits of cognitive pithiness. It will remain, in any variant, "an intelligible statement, sufficient unto itself", as it has been said.

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III. LINGUISTIC CONFLUENCES

MILITARY DISCOURSE.
CHARACTERISTICS AND TYPES

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Abstract

Efficient communication is essential in any field, being vital in dynamic, high-stakes environments such as the military, where clear and accurate communication safeguards troop safety and mission success. In this paper, we delve into the peculiarities of military communication, aiming to point out some of the features of its different types. The focal point in our endeavor – the ceremonial speeches in the Romanian Navy – are going to be analyzed taking into consideration the rules and regulations that govern military communication in the Romanian Armed Forces, on the one hand, and the rhetorical and public relations strategies used, on the other hand.

How the military communicate, and the types of discourse and strategies they use vary according to context. For instance, internal communication is defined by precise, concise and direct language needed to coordinate missions, to give orders and to report back from the field. Ceremonies are prone to the same military rigor, the purpose of communication being different, however. In this case, speeches become a means to bring forward the discipline within the military institution and to promote its core values: respect, unity and honor.

Key words

Discourse, military communication, group communication, rigor, tradition, military ceremony.

1. Introduction

Communication is tightly connected to every aspect of everyday life, acting as a stimulus for the harmonious functioning of societies. Through communication people exchange information, ideas, thoughts and emotions using verbal, nonverbal or written means. Communication is a key factor in shaping social structures, in fostering educational efforts, and in maintaining

social coherence, influencing at the same time personal interactions, professional collaborations and societal discourse.

This process is paramount in the military system, where clear and accurate communication safeguards troop safety and mission success. Both leadership and the chain of command, whether we refer to the relation with superior echelons or with subordinate units, rely on efficient communication, which can take different forms according to context. Thus, it varies from strictly informative discourse, in which each word is carefully chosen, to avoid misunderstandings to informal communication among members of the same department or structure up to verbal interactions with external partners and the media.

1.1. Military communication characteristics
1.2. Organizational communication

From the very beginning people have lived in communities in order to protect themselves and to hunt basically for survival. The need to cooperate has continued throughout the years and manifested itself in various types of social organization. Nowadays, organizations and institutions are, obviously another social framework, which facilitates the achievement of common goals for groups of people who join efforts. Consequently, in order to fulfill these targets, people have to communicate. The way they do it, brings them closer to or further away from their pre-established objectives.

Organizational communication stands, therefore, for the processes and methods used for a smoother exchange of information internally and between organizations. Verbal interaction plays an essential role in ensuring operational efficiency, in improving collaboration between employees or between the latter and the management, in attaining strategic objectives, and in promoting organizational culture.

Among the basic characteristics of efficient organizational communication, we are going to mention:

a) the clarity and availability of messages, which need to be concise and intelligible;

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b) opportunity, that is, embracing all occasions that involve information exchange;

c) relevance, which implies that messages are complete and contain the required data needed in the given circumstances;

d) the adaptability and the necessity to adapt the communication strategies to various audiences and contexts.

Moreover, in order to improve the decision-making process, to solve conflicts, and to set common goals, active listening and promoting an environment of transparency and trust become equally important. Thus, organizational identity can be fostered and consolidated, which will ultimately lead to building long lasting relations with external partners.

Before moving on to the characteristics of military communication, it would be advisable to make a clear distinction between the terms "institution" and "organization", as they are sometimes used interchangeably, even though they have distinct meanings. "Institution" usually refers to a system or an established structure within the society, which serves a specific purpose, often having rules and formal traditions. We could mention here apart from the military, the government, the educational systems, and religious institutions. These ones tend to have an impact in the long run and are deeply rooted in culture and society. "Organization", on the other hand, is a broader term, which refers to a group of people that perform specialized activities in order to reach common objectives, like a company, an NGO, a club, or any other collective entity. Unlike institutions, organizations do not have the same social significance and persistence (Iacob and Cismaru, 2002: 14).

2.2. Communication in the military system

Broadly speaking, military communication resembles the organizational one, as for both environments communication is the backbone for establishing, coordinating and leading specific activities. Verbal interaction adapts to context and varies from organizing and planning the activity in order to achieve pre-established objectives to decision making, motivating and assessing the subordinates' work, up to coordinating and implementing corrective actions to rectify deviations from the predetermined

plan, as stipulated in *R.G. 1- Regulamentul de ordine interioară în unitate* (*G.R. 1- Regulations on the Interior Order in the Military Unit*).

The difference from organizational communication resides in the way people communicate in the military system, as it is known that this institution is defined by "*rigor, austerity, solemnity, rigidity, high demands, inflexible moral values, and mandatory rules of conduct that are carefully outlined*"[1] (Arădăvoaice, 1997: 230). Military communication is obviously subject to specific regulatory acts that direct the verbal interaction up the chain of command, between employees, and with other people or entities outside the system.

Overall, whether we refer to institutions or to organizations, communication patterns remain the same with slight dissimilarities depending on the specifics of their activities. Hence communication is bidirectional: internal and external; these two types subsequently can be divided into other subtypes.

Internal communication encompasses the exchange of information, ideas, and messages among the members of an organization or institution. Moreover, it channels all the efforts spent to reach the goals and objectives of the organization. This type of communication can be formal and informal. The former mirrors the organizational hierarchy; therefore, the information exchange can be done in between levels (upwards or downwards) and in between departments (horizontally) (*Ibidem*, 120).

In downward communication, as the name says, the management is the sender, while the personnel is the receiver. The aim is to provide directives, to inform the employees about the regulations in force or to notify them about their duties or responsibilities according to their job description. In a real-life situation, this type of communication takes place mostly between the heads of departments, who will later disseminate the information to the other employees. In the military, when a commanding officer gives an order, he uses a firm, somber tone. The language he uses is clear, direct, precise and

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[1] Arădăvoaice, 1997: 230 : "*rigoare, austeritate, sobrietate, rigiditate, exigenţă ridicată, valori morale inflexibile şi reguli obligatorii de conduită definite cu precizie*" – original Romanian version.

concise, and it stands out "*through the sender's imperative tone and powerful emotional charge, so that one can notice the determination and willpower of the person giving orders*" [2] (Moldoveanu, 2022:74). The subordinates listen to these orders and do not interrupt their superior. In the military environment there is a well-known saying: "Ordinul nu se discută, se execută" ("An order is to be executed, not to be discussed").

When employees initiate the ideas exchange, we deal with upward communication. In civilian institutions and organizations this type of communication allows employees to offer feedback or to report problems to management. In the military, one engages in communication starting with their immediate superiors respecting, thus the chain of command. This way, an attempt is made to solve any issues that may impede the sooth running of the activity before calling on the commanding officer's expertise. Feedback comes in the form of a status report informing the commanding officer about the stage of certain ongoing activities or how they are going to be completed. There are, however, instances when commanders interact with their subordinates in order to make some decisions or to be informed about the challenges they are facing. In the first case, the CO relies on the staff members' expertise, on his counselors or on the specialists in various departments. The flow of information is both upward and downward in this case. More than that, the subordinates' ideas and suggestions are welcomed so that, in the end the commanding officer can make the best decision, delegate tasks and establish a course of action. To facilitate the direct interaction between commanders and subordinates, in military units they organize "Adunări fără ordine de zi" (informal meetings that are not listed in the Plan of the Day). However, given the circumstances, communication is flawed and messages tend to be delivered solely by the commander. Besides this, the employees' unwillingness to take the floor or their tendency to filter their messages very well when they do have something to share with the rest also impair communication.

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[2] Moldoveanu, 2022: 74 : "*printr-un ton imperativ al emiţătorului şi o puternică încărcătură emoţională, astfel încât să se remarce din start hotărârea şi determinarea celui care dă ordine*" – original Romanian version.

Horizontal communication facilitates the collaboration among colleagues who are at the same hierarchical level or from other branches and specialties. Through this exchange of messages the activity between departments is coordinated and details regarding the logistics necessary for the organization and development of exercises and mission are established.

In conjunction with the formal side of communication we find the informal one. This type of communication takes place naturally, spontaneously, and stands for "*the individual's need to contrast his opinions with the others', to look for support and understanding*"[3] (Arădăvoaice, 1997: 41). It acquires a therapeutical role, contributing at the same time to harmonious relations among employees. Besides this, when it is backed up adequately by the management, it can turn out to be a source for authentic feedback regarding the existing state of affairs within the organization or institution. Encouraging unofficial communication reduces the incidence of workplace conflicts and that of strikes (Iacob and Cismaru, 2002: 122). However, if handled poorly, it can lead to rumors and gossips that are detrimental to the image of the organization or institution.

As for the external communication, it refers to the interactions with the stakeholders outside the organization or institution, such as clients, partners and the media. With the use of public relations and advertising, internal values and services are promoted to create a favorable image for the target audience and society in general. Thus, the flow of information from the inside to the outside is not just meant to inform, but also to influence. In Mucchielli's opinion (2002: 13) any act of communication encompasses an attempt to influence the other, to make them believe, think, and act in a certain way. That is, external communication brings about correcting erroneous information and instilling new beliefs, preferences, and ideas.

Among the variety of forms this type of communication takes, we could mention: press conferences, public appearances of different public figures from within the organization or institution, ceremonies, setting up *Open Doors Days* events, exhibitions, online promotion, attending

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[3] Arădăvoaice, 1997: 41: "*dorinţa individului de a-şi confrunta opiniile cu ale altora, de a căuta sprijin şi înţelegere*" – original Romanian version.

conventions, conferences or seminars, building alliances and coalitions, as well as taking part in charity campaigns and volunteering activities (Mircea, 2014: 113). These types of promotion strategies were not randomly chosen, since all of them are also specific to the military system, too, as provisioned in *Instrucțiuni privind activitatea de informare și relații publice în Ministerul Apărării Naționale* (*Instructions on the Information and Public Relations Activities in the Ministry of National Defense*).

Military ceremonies, which have a distinct place in the military agenda, are probably the best-known to the general public. For each type of ceremony, be it local or national, there is a well-established protocol – *Regulamentul onorurilor și ceremoniilor militare* (*Military Honors and Ceremonies Regulation*), which offers guidelines on the way the military personnel must behave and communicate. Public relations campaigns are set up for these festive events, which are meant to influence and shape the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of the target audience by supplying specific information. To shed light on how influential communication works during military ceremonies, we will focus in the next lines on the observances in the Romanian Navy.

2. Case study:
Military ceremonies

As we have noticed, from the public relations strategy perspective military ceremonies are the perfect opportunity to reinforce the armed forces' public image. Moreover, the speeches delivered on this occasion reiterate the importance of this institution on national and international levels and bring forward the core values of the military system: honor, patriotism, courage and commitment. Article 34 in *Regulamentul onorurilor și ceremoniilor militare* (*Military Honors and Ceremonies Regulation*) underlines the importance of the events organized on national holidays, that represent

> *"...a good opportunity to promote the respect for our ancestors, to foster patriotic feelings, dignity and military pride, camaraderie, and dedication to military values"*[4]

The minute precision the military uses in preparing these events is also to be found, at first glance at least, in the PR field at the concept level: "campaign", "tactics" or "target". Dagenais (*apud* Mircea, 2014: 31) states that this loan is not accidental as, similar to strategist who plans every stage of a military confrontation, the public relations specialist carefully chooses his "weapons" to "hit" their "target" audience. What is more, the PR man is not alone on the battle field. Those who deliver their speeches during the ceremonies are second in command. The spokesmen's oratory skills highlight the efforts put in in influencing and persuading the group of people the message was meant for. The tone and pitch of voice, as well as the pace can make a difference in this context where everything revolves around the motivational, captivating speech that can get to the people's hearts.

The national flag and anthem, the military music, the country's national coat of arms, and the full-dress uniforms are some of the indispensable items carrying great symbolic significance that make up the "ammunition" for the ceremonies. They all contribute to sensory stimulation, especially to that of sight and hearing, creating thus, an active connection between subject and object or between the mind and the outer world. In other words, influencing implies reshaping the situational context to create the intended meaning (Mucchielli, 2002: 36).

Mircea (2014: 21) states that there are three basic aspects in social influence campaigns: obedience, conformity and compliance. They are all used during military ceremonies to a greater or lesser extent.

From a psychological viewpoint, obedience or submission represents "*the process of complying with the influence of people with higher social*

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[4] "*[...] un prilej important pentru cultivarea respectului faţă de înaintaşi, dezvoltarea sentimentelor patriotice, a demnităţii şi mândriei ostăşeşti, a spiritului de corp şi a ataşamentului faţă de valorile militare.*" – original Romanian version.

status or with legitimate authority"[5] (Chelcea *apud* Mircea, 2014: 22). This type of behavior is typical for the military system, and therefore, nobody questions the speaker's authority or legitimacy, who is usually a high-ranking officer with a leading position. Under such circumstances, forming opinions or changing attitudes become impracticable, as the messages delivered are endorsed by the spokesperson's position within the military hierarchy. Any reference to the armed forces' role in society, the military's dedication to serving one's country, as well as the recommendation to maintain collaborative efforts for mission and exercise success prove to be incontestable facts.

Conformity refers to peoples' tendency to adjust their attitudes, convictions and actions to align with the people around them, and to alter their behavior in order to fit in a social group. (Sunstein, 2019). Pânișoară (2015: 242) uses the term "social proof" to define this process through which people tend to adopt similar behaviors to the majority. The positive atmosphere during ceremonies is backed up by the constant reiteration of the concept of belonging to a system, to a branch in the speeches delivered, as we can notice in the following examples: "*nava este o a doua casă, iar echipajul o a doua familie*" ("*the ship is your second home while the crew is your second family*", "*faceți parte dintr-o echipă*" ("*you are part of a team*"), "*suntem o comunitate academică*" ("*we are an academic community*"). Moreover, by restating the core values of the military, the message becomes more persuasive.

The more one is exposed to a certain type of information, the easier it becomes to accept it, and so it imprints in the subconscious. Hence, it is expected that the target audience, in our case the military, join forces wholeheartedly for the success of the Romanian Navy. What is more, the recipient is made to believe that through their commitment, they accomplish something great and will enjoy a special status, like in the following examples:

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[5] Chelcea *apud* Mircea, 2014: 22 : "*procesul de acceptare a influenţei din partea persoanelor cu status social superior sau cu autoritate legitimă*" – original Romanian version.

"[...] veţi avea un impact benefic nu numai în sistemul de apărare a ţării, ci şi în economia românească" ("[...]you will have a beneficial impact not only on the country's defense system, but also on the Romanian economy", "[...] reuşim să avem o contribuţie importantă în angajamentele euroatlantice" ("[...] we manage to bring an important contribution in our Euro Atlantic commitments").

Mucchielli (2002: 21) states that in order to persuade people, things have to make sense, they need to understand why it is essential to work, to put in effort. In essence, they need to become aware of the positive outcome of their endeavors.

Compliance involves "*a deep and complete transformation of convictions, attitudes, emotions, and relevant opinions of the target audience*"[6] (Mircea, 2014: 24). An expected change in behavior typically follows these changes. In an attempt to get the desired outcome, speakers resort to "ingratiate technique" (Pânişoară, 2015: 220), which means flattering and paraising the audience, like in the following examples: "*celor mai buni specialişti*" ("*the best specialists*"), "*meseria de marinar militar este una excepţională*" ("*a sailor's job is an exceptional one*"), "*luptători veritabili*" ("*true warriors*"). Mucchielli (2002: 15) states that through every compliment or praise, the spokesperson acknowledges without any doubt the other's value. The person that was flattered is more willing to listen to the one complimenting them; thus, the latter's messages gain a new significance and, consequently, are worth listening to.

Furthermore, praising can boost the recipient's self-esteem, who reconsiders their worth and qualities. As a result, they relate differently to the military system. In Pânişoară's view (2015: 236), this technique of influencing the public is a subtler version of the sweet-talk technique and it is

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[6] Mircea, 2014: 24: "*transformare profundă şi completă a convingerilor, atitudinilor, emoţiilor şi opiniilor relevante ale publicului ţintă*" – original Romanian version.

called "positive labelling". Specific to this type of communication are the phrase that contain reassurance, like:

> *"Sunt optimist, avem o gândire pozitivă că vom reuşi"* *("I am optimistic, we think in positive terms that we will succeed"), "Cu dăruire şi curaj, suntem pregătiţi să îndeplinim misiunile cu succes şi să asigurăm securitatea ţării noastre" ("With dedication and courage, we are ready to fulfill our missions successfully and to ensure the security of our country").*

What is more, the speaker expresses his support for the activities carried out by the entire personnel of the navy and shows his empathy when referring to the hardships sailors go through during missions at sea. The following excerpts are a case in point: "*Ştim că viaţa pe mare şi pe ocean nu este simplă pentru marinari.*" ("*We know that life at sea and on the ocean is not easy for sailors.*"), "*[...]vă asigur că [...] ei vor primi tot sprijinul nostru*" ("*[...] I assure you [...] they will get our full support*").

As observed, public relations campaigns play an essential role in promoting organizations and institutions the navy, in our case. The interest shown to aspects related to ethics, virtue and norms that are fundamental to the functioning of a society brings public relations closer to rhetorical tradition.

In Antiquity the word was seen as the essence of rhetoric, while discourse was the display of carefully chosen, crafted speech (Moldoveanu, 2022: 18). The orator wisely selects the way to persuade the audience: manipulation, propaganda, seduction, etc. Aristotel identifies three primary types of rhetorical discourse: deliberative, judicial, and epideictic, each of them having "*a topic, a purpose, a criterion, a time frame, and a specific argumentation*"[7] (Ene, 2007: 15). Military discourse falls under the category of epideictic oratory, which is used to praise and blame someone by

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[7] Ene, 2007:15: "*un subiect, un scop, un criteriu, un timp şi o argumentaţie specifice*" – original Romanian version.

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highlighting their virtues or vices. The underlying criterion of this gender is beauty, so exaggeration and amplification become the norm.

Aristotel proposes a threefold model for persuasion: ethos, logos and pathos. Ethos is connected to the speaker and denotes the credibility invested in them. By winning the goodwill of the audience, the orator has to prove that he is trustworthy and proficient in the topic at hand. By using an authoritarian, formal, and objective tone together with charisma the spokesperson is trying to reason with their public. In military ceremonial speeches the speaker's authority and credibility cannot be questioned. Their position in the Naval Forces vouches for their skills and qualities as a leader, which legitimate them being the emissary of the message.

Logos stands for the use of reasonable arguments: proofs, explanations, analogies, reasoning, definitions. The discourse must have a logical, clear and concise structure so that it can be easy to follow and have the expected outcome. In military speeches they dwell upon the historical significance of the event: "*120 de ani de sărbătoare*" ("*120 years of celebration*"), "*162 de ani de înființare*" ("*162 years since the inauguration*"), "*[...] nava a fost construită și [...] a plecat spre țară acum 80 de ani*" (*[...] the ship was built and [...] set sail towards the country 80 years ago*"). A summary of the most recent accomplishments (missions and partnerships) is also presented, as well as a vision for the future that rests on modernization and education, like in these examples:

> "*[...] ne dorim să călim, să pregătim și să ridicăm nivelul de performanță la nivelul echipajului Bricului Mircea*" ("*[...] we want to strengthen, to prepare, and to increase the level of performance for the crew of Tall Ship Mircea*"), "*[...] vom reuși să dezvoltăm programele de înzestrare și să modernizăm Forțele Navale Române*" ("*[...] we will succeed to develop the acquisition programs and to modernize the Romanian Naval Forces*").

By presenting these arguments, the spokesmen create a persuasive narrative which pleas for a common goal, for collective effort promoting thus, a feeling of camaraderie and national pride among the audience.

To emphasize growth and the plans for the future, the speaker resorts to emotion, which counterbalances the concrete facts and data offered. Through pathos they try to seduce and move the audience. For this, the orator has to speak with passion and conviction if he wants to bring about an emotional reaction and a series of profound experiences. The ultimate goal is persuading the public of the validity of the arguments presented (Moldoveanu, 2022: 20). The appeal to emotion is done not only through linguistic means, but also through paralinguistic ones. Among the linguistic ones, we could mention "*the evaluative lexicon with emotional connotation – descriptors, superlative forms and specialized emotions and affect lexicon*"[8] (Ene, 2007:15). In the category of evaluative vocabulary we are going to mention the following excerpts from military speeches: "*celor mai buni specialişti*" ("*the best specialists*")*,* "*excepţional*" ("*exceptional*"), "*incredibil*" ("*incredible*"), "*intens*" ("*intense*"), "*important*". Emotion-related vocabulary is full of words connected to pride, hope and gratitude for our ancestors and their sacrifices: "*bucurie*" ("*joy*"), "*onoare*" ("*honor*"), "*amar*" ("*grief*"), "*abnegaţie*" ("*devotion*"), "*dăruire*" ("*commitment*"), "*dedicare*" ("*dedication*"), etc. The speaker also resorts to pathos in the way they portray themselves in front of the audience: like a connoisseur of the system and like an empathic person who cares about the problems navy personnel has to face.

Conclusions

Communication represents the foundation for the efficient functioning of organizations and institutions, while having a defining role in decision

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[8] Ene, 2007:15: "*lexicul evaluativ cu conotaţii emoţionale – descriptori, superlative şi lexicul specializat al emoţiilor şi al afectelor*" – original Romanian version.

making process, in coordinating current and future activities, and in internal and external cooperation.

In the military system, the role of communication is a vital one as it contributes to organizing missions and exercises, to giving orders, to maintaining discipline, and to motivating the personnel. However, internal communication is not sufficient for activities to go smoothly. What it also takes is good partnership with the external environment and with the mass-media, which help shaping and cultivating a cohesive and trustworthy public image. Consequently, this type of verbal interaction, from the interior towards the exterior, involves not only informing, but also influencing the recipient.

In this respect, we have analyzed the public relations and rhetorical strategies used in the speeches delivered during the ceremonies organized by the Romanian Navy. Through their declamatory tone, the speakers are trying to win the goodwill of the audience and to create an emotional bond. That is why they resort to praise words, to empathy, to encouragement, and to emotions to amplify the impact on the public. There are constant references to the spirit of solidarity and sacrifice, to patriotism and to the respect for the national values, which contribute to portraying the military as a unified system and as a trustworthy partner both at the national and international levels. Obviously, those who are part of the military system from the military personnel to the civilians up to their families share the same features specific to the military.

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THE LINGUISTIC CONFIGURATION OF
TATAR WEDDINGS IN DOBRUJA

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Abstract

The ethnic diversity in Dobruja influences the wedding ceremony and the traditional prop, which varies according to the community we are referring to: Romanians, Lipovans, Turkish, Tatars, Aromanians, etc. In the current study we will highlight some terms related to the specific wedding attire and props of the Tatars in Dobruja, grouped according to extra linguistic criteria: the gender of the person wearing the wedding attire (bride, groom), colors and symbols, types of items that make up the dowry, etc.

Alongside the clothing terminology, we will also take into consideration the elements pertaining to the wedding ceremony: various categories of fabrics and embroideries that make up the bride's dowry in the Tatar community, the collection of gifts that were offered to the bride, to the groom's family, but also to the suitors or to the groomsmen.

This paper's aim is to highlight the linguistic complexity generated by the Tatar wedding ceremony in Dobruja. The language and terms that make up the props of Tatar weddings reveal a mixture of archaisms and ritualistic expressions, loans from Turkish, Romanian, etc. The linguistic elements of Dobrujan Tatar weddings are not mere expressions, but can be considered identity landmarks, which carry on the cultural heritage of the community.

Key-terms
Tatar language lexis, ritual clothing, symbolic gifts, ceremonial objects.

1. The bride's dowry

According to tradition, Tatar girls would get married at the age of 16, and by then their dowry was prepared. Without it, there could be no marriage negotiation. The dowry of Tatar brides in Dobruja reflects both their social status and the cultural heritage of the family they come from. Among the items that make up the dowry we could mention:

- Fabrics and embroideries – *bayerbaş, testîmal* ("towels"), *cse* ("wall carpet in vibrant colors"), *câbrâs* ("wall carpet decorated with floral embroidery''), blankets, *şewre/ cevre* ("wedding

handkerchiefs"), *marama*[1] ("long and wide headscarf decorated with floral embroidery"), *şerbentî* (another type of "towel", but wider), etc. These fabrics and embroideries are frequently displayed inside the house to show the girl's dowry and the gifts she can offer.[2]

- Traditional clothing – wedding dresses, veils, scarves, different festive clothes, etc.
- Household objects – kettle, baklava tray, decorated plates, pillows, mattresses, etc.
- Precious jewelry – which were frequently handed down from generation to generation.
- The necklace (*gurdila*), a "neck ornament" made up of several strings of coins (gold coins) offered as dowry to the girl.[3]

The stages of a Tatar weeding coincide with the Romanian ones: the matchmaking, the proposal, the engagement, and the wedding. After the families got to know each other (*cauşi*), if the boy's family liked the girl, the intention to propose was revealed. The boy's family would bring symbolic gifts to the proposal (*kız isteme*). If the girl's parents accepted the proposal, it was followed by the engagement (*nişan*), a very important event, which took place at the future bride's home. In this setting, the engagement ring was offered and gifts were brought (clothes, jewelry, carpets). Before the wedding, the bride would display her dowry in front of her relatives to be admired. On the eve of the wedding, a group of young men would come to the groom's house to stretch ropes to hang the gifts received from the bride. The room prepared for this custom was called *çigip odasi*. The bride's dowry could also be hung from these ropes (*ip gerdirme*).[4] The expression *ip gerdirme* literally means "stretching a rope" in Turkish. However, in Dobrujan Tatar traditions it takes on a ritualistic meaning.

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[1] Cf. rom. *maramă* "headscarf", actually, "a long strip of thin veil that women in the countryside use to cover their heads when they wear the traditional costume", cf. DEX, s.v. The headscarf was often very long and its ends were left hanging almost to the ground.
[2] M. Magiru, 2009, p. 14.
[3] I. Dumitrescu, 1920, p. 165.
[4] C. D. Constantinescu-Mirceşti, 1939, p. 218.

2. Wedding gifts

At the wedding different objects were given to the people who made sure the event ran smoothly:

- Towels (*testîmal/ testimel*)[5], which were offered to the masters of ceremony (*sağdıç*), to the help of the bride's and groom's families, to the dancers and to the musicians. They were made of cotton or linen, and could be embroidered with different patterns (floral, geometric). The towel had a symbolic role, and it was tied around the wrist, neck or waist, according to the person's role in the wedding.
- Tobacco pouches (*tutun kisesi*) are embroidered velvet or fabric pouches offered as gifts, which were tied with string or tassels and contained ground tobacco. They were offered as gifts to men. This custom is almost forgotten nowadays, being replaced by modern party favors like bags of sweets or lavender.
- *Basma tastar* (sometimes written *başma taştar* or just *tastar* or *pasma tastar*) was given as a gift to older women who helped with the preparation of the bride (aunts, female neighbors, relatives); it also had a symbolic role standing for the bride's gratitude towards those who were by her side on her wedding day, and for the celebration of the bride's transition to a new stage in her life. It was manually embroidered with floral or geometric motifs and decorated with fringes and beads.
- Wedding handkerchiefs *(şewre/ cevre)* were offered to groomsmen *(sağdıç,* the equivalent of young masters of ceremony). They were made of fine fabrics like cotton or vegetable silk and were embroidered by hand around the edges. In the middle of the handkerchief, they would often sew tobacco pouches, money or a watch. The young men that decorate the groom's room receive two napkins/ handkerchiefs, one is tied to the ceiling of the room, while the other is taken as a gift.[6]

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[5] The Romanian term *testemel* „babushka, kerchief, napkin" is derived from it; a term used especially in Dobruja and in the Danube Plain, cf. DLR, s.v.
[6] *Ibidem*

- *Tokîz/ tocâz* – word derived from Turkish and used in various Turkish communities; it refers to a collection of gifts offered to the groom or to her mother-in-law by the bride. It consisted mainly in clothing items or accessories. Specific to Tatars in Dobruja is the fact that on their way from the bride's house to the groom's the groomsmen would dance the *tokîz*, which means that there has been an extension of meaning, common in historical semantics, from one referent to another, from the same sphere of interest. This collection of gifts counted 9 or 11 items, which could be woven onto a garment, a shirt, for example. The items that make up the *tokîz* are: *ştan* (tights), *ilec* (shirt), *şewre* (handkerchiefs), *kîse* (pouches for watches or tobacco), *şerbentî*, *şerîk* (napkins), *şorap-baw* (groom's garters). As for the gift for the mother-in-law, the *tokîz* also contained nine items, tied and sewn together: one *cevre*, one *cse*, one headscarf, one *serbenti*, one shirt (*colec*) and the carpet (*cbras*).[7]
- *Condra* – boots offered to the girl and to his parents-in-law by the groom.[8]

3. Wedding attire

The wedding attire has a unique significance because it reflects not only the social status of the newlyweds and the beginning of a new stage in their lives, but also the cultural values of the community.

A Tatar bride's outfit is an elegant one, richly decorated, which combines both local tradition and Ottoman influences. Among the clothing items that make up her attire we are going to mention: the wedding dress (*kelĭn paşalı*) made from a verity of special fabrics (silk, velvet), which can be decorated with golden or silver embroidery; the veil (*yasmak*), which covers the bride's head and face, and can be accessorized with embroidery, beads or gold threads; jewelry (*takı*) frequently handed down from generation to generation.

Wedding dresses called *kelĭn paşalı* or *bindallı* ("the dress with one thousand branches") were meant for certain social categories and were

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[7] I. Dumitrescu, 1920, p. 162.
[8] M. Magiru, 2009, p. 19.

designed in specialized urban tailor shops. They were to be found in Turkish communities in Romania.[9]

Yasmak has two totally different meanings of different origins, although it is written and pronounced the same. On the one hand, it refers to "veil", "headscarf" (word derived from Turkish which means "to cover"), and on the other hand to "rosin''/ "glue''/ "natural resin''. During the beautification process the bride went through, they used *yasmak* – a mix of melted rosin and lemon salt, which, once hardened, removed facial hair.[10] The word was borrowed in Romanian in the form *iaşmac*, meaning "veil that Turkish women covered their faces with".

The traditional dress in rural communities in Dobruja contains a wide variety of items that women used to cover their heads, such as: *şember*[11], *crep*[12], *tastar, pasma, şal, şalişal, kıyıkşa*[13], *baş cawlık, marama*[14], *dolanma, bayırbaş*[15]. In Tatar wedding folklore (*şın*) we find the velvet fez hat associated with the *şember* ("*kadipe peşin töbesi şember*"), which suggests the fact that it was used to decorate the young girls' heads. This hat, an item of Turkish influence widely spread both in Romania and in vast Balkan regions, was integrated in the bride's ceremonial dress and in the specific attire of girls coming from rich families in Bucovina, Suceava, Neamţ, Ramnicu-Sarat, Teleorman, Gorj, Dobrogea[16]

Also related to beauty practices, as describes above, they applied a white liquid called *düzghin* on the bride's face, which replaces setting powder and stretches the skin. The lips and cheeks are painted using *kirmizilîk*[17], while for the eyebrows they use a black mixture called *kaş*. To contour the eyes the *sürme* is used. The bride wore a forehead decoration named

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[9] *Idem*, p. 56.
[10] C. D. Constantinescu-Mirceşti, 1939, p. 220.
[11] Headscarf used by women of all ages adopted from Turkish fashion.
[12] Babushka, with a common denominative in Turkish, refers to the type of fabric it was made of (silk), being a more precious variant of *şember*.
[13] Triangular babushka, which can be worn as a belt.
[14] The denominative word *marama*, derived from Turkish (*mahrama*), can refer to three different types of objects: "headscarf made of Dobrujan vegetable silk", *şerbentî* type embroidered decoration ("rustic country embroidery"), "embroidered decoration made using narrow triangle stitches" (covering the forehead).
[15] Headscarf similar to *marama*.
[16] M. Magiru, 2009, pp. 53-54.
[17] "Red dye".

apistinna, made of red fabric, cut in the shape of a heart or flowers, and embroidered with stones. [18]

Kawkaz-kuşak is a Caucasian-inspired belt, which had a ceremonial rather than practical role. It was made in the form of a metalized textile cord, doubled with pieces of cloth. The belt was decorated with floral and plant ornaments using the incision and engraving techniques. This item can be found in the Tatar community in Dobruja in the 19th century. The word *kawkaz* designates the region of Caucasia and acquires cultural values in this Dobrujan context since some of the Tatars in Dobruja descend from Caucasian refugees. *Kusak* has common roots in many Turkic languages like Tatar, Turkish, Uzbek, etc. When used in reference to clothes, it refers to a traditional belt. Thus, *kawkaz-kusak* means "Caucasian belt", denoting the cultural influence in that region.

Ceremonial jewelry can be perceived as decorative objects, but also as symbols of the bride's and her family's status.

Blezîk, word derived from Turkish (*bilezik*), refers to "bangles made of gold or silver'', which feature floral or emblematic ornaments, and are decorated with semiprecious stones.

Topli, "decorative clothes pins'' (ceremonial brooch), is made using the same techniques as for *blezîk*. It could be worn to secure the veil or shawl, and in some ethnogeographical areas (Medgidia, Cobadin, Valu lui Traian) women wore it as a festive accessory at weddings.

Sîrga, a word of Turkic origin, with a form that has survived in the Tatar dialects in Dobruja, stands for earrings, which were given to girls at a symbolic age, at their engagement, for example. The earrings were part of the girl's dowry and could be made of gold, silver, copper, or even a common metal, according to the family's status. As a basic item in the attire of Dobrujan Tatar women, the *sîrga* had an aesthetic and protective role; it was worn as an amulet meant to ward off the evil eye, that is why some models contained protective symbols against the evil eye (*nazarlik*).

The Tatar groom wears clothes like *şalvar* (loose trousers made of fabric or silk), *işlik* (white or colored high collar shirts) or *keten kolek* (linen shirt), *takke* (traditional headwear), *kemer* (wide leather or embroidered fabric

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[18] C. D. Constantinescu-Mirceşti, 1939, p. 220.

belt), *ceket* (coat similar to a jacket or tunic made of wool or cashmere and embroidered with traditional motifs).

According to the historical period and the community the groom belonged to, we can distinguish several types of ornamental objects. For instance, *kemer* is a word derived from Turkish meaning "belt", which was used to support the traditional pants and was usually made of leather.

Among the groom's accessories we could mention:

- *Mendîl* (wedding handkerchief), made of silk or cotton, sometimes embroidered with traditional or symbolic motifs. The groom can wear the *mendîl* around his wrist or can attach it somewhere to his ceremonial dress (to the waistband of his trousers, for instance).
- *Para kisesi* (money pouch), sewn or embroidered with traditional motifs, could be black with golden embroidery and was used to collect the money given as wedding gift during the ceremony.
- *Şorap baw* (groom's garter) matched the *para kisesi* (the same material and embroidery) and was worn on the groom's leg, around the thigh. Their significance is related to fertility, prosperity and luck in married life.

A piece of clothing worn by Tatar men during ceremonies is the *fermen*, "man's vest with sleeves". Such a garment, with its front made of baize and the lining made of yellow satin, is exhibited at the Museum of Folk Art in Constanţa. The tunic collar is decorated with small floral and plant embroideries made with silver metallic thread. This item of clothing was worn in the first half of the 19th century in the Tatar communities in Dobruja.

In what the color pattern is concerned, we notice that the groom wears sober tones (dark blue, black), while the bride chooses strong colors for her pre-ceremony outfit (blue, green, red) leaving white and pastels for the wedding day.

Conclusions

To conclude, the language and terms that form the wedding prop in a Tatar family in Dobruja reveal a mixture of archaisms and ritualistic expressions, with elements borrowed from Turkish, Romanian, etc. The linguistic component of Dobrujan Tatar weddings is not just a simple verbal

expression, but it can be considered an identity landmark, which carries on the cultural legacy of the community.

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THE PROBLEMATICS OF
GRAMATICAL GENDER OF
NOUNS IN ROMANIAN GRAMMARS

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Abstract

In Romanian descriptive grammars, noun inflection is a controversial chapter. However, grammarians agree that the noun has the known grammatical categories: gender, number and case, and that gender is not a criterion for inflection, since it is an intrinsic feature of the noun.

This paper presents an exploration of the gender subcategories of the noun, as illustrated in the three modern Romanian grammars, and describes both the motivated or unmotivated classification of nouns into the gender subcategories - masculine, feminine and neuter, as well as the general morphological, syntactic and semantic expression of this grammatical category.

Thus, an undeniable feature of the gender of the noun is its fixed character because each noun has a gender feature, by which it falls into one of the three subcategories, each of them having its own inflection, characterized by homonyms and specific combinations of desinences. Moreover, there are also nouns whose inclusion in a particular gender subcategory is closely related to the expression of semantic distinctions imposed by natural gender.

Key words

Grammatical gender, specific contexts, common gender, personal nouns, epicene nouns.

1. Classifying gender by meaning

In Romanian, according to the three grammars, nouns are divided into three gender subcategories: masculine, feminine and neuter.

The authors of GA_1 insist upon assigning gender to nouns according to their meaning by presenting examples of nouns for each gender. Thus, they consider as masculine those nouns that designate male beings and objects, which by resemblance to the former ones, are also considered masculine, recognizable because they use *un* (one) in the singular and *doi* (two) in the plural when counting them: *(un) băiat – (doi) băieți* ((one) boy – (two) boys). Masculine nouns are classified according to meaning into the following

categories: common and proper names of male beings (*vițel*=calf, *câine*=dog, *bărbat*=man, *Alin*); names of mountains (*Ceahlău, Parâng*), names of trees (*prun*=plum tree, *păr*=pear tree), some names of flowers and plants (*usturoi*=garlic, *trandafir*=rose), some names of things (*perete*=wall, *buștean-*=log), names of coins (*dinar, dolar*=dollar, *galben*=gold coin), names of the letters of the alphabet (*d, e, f*), names of the months of the year, of music notes and of most of the digits (*aprilie*=April, *mi, sol, (un) cinci*=(one) five)[1].

What is more, these linguists state that feminine nouns are those names of female beings and objects, which by analogy with these ones are also considered feminine, recognizable in the singular by *o* (one) and in the plural by *două* (two): *(o) femeie – (două) femei* ((one) woman – (two) women). Hence, they classify them into the following categories: common and proper names of female beings (*fată* =girl, *Mioara*), names of things (*pătură*=blanket, *pernă*=pillow), names of fruit and most names of flowers (*prună*=plum, *lalea*=tulip), names of days, of times of the day and of seasons (*marți*=Tuesday, *seară*=evening, *iarnă*=winter), names of countries, continents and islands (*Spania*=Spain, *America, Sicilia*=Sicily), names that express feelings (*teamă*=fear, *iubire*=love) and names of actions often derived from long infinitives (*trimitere*=reference/referral, *citire*=reading).

They do the same for the neuter gender, which includes nouns that designate inanimate objects and some collective and generic names, except from some nouns which designate animate beings, formally identified by the fact that they use the word *un* (one) in the singular and the word *două* (two) in the plural when counting them. These words fall under the following thematic categories: most names of objects (*creion*=pencil, *tablou*=painting), names of senses (*văz*=sight, *miros*=smell), names of actions derived from supines (*ronțăit*=nibbled, *curățat*=cleaned), names of matter and of features that do not have a plural form or have a different meaning in plural (*curaj*=courage, *frig*=cold), names of some sports and games (*baschet*=basketball, *șah*=chess), names of some winds (*austru, crivăț*), and some names of animate beings (*macrou*=mackerel, *tist*=commander/ officer)[2].

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[1] GA₁, 1966, p. 58.
[2] GA₁, 1966, p. 59.

GALR₁ draws up this classification just for inanimate nouns, by bringing supplementary information about the peculiarity of the noun to express, through the category of gender, content features concerning sex differences (masculine/feminine) by resorting to the dissociation of animate from inanimate names. The authors point out the fact that semantic oppositions "*can explain the grammatical gender of some nouns*"[3]. In fact, according to these grammarians, many nouns fall arbitrarily into gender series, apart from semantic reasons, and thus, there are several types of grammatical gender inconsistencies with the natural gender:

a) [-Animate] → neuter: *animal, dobitoc* (beast), etc. The number of animate neuter nouns is low, that is why it mainly includes generic nouns, "*but there is a tendency for it to expand through neologisms with individual reference*: *star, VIP*), etc"[3].

b) [-Animate] [-Sex] → masculine: *covrig* (bagel)*, perete* (wall), etc.
[-Animate] [-Sex] → feminine: *casă* (house)*, macara* (crane), etc.

2. Grammatical gender

GA₁ researchers highlight the difference in sex in humans and animals in two ways:

a) through different words for each of the two beings of opposite sex: *bărbat-femeie* (man-woman)*, frate-soră* (brother-sister)*, unchi-mătuşă* (uncle-aunt);

b) by creating new words by adding suffixes to nouns of the opposite gender, a process called "*motion*", and thus, the resulting nouns are called "*mobile*" nouns[4]:

• feminine nouns formed from masculine ones using the following suffixes: **-ă** → *bătrân-bătrână* (old man-old lady)*, bunic-bunică* (grandfather-grandmother), **-iţă** → *actor-actriţă* (actor-actress)*, frizer-frizeriţă* (barber-lady barber), **-că** → *cobian-cobiancă* (male from Cobia-female from Cobia)*, sătean-săteancă* (male villager-female villager), **-oaică**

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[3] GALR₁, 2008, p. 66: "*pot motiva genul gramatical al unor substantive*"; "*dar se observă tendinţa sa de extindere prin substantive neologice cu referinţă individuală: star, vip etc.*" – original Romanian version.
[4] GA₁, 1966, p. 62.

→ *leu-leoaică* (lion-lioness)*, zmeu-zmeoaică* (dragon-dragoness), **-easă →** *cofetar-cofetăreasă* (male pastry chef-female pastry chef)*, mire-mireasă* (bride-groom), **-esă →** *duce-ducesă* (duke-duchess)*, conte-contesă* (count-countess);

- masculine nouns formed from feminine ones using the following suffixes: **-oi →** *vulpe-vulpoi* (fox-vixen)*, rață-rățoi* (duck-drake), **-an →** *ciocârlie-ciocârlan* (male skylark-female skylark)*, gâscă-gâscan* (goose-gender).

According to GALR₁ authors the two previous groups mentioned in GA₁ belong to a single category called "*nouns that form pairs differentiated by gender, masculine/feminine, corresponding to sex distinctions*"[5]. In contrast, GALR₁ linguists add a new group to the series of nouns whose grammatical gender matches the natural gender, namely: nouns with a single gender form, "*corresponding to some referential features*" ("*corespunzătoare unor particularități referențiale*")[6]. They consider that the following types of nouns can be distinguished among nouns with single gender structure:

- only masculine nouns that refer to people whose features are associated with the male gender: *bariton* (baritone), *tenor*, etc. or with exclusively male occupations/status (in a certain era): *pașă* (pasha), *voievod* (voivode), *popă* (priest), *latifundiar* (landowner), etc.

- exclusively feminine nouns, denoting people with features associated with the female sex: *gravidă* (pregnant woman), *soprană* (soprano), etc. or with predominantly female occupations: *casnică* (housewife), *moașă* (midwife), *soră (de caritate)* (nurse), etc., less frequently feminine non-personal animate nouns: *cloșcă* (hen), *matcă* (queen bee), etc.[7].

GBLR authors claim that nouns do not switch gender, as seen in the words chosen for demonstration: *student* (male student) and *studentă* (female student), which they consider to be two distinct nouns, "*the feminine one*

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[5] GALR₁, 2008, p. 66 : "*substantive care alcătuiesc perechi diferențiate ca gen, masculine / feminine, raportate la distincțiile de sex*"– original Romanian version.
[6] *Ibidem.*
[7] GALR₁, 2008, p. 67.

being formed from the masculine one using the motional suffix "-ă""[8]. The researchers point out the fact that nouns designating animate and inanimate referents have, in most cases, motivated gender (i.e. the natural gender of the referent). Thus, in the case of masculine or feminine animate nouns, they notice that there is sometimes a correspondence between the grammatical gender marked by desinences and the referent's sex ((*băiat*=boy, *fată*=girl), while other times, although they have a feminine desinence, animate nouns reflect the natural gender (*tată*=father, *popă*=priest, *agă*=aga). In the case of the neuter gender, which generally includes inanimate nouns (*pat*=bed, *stilou*=pen, *creion*=pencil), they notice that it also includes a number of animate nouns (*animal*=animal, *popor*=people, *star*).

2. Contexts for recognizing genders

According to GALR[1] grammarians noun gender classes "*are characterized by the selection of certain adjectival contexts (proper, participial, pronominal adjectives)*".[9] GBLR authors support this classification and assign nouns to genders based on their distribution in the context of a determiner with distinct forms for gender and number, such as *acest* (this): masculine: *acest cal* (this horse), *aceşti cai* (these horses), feminine: *această pernă* (this pillow), *aceste perne* (these pillows), and neuter: *acest stilou* (this pen), *aceste stilouri* (these pens), or in the context of a four-form adjective (*bun*=good, *frumos*=beautiful). They conclude that only the contexts *această* (this) and *aceşti* (these) select just one form: *pernă* (pillow) and *cai* (horses), respectively; that is why they are considered *specific*, in other words, they are specific to the feminine and masculine, and any noun that appears in one of these contexts is feminine or masculine. In contrast, the contexts *acest* (this) and *aceste* (these) are considered to be *non-specific* by the authors, since they are common for both masculine and neuter nouns in the singular and for feminine and neuter nouns in the plural. Thus,

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[8] GBLR, 2016, p. 50 : "*cel de genul feminin fiind format cu ajutorul sufixului moţional „-ă" de la cel masculin*" – original Romanian version.
[9] GALR[1], 2008, p. 64 : "*se caracterizează prin selectarea anumitor contexte adjectivale (adjective propriu-zise, participiale, pronominale)*" – original Romanian version.

only the association of the two *non-specific* contexts can lead to telling apart the class of neuter nouns (*acest stilou*=this pen, *aceste stilouri*=these pens)[10].

In her work "*O gramatică a limbii române altfel*" researcher Isabela Nedelcu states that "*due to its formal identity in the singular with the masculine and in the plural with the feminine, the neuter has not been considered a distinct gender by some researchers*" [11], but in order to argue that the neuter is a distinct gender, semantic-referential and morpho-syntactic arguments can be brought. A semantic-referential argument mentioned by this author is that neuter nouns designate inanimate referents, except for some generic nouns (*animal*=animal, *fotomodel*=model, *model*), or collective ones (*popor*=people, *cârd* =crowd), as opposed to masculine and feminine nouns, which can designate animate and inanimate referents.

GALR[1] authors point out that a small number of nouns allows only one of the four types of adjectival contexts:

a) *acest curaj, ~ handbal* etc.;   this courage, ~ handball, etc.
b) *această loialitate, ~ făină* etc.;   this loyalty, ~ flower, etc.
c) *aceşti lapţi, ~ pantaloni* etc.;   these fish testes, ~ trousers, etc.
d) *aceste aplauze, ~ tărâţe* etc.[12]   these applause, ~ bran, etc.

Thus, they consider that nouns that correspond to one of the gender-specific contexts type (c) / (b) are in the masculine or feminine, while nouns that exclusively accept one of the gender-specific contexts common to masculine and neuter (a) or to feminine and neuter (d) cannot be placed in any gender class, being considered "*arhigenuri*"[13] (archegender) with incomplete paradigm, by the absence of either the plural form, if they exclusively accept context (a), or of the singular form, if they exclusively belong to context (d). GBLR grammarians hold the same view and consider that due to the paradigm flaw and gender nonspecificity, these nouns belong to the masculine-neutral *arhigen* (*curaj*=courage, *spate*=back) or feminine-neutral *arhigen* (*aplauze*=applause, *viscere* =viscera)[14].

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[10] GBLR, 2016, p. 51.
[11] Gabriela Pană Dindelegan (coord.), 2021, p. 241: "*din cauza identităţii formale la singular cu masculinul şi la plural cu femininul, neutrul nu a fost considerat un gen distinct de către unii cercetători*" – original Romanian version.
[12] GALR[1], 2008, p. 64.
[13] *Ibidem*.
[14] GBLR, 2016, p. 51.

3. Common gender

Specialists in the morphology of the Romanian language from GA₁ underline the agreement between gender and sex in personal names, present in common names: *bărbat-femeie* (man-woman), *tată-mamă* (father-mother), *unchi-mătuşă* (uncle-aunt), *băiat-fată* (boy-girl), in personal proper nouns: *Cătălin-Cătălina*, *Florea-Floarea*, as well as in some masculine nouns (names of occupations) from which a feminine form was formed, designating the female person who has the same occupation: *doctor-doctoriţă*, (doctor-female doctor), *sudor-sudoriţă* (welder-female welder)*, şcolar-şcolăriţă* (schoolboy-schoolgirl). On the other hand, they state that there are situations where the agreement between gender and sex is not achieved, like for nouns in which the feminine form is not fixed, resulting in a more frequent use of the masculine form: *maistoriţă* (forewoman), but also *maistru* (foreman), *sondoriţă-sondoră* (female assistant driller), but also *sondor* (male assistant driller), or some masculine nouns, also used in relation to women who fill in these positions or do these jobs: *electrician* (electrician)*, frezor* (milling machine operator)*, mecanic* (mechanic)*, medic* (doctor)*, ministru* (minister)*, rector* (rector)*, tehnolog* (technologist). Moreover, they observed that by canceling the agreement between gender and sex with suffixes, some nouns have an affective nuance, which can be derogatory, for example, *fată-fătoi* (girl-sissy boy): "*Dintr-atîtica s-o făcut coşcoge **fătoi***"[15] ("From such a little boy he turned into such a **sissy boy**"); others emphasize their pejorative meaning when used in the feminine form to refer to a male like the noun "*nătăfleaţă*" (ninny) said about a man, which is more derogatory than "*nătăfleţ*" (blockhead, silly): "*Aş fi o **nătăfleaţă** să dau cu piciorul norocului*" ("*I would be a **ninny** to blow chance*").[16]

If in GA₁, the agreement between gender and sex in personal nouns is reviewed extensively, in GALR₁ and GBLR researchers present the appearance of a subclass of interference of masculine with feminine, called *common gender*. Thus, according to GALR₁ authors, a restricted group of "*affective*" derived or compound nouns: *dinţişor* (little tooth)*, fluieră-vânt*

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[15] GA₁, 1966, p. 63.
[16] *Ibidem*.

(idler), *papă-lapte* (milksop)*, târâie-brâu* (slacker), etc. allow all four types of adjectival contexts:

(a) *acest **papă-lapte, fluieră-vânt** etc.;*   *this **milksop, idler,** etc.;*
(b) *această **papă-lapte, fluieră-vânt** etc.;*   *this **milksop, idler,** etc.;*
(c) *acești **papă-lapte, fluieră-vânt** etc.;*   *these **milksop, idler,** etc.;*
(d) *aceste **papă-lapte, fluieră-vânt** etc.*[17]   *these **milksop, idler,** etc.;*

Thus, the above mentioned authors consider that the occurrence of these nouns in adjectival contexts specific to both masculine (c) and feminine (b) is an indicator they belong to *common gender*, which does not behave differently, but which can be determined based on context both in the masculine and in the feminine (*A fost totdeauna **un papă-lapte**.*, *Elena, ești **o nătăfleață**.*) (*He/She has always been a **milksop**.*, *Helen, you are a **ninny**)* [18].

4. From "personal gender" to "personal nouns"

In traditional grammars such as GA$_1$ and GALR$_1$ we find references to the "*personal gender*", which includes "*proper and common nouns that designate people and personified animals*"[19] Over time this vision has changed because GBLR authors refer to "*personal nouns*". However, all three grammars point out the two following features of masculine and feminine proper and common nouns, which fall into this gender:

a. taking the morphological criterion into consideration, marking oblique cases in singular when the noun is individualized by using the definite proclitic article *lui*: *mingea lui Marin* (Marin's ball), *(îi) dau lui Marin* ((I) give to Marin)[20];

b. taking the syntactic criterion into consideration, marking the direct object using the preposition *pe*: *văd pe tata* (I see *pe* my father)*, pe Marin, pe mama* (*pe* my mother)*, pe Maria,*[21] etc.

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[17] GALR$_1$, 2008, p. 65.
[18] *Ibidem*.
[19] GA$_1$, 1966, p. 59: "*substantive proprii şi comune care denumesc persoane sau animale personificate*" – original Romanian version.
[20] GBLR, 2016, p.74.
[21] GALR$_1$, 2008, p. 68.

A peculiarity of "personal gender" in GA[1], which is not found in modern grammars is that by adding diminutive or augmentative suffixes to personal proper names they retain their gender: *George* (masculine) – *Georgică* (masculine), unlike common nouns which change gender: *fată* (feminine) – *fătoi* (sissy boy) (masculine)[22].

GALR[1] authors state that "*personal gender is not a well-established sub(class) of nouns within the gender category*"[23] due to the fact that its features are not homogenously present in all personal nouns, common or proper, and the specific expression of some common and proper nouns is related in particular to individualization by naming personal or non-personal animate nouns, thus, falling in the common/proper distinction. They highlight a feature of the "*personal gender*" that is also to be found in GA[1], namely the addition of the possessive pronominal adjective to the non-articulated form of kinship names: *frate-meu*, (my brother), *soră-mea* (my sister)*, maică-mea* (my sister), *tată-meu* (my father), etc.; this feature of" personal nouns" is no longer mentioned in GBLR. In contrast, GALR[1] and GBLR add a new morphological trait to this class, namely using specific desinences to mark the vocative: *Ioane, Mario* etc.

Unlike traditional grammars, GBLR specialists design a lexico-semantic classification of nouns in which they include the "*personal nouns*" in the group of non-prototypical nouns, "*whose special meaning is related to a series of grammatical features, different from those of the common ones*"[24], together with mass, abstract, collective, relational, postverbal, post-adjectival and proper nouns. As noticed above, GBLR linguists have kept the morphological and syntactic features of "personal gender" presented in GA[1] and GALR[1,] and have made a point by adding a series of additions. Thus, they claim that the morphological and syntactic features of this class are not a regular trait of all personal names. One of the reasons is that the genitive and dative of individualized personal nouns (which are not masculine proper nouns) can be expressed by using the enclitic article: *tatei* (to my father)*, popii*

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[22] GA[1], 1966, p. 60.

[23] GALR[1], 2008, p. 68: "*genul personal nu reprezintă o (sub)clasă de substantive clar constituită în cadrul categoriei de gen*" – original Romanian version.

[24] GBLR, 2016, p. 71: "*al căror sens special se corelează cu o serie de particularități gramaticale, diferite de ale celor commune*" – original Romanian version.

(to the priest). Moreover, they state that the vocative can be homonymic with the nominative (*tată* =father*, Ion, Maria*), while the direct object can occur without the preposition *pe*: „*Îl caut pe copil / Caut copilul*" (I am looking for the child/The child is what I am looking for")[25].

5. Epicene nouns

GA[1] authors state that for some animals the difference in sex is not relevant, as their name has the same form for both sexes; this is what we call "*epicene*" nouns. Within this category they include nouns that are used only in the masculine: *bâtlan* (heron)*, cocostîrc* (crane)*, dihor* (ferret), *elefant* (elephant), *future* (butterfly), *guzgan* (rat), etc. and nouns that are used only in the feminine: *cămilă* (camel)*, lebădă* (swan), *privighetoare* (nightingale), *prepeliță* (quail) etc., with the mention that if needed, feminine and masculine forms can also be formed for nouns like *cuc-cucă* (male cokoo bird - female cuckoo bird)*, barză-bărzoi* (male stork - female stork)[26].

GALR[1] authors make a much broader classification of *epicene* nouns, which includes the following categories:

- animate personal nouns of both sexes, classified as masculine: *ministru* (minister), *soldat,* (soldier) *critic literar* (literary critic),[27] etc.;

- animate personal nouns of both sexes, classified as feminine: *persoană* (person), *victimă* (victim), etc.;

- animate personal nouns of both sexes, classified as neuter: *fotomodel* (model), *model*, etc.;

- non-personal animate nouns of both sexes, classified as masculine, from the following semantic groups: names of (wild) animals, birds, fish and insects: *râs* (linx)*, șoim* (hawk)*, somn* (catfish), *purice* (flea), etc.;

- non-personal animate nouns of both sexes, belonging to the feminine, from the following semantic groups: names of animals, birds, fish and insects: *hienă* (hyena)*, nevăstuică* (weasel)*, dropie* (great bustard)*, cegă* (sterlet), *libelulă* (dragonfly)*, viespe* (wasp) etc.;

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[25] GBLR, 2016, p. 74.
[26] GA[1], 1966, p. 63.
[27] GALR[1], 2008, p. 67.

- non-personal animate nouns of both genders, classified as neuter: *animal*, [28] etc.

Given this classification, GALR₁ linguists consider that the natural gender of animate nouns can be updated through contextual epicene nouns (in agreement or disagreement with the grammatical gender), through postposed determiners displayed in pairs: *cangur-mascul / cangur-femelă* (male kangaroo/ female kangaroo), etc., through motional (occasional) derivation: *jderoaică* (female marten), *vrăbioi* (male sparrow),[29] etc. More than this, they have put forward the idea that epicene nouns, whose features are the indifference to the expression of sex differences, and exclusive categorization in a gender subcategory: masculine, feminine or neuter, are distinct from common gender nouns.

Conclusions

The main feature of gender in nouns is its precise nature. Thus, we can notice that there are three grammatical genders: masculine, feminine and neuter, each of them subordinating inflectional classes established both based on specific homonyms and combinations of desinences and by expressing semantic distinctions. For nouns with two gender forms, which are ambiguous when it comes to categorizing nouns as masculine, feminine or neuter, each of the two forms has a fixed gender, representing a variant of the noun's classification in one of the gender subcategories.

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THE TYPOLOGY OF VERBS IN
MODERN ROMANIAN GRAMMARS

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Abstract

The verb is, as we well know, one of the most complex parts of speech in the morphological system of any natural language. In the following pages, we aim to examine the typology of verbs in modern Romanian grammars and to highlight the classification criteria used in their analysis.

In principle, the main verbal categories are determined based on morphological (regular and irregular verbs, predicative and auxiliary), syntactic (transitive, intransitive, copulative) and semantic (action, state, modal) features. Contemporary grammars emphasize the interaction between these criteria, providing an integrated perspective on the verb.

The study emphasizes the complexity of verb classification in Romanian and the need for a flexible approach, which should reflect both their formal structure and their role in the utterance.

Key words

Verb, *verbal typology*, *classification criteria*, *verbal categories.*

1.1. Verb definitions

Classifications of the verb can be traced back to Antiquity, made by Aristotle, the Greek grammarian Dionysios Thrax, and the Latin grammarian Remmius Palaemon. This prominent part of speech is present in all the traditional classifications where its importance is acknowledged. It is typically defined in contrast to the nominal class (nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and numerals).

In *Gramatica limbii române*, vol. I from 1966, the verb is defined as "the *flexible part of speech that is conjugated and expresses actions or states*".[1] Later, in 1976, Dumitru Irimia stated that:

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[1] GA₁, 1966, p. 202: "*partea de vorbire flexibilă care se conjugă și care exprimă acțiuni sau stări*" – original Romanian version.

> *"the verb is defined both in itself (through its specific features) and in opposition (determined precisely by its distinctive features) to other lexico-grammatical units of the language, primarily the noun, at the lexical (to a lesser extent), morphological and syntactic levels."[2]*

The same grammarian considers that:

> *"The verb primarily expresses actions, followed by states, phenomena, existence, all perceived and conveyed dynamically, as a process"[3]*

Ion Coteanu, in his treatise, Gramatica de bază a limbii române, 1982, defines verbs as words "that indicate that something is happening, occurring or that someone is performing an action in the sentence".[4]

The verb is characterized:

> *"by a sufficiently rich notional content, by virtue of which it can possess an adequate lexical meaning and well-defined syntactic functions".[5]*

In GALR₁ the verb is characterized from morphological, syntactic-semantic and pragmatic perspectives.

GALR₁ authors place the verb within "the lexico-grammatical class with an extremely rich inventory".[6]

GBLR authors reiterate the opinion of the above-mentioned authors, classifying the verb in the same "*unified, rich and open lexico-grammatical class (which is continually enriched with new units)*". [7]

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[2] Irimia, 1976, p. 7: "*verbul se definește în sine (prin trăsăturile sale specifice) sau și prin opoziție (condiționată tocmai de notele sale specifice) cu celelalte unitați lexico-gramaticale ale limbii, cu substantivul, în primul rând, la nivel lexical (mai puțin), morfologic și sintactic*" – original Romanian version.

[3] *Ibidem.* : *Verbul exprimă, înainte de toate, acțiuni, apoi stări, fenomene, existența, toate văzute și comunicate dinamic, sub formă de proces.*" – original Romanian version.

[4] Coteanu, 1982, p. 158 : "*care arată că în propoziție se întâmplă, se petrece ceva sau că cineva face o acțiune*" – original Romanian version.

[5] *Ibidem.* : "*printr-un conținut noțional suficient, în virtutea căruia poate dispune de un sens lexical suficient și de funcții sintactice determinate*" – original Romanian version.

[6] GALR1, 2005, p. 323 : *clasa lexico-gramaticală cu un inventar extrem de bogat*" – original Romanian version.

[7] GBLR, 2016, p. 232 : "*clasă lexico-gramaticală unitară, bogată și deschisă (care se îmbogățește permanent cu noi unități).*" – original Romanian version.

In GALR[1], from a morphological point of view, the verb is:

> *"a flexible part of speech, distinguished by a special type of inflection known as conjugation, which consists in changing the form of the verb according to the categories of mood, tense, person, number, voice, each category being expressed through its own set of oppositions and specific forms of realization/expression.[8]*

The same authors propose a definition based on the syntactic-semantic criterion:

> *"it possesses the ability to attract actants, components closely linked to the internal semantics of the verb, to which it assigns specific semantic roles and formal constraints".[9]*

This part of speech is the core that ensures the semantic-syntactic structure of the sentence.

From a semantic point of view the verb:

> *"expresses actions, events and states fixed in time and depicted in aspect"*, being *"the class that carries prediction to the highest degree"*[10] among the other parts of speech.

From a pragmatic perspective it is:

> *"the component of the sentence endowed with a set of grammatical categories, and a high deictic potential (tense, mood and person), categories capable of transforming a syntactic structure into an utterance".[11]*

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[8] GALR[1], 2005, p. 323: "*o parte de vorbire flexibilă, distingându-se printr-un tip special de flexiune numit conjugare şi care constă în schimbarea formei verbului in funcţie de categoriile de mod, timp, persoană, număr, diateză, fiecare categorie manifestându-se printr-un număr propriu de opoziţii şi prin forme specifice de realizare/manifestare*" – original Romanian version.

[9] *Ibidem*.: "*el are calitatea de a atrage actanţii, componente strâns legate de semantica internă a verbului, cărora acesta le atribuie funcţii semantice şi restricţii de formă.*" – original Romanian version.

[10] *Ibidem*.: "*exprimă acţiuni, evenimente şi stări, fixate temporal şi înfăţişate aspectual*"; "*clasa purtătoare în cel mai înalt grad a predicaţiei*". – original Romanian version.

[11] *Ibidem*.: "*componentul propoziţiei înzestrat cu un ansamblu de categorii gramaticale, cu înalt potenţial deictic (timp, mod şi persoană), categorii capabile să transforme o organizare sintactică într-un fapt de enunţare.*" – original Romanian version.

In the same paper, it is stated that the verb is the core of the verbal group, and from a semantic point of view:

"*the verb designates actions, events or states, fixed in time and depicted in aspect*".[12]

It is characterized by rich inflection, known as conjugation (a standard verbal item represented by its infinitive form has approximately 100 inflected forms. For example: *a şti* (to know), *ştiu* (I know), *ştiam* (I knew), am ştiut (*I have known/ I knew*), ştiusem (*I had known*), voi şti (*I will know*), etc.).

From a pragmatic perspective the verb, through its morphemes of tense, mood, person, and number, establishes a connection to reality, transforming a verbal group into an utterance (*a citi un roman*/*Citeşte un roman*) (to read a novel/ He/ She reads a novel).

Among the definitions previously collected and stated, the most commonly used is the one from *Gramatica limbii române* (1968), according to which the verb is:

"*a flexible part of speech that is conjugated and expresses actions or states*".[13]

Due to the simplicity of this definition, the verb can be associated with actions or states, making it more easily identifiable in utterances.

1.2. Verb typology. Classification criteria
1.2.1. *Syntactic-semantic classification*

In GBLR the syntactic-semantic classification takes as its starting point the actantial relations of the verb as the central element; the former being mandatory, determined by the conceptual-semantic content of the verb. These non-circumstantial relations involve the position of the subject and direct, indirect, secondary and prepositional objects, and are typically realized through nominal phrases in adverbial roles:

"*In isolated cases, for a smaller class of verbs, the syntactic-semantic classification also takes the adverbial element into account. There are verbs that are necessarily*

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[12] *Ibidem.*: "*verbul denumeşte acţiuni, evenimente sau stări fixate temporal şi înfăţişate aspectual.*" – original Romanian version.
[13] GA₁, 1966, p. 202: "*parte de vorbire flexibilă care se conjugă şi care exprimă acţiuni sau stări*" – original Romanian version.

modified, as an inherent semantic-syntactic feature, by an adverbial of manner, quantity, place, direction, or time: a se comporta (to behave) necessarily requires an adverbial of manner, a cântări (to weigh), one of quantity, a locui (to live), and a ajunge (to reach), one of place. For this category of verbs, adverbials are part of their underlying structure, contributing to their syntactic-semantic definition."[14]

This classification criterion sometimes includes, in addition to actantial relations, adverbial and predicative relations.

1.2.1.1. Syntactic classification based on the number of mandatory modifiers

GBLR considers that the syntactic classification of verbs:

"is based on the relation of the verb with its objects, and it concerns the occurrence of verbs only within primary, basic structures, not in reorganized ones".[15]

According to this criterion *Gramatica Academiei* (GA₁) states that, regardless of the syntactic position they occupy, the following verb classes can be observed:

• zero-valent verbs, characterized by the ability to form a complete utterance in the absence of any actantial determiner, including the nominal actantial subject.

Examples: *a ninge* (to snow), *a ploua* (to rain), *a gerui* (to frost), *a se întuneca* (to get dark), *a se lumina* (to clear up).

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[14] GALR₁, 2005, pp. 333-334: "*Izolat, pentru o clasă mai puțin numeroasă de verbe, clasificarea sintactico-semantică are în vedere și circumstanțialul. Sunt verbe care cer, în mod necesar, ca particularitate semantico-sintactică inerentă, determinarea printr-un circumstanțial de mod, cantitativ, de loc, de direcție, de timp: a se comporta cere obligatoriu un circumstanțial de mod,* a cântări *cere unul cantitativ,* a locui, a ajunge, *unul de loc. Pentru această categorie de verbe, circumstanțialele intră în schema lor matricială, contribuind la definirea lor sintactico-semantică* – original Romanian version.
[15] GBLR, 2016, p. 276: "*se bazează pe relația dintre verb și complementele sale și privește apariția verbelor numai în structurile primare, de bază, nu și în cele reorganizate*– original Romanian version.

• monovalent verbs, which form a complete utterance by taking a single mandatory object, a single nominal actant, regardless of its form or thematic role.

Examples: *Adrian fuge/înoată/plânge/suferă/se vindecă.* (Adrian runs/swims/cries/ suffers/heals.)

• bivalent verbs, which combine with two obligatory actantial positions, with different semantic values and forms of actants. This class is very numerous and includes a wide range of syntactic patterns.

Examples: *Stelian mănâncă/vinde/cumpără/aruncă o înghețată.* (Stelian eats/sells /buys/throws an ice cream.)

Îi arde/pasă/pare rău de şcoală. (He cares / minds / feels bad about school.)

Te enervează/sâcâie/miră tâmpenia lui. (His nonsense annoys/bothers/ surprises you.)

• trivalent verbs, characterized by their ability to combine with three obligatory actantial modifiers, each assigned a different thematic role and occupying different syntactic positions.

Examples: Mama mă sfătuieşte/întreabă/anunţă ceva. (Mother advises me on/asks/informs me about something.)

Darius îmi spune/oferă/dă ceva. (Darius tells/offers/gives me something.)

The classification presented in GA$_1$ is unstable, as numerous verbs shift from one class to another; some transitions are explainable through the syntactic features of the Romanian, while others result from semantic-stylistic deviations. Thus, there are verbal constructions in which certain roles remain vacant, either due to the possibility of omitting the subject and object (compare *Ileana scrie/spune ceva.* = Ileana writes/says something and *Ileana scrie/spune.* = Ileana writes / says.), or due to the suppression of certain actants, most often the indirect object (IO) in constructions such as *Constantin (ne) mărturiseşte.* (Constantin confesses (to us)).

According to GALR$_1$ the above-mentioned criterion is, in fact, *"more of an attempt"*[16]. It is noted here that the inflection of Romanian verbs is more complex than previously presented, particularly when considering stem

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[16] GALR I, 2005, p. 555 : *"mai mult o încercare"* – original Romanian version.

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variation. Alternations are primarily conditioned by phonological factors. Consonantal alternations occur at the juncture between the stem and the inflectional ending. Vocalic ones, on the other hand, take place in the middle part of the stem and are mainly influenced by stress, with stressed syllables favoring the occurrence of alternations, and by the phonological quality of the vowel in the following syllable. Apart from this phonological conditioning, alternations are also subject to morphological marking.

If we consider the participation or non-participation of verbs in alternation phenomena, they can be divided into:

➢ verbs with an invariable stem, most neologistic verbs and some older ones such as: *a ara* (to plough)*, a (se) bucura* (to rejoice)*, a fulgera* (to lightning)*, a fura* (to steal)*, a încheia* (to finish);

➢ verbs with two allomorphs of the stem morpheme: *astâmpăr/astâmperi, să astâmpere* (to calm down), *ajut/ajuţi* (to help);

➢ verbs with three allomorphs of the stem morpheme: *scapăr/scaperi/scăpărăm* (to spark), *ies/iasă/ieşi* (to get out);

➢ verbs with four allomorphs of the stem: *cad/cădem/cazi/căzut* (to fall), *port/poartă/purtăm/porţi* (to wear);

➢ verbs with five allomorphs of the stem: *rog/roagă/rogi/rugăm/roage* (to ask/pray);

➢ verbs with six allomorphs of the stem: *torc/torci/toarce/toarcă/torØs/toarØse* (to spin).

Due to the fact that, under the same phonological and morphological conditions, some verbs are subject to the alternation rules and others are not, this phenomenon emphasizes its irregularity.

1.2.1.2. The productivity of conjugations

The class of verbs ending in -*a* in the infinitive, corresponding to the first and second conjugations, is the most productive accounting for 42.61% of all Romanian verbs listed in DEX.

The class of verbs ending in -*i* in the infinitive, corresponding to the fourth, fifth and sixth conjugations, although quite numerous in Old Romanian, has become stagnant adding only 219 neologistic verbs. Most of them end in -*ui*: *a atribui* (to attribute), *a retribui* (to remunerate), *a substitui* (to substitute).

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The class of verbs ending in –*î* in the infinitive, which corresponds to the third and fourth conjugations, is the smallest one comprising only 31 verbs, none of which are neologisms. More than half of these are of popular usage or are considered regional words.

The class of verbs ending in –*e* in the infinitive, corresponding to the ninth, tenth and eleventh conjugations, is numerically small and has limited productivity. The 117 verbs from the old vocabulary have been supplemented with 143 neologistic verbs.

The class of verbs ending in –*ea* in the infinitive, representing the eighth conjugation, is very small in number and unproductive, including only 20 verbs.

According to DCR^2 and DOOM^2-based analyses of journalistic and scientific texts, the conclusions drawn above are confirmed. Recent occurrences ending in -*iza*: *a sataniza* (to satanize), *a manageriza* (to manage), *a spaţializa* (to space) and very recent loans: *a ejecta* (to eject), *a reitera* (to reiterate), *a antama* (to engage/ to arrange in advace), *a lista* (to list), etc. reinforce the class in -*a*.

Inflectional patterns in -*i* remain productive, either due to the formation of verbs from nouns using the lexico-grammatical suffix –*i*: *a bişniţări* (to scalp)*, a cărămizi* (to lay bricks), or to the use of verbal suffix –*ui*: *a bipui* (i.e. to send a short signal)*, a ţepui* (to scam), *a şmenui* (to swindle), etc.

1.2.2. The inflectional classification of the verb

The problematics of verb inflection is a highly debated topic not only in GA$_1$ and GALR$_1$ but also in GBLR, where the authors adopt a more practical perspective.

In GBLR, "*an initial classification in conjugation is based on the infinitive suffix.*"[17]

Thus, according to GBLR, "*by separating the verbs that have the infinitive suffix -î from those with the suffix* -i"[18] we identify five types of conjugation:

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[17] GBLR, 2016, p. 269: *"o primă clasificare în conjugări se face pe baza sufixului de infinitiv."* – original Romanian version.
[18] GBLR, 2016, p. 269: *"separând verbele care au sufixul de infinitiv -î de cele cu sufixul de infinitiv -i"* – original Romanian version.

(1) verbs with the infinitive suffix -*a* (*a lucra*, *a mânca*) (to work, to eat);

(2) verbs with the infinitive suffix -*ea* (*a vedea*, *a plăcea*) (to see, to like);

(3) verbs with the infinitive suffix -*e* (*a râde*, *a merge*) (to laugh, to walk);

(4) verbs with the infinitive suffix -*i* (*a iubi*, *a minți*) (to love, to lie);

(5) verbs with the infinitive suffix -*î* (*a vârî*) (to shove).

Unlike GALR[1] and GBLR, traditional grammar identifies four types of conjugation, based on the infinitive suffix. Thus, the first conjugation is characterized by the suffix -*a*, the second by -*ea*, the third by -*e*, and the fourth includes verbs that have the infinitive suffix -*i* or -*î*.

According to GBLR, "*the inflectional classification of verbs is based on all relevant inflectional morphemes within the verbal paradigm and, implicitly, on the homonymies they generate*".[19]

In the same work, the following is stated:

> "*a verb form is fragmented into units/segments with lexical and grammatical meaning (suffix and desinence): lucr-ez-i (you work), apel-ă-m (we call), scri-a-m (I/we was/were writing), văz-u-se-m (I had seen), prin-se-se-ră-m (we had caught), etc*".[20]

1.2.3. Verbs with irregular inflection

According to GALR[1]:

> "*any verb form and any paradigm that deviate to a greater or lesser extent from the current and repeatable inflectional patterns are considered irregular. Irregular forms represent isolated instances, present in the inflection of a single verb or a very small number of verbs.*[21]

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[19] GBLR, 2016, p. 268: "*clasificarea flexionară a verbelor se face în funcție de toate flectivele relevante din paradigma verbală și, implicit, de omonimiile pe care acestea le stabilesc.*" – original Romanian version.

[20] GBLR, 2016, p. 268: "*o formă verbală se segmentează în unități / segmente cu semnificație lexicală și gramaticală (sufixul și desinența): lucr-ez-i, apel-ă-m, scri-a-m, văz-u-se-m, prin-se-se-ră-m etc.*" – original Romanian version.

[21] GALR[1], 2005, p. 562: "*este considerată neregulată orice formă verbală și orice paradigmă care se îndepărtează într-un grad mai mare sau mai mic de schemele curente și repetabile de flexiune. Formele neregulate constituie fapte izolate, prezente în flexiunea unui singur verb sau a unui număr foarte mic de verbe* – original Romanian version.

The types of irregularity are varied, as it may involve only the variation of the stem, of the inflectional morphemes, the unusual character and an unexpected distribution of homonyms or, simultaneously, multiple aspects of those mentioned before.

The degrees of irregularity may be minimal, affecting a single inflectional morpheme or a single stem variation, or major, affecting both the stem and the inflectional morphemes.

The reasons behind these irregularities are diverse, the etymological one being predominant (for example, the occurrence of alternations, given the fact that verbs from the old vocabulary follow phonological alternation rules, while neologistic verbs do not always respect these rules), complemented by phonological evolutions (for example, the variation of the stem between the singular and plural of verbs such as *mănânc* (I eat) – *mâncăm* (we eat)).

The free literary inflectional variation, accepted by DOOM[3] which implies the acceptance of parallel inflectional forms for certain areas of the paradigm, also represents a source of inflectional irregularities.

We will list below a few of the irregular verbs in terms of their stem:

a mânca (to eat): *mănânc*, *mănânc-*, *mânc-*;

a usca (to dry): *usuc*, *usuc-*, *usc-*;

a da (to give): *da-*, *d-*, *dăd-*, *dea*;

a bea (to drink): *bea-*, *be-*, *b-*, *bă-*;

a vrea (to want): *vrea-*, *vre*, *vr-*, *vor*;

a avea (to have): *a-*, *ar*, *av*, *aib*;

a fi (to be): *sunt*, *eşt-*, *est*, *e*, *er-*, *f-*, *fi-*, *fos-*.

Besides the verbs *a mânca* (to eat) and *a usca* (to dry), the other verbs whose stem is irregular exhibit irregularities in inflectional forms and/or homonymy.

1.2.4. Defective verbs

In GALR₁ defective verbs are those that are characterized by incomplete conjugation, as they cannot be used for certain values within the paradigm. The causes of this phenomenon are diverse, one of them being the age of the verbs. Thus, there are neologisms which have still kept their entire paradigm (for example: *a exige*=to demand*, a accede*=to access*, a*

diverge=to diverge*, a desfide*=to defy) and archaic verbs, very rarely used (for example: *a la = a spăla* (to wash), *a păsa = a merge* (to walk)). Other causes may include the homonymy of certain verb forms and the semantics of the verb, which may not be compatible with the semantics of certain grammatical categories (for example, verbs that do not admit imperative forms or only admit the negative imperative form, such as *a vrea*=to want, *a putea*=to be able to, *a aparține*=to belong).

1.2.5. Unipersonal verbs

Unipersonal/impersonal verbs represent a class of verbs characterized by incomplete person inflection, occurring only in the third person. They contrast with the class of personal verbs (those with complete person inflection). The following subclasses fall into this category:

- verbs that do not allow the subject role: *a ninge* (to snow), *a ploua* (to rain), *a i se urî de* (to have enough of), *a-i arde de* (to feel like);

- verbs that may allow the subject role, but it must have the [+ Animate, - Human], feature, such as: *a mieuna* (to mew), *a măcăi* (to quack), or [-Animate] feature, such as: *a apune* (to set), *a consta* (to realize), *a derapa* (to skid);

- verbs that allow a prepositional phrase as subject (subject phrase) or realized through non-personal verb forms: *Se întâmplă să/că* (It happens that), *Trebuie* să (It is necessary to), *Te interesează să* (It interests you to), etc.

There are certain verbs that are impersonal in any context in which they are used, except when they contribute to the construction of artistic devices: *a mieuna* (to mew), *a se cuveni* (to be adequate), *a se întâmpla* (to happen), etc. Others, such as *a spune* (to tell), *a scrie* (to write), *a şti* (to know), are usually personal *(spun-spui-spune, scriu-scrii-scrie, ştiu-ştii-ştie)*, but they become impersonal only when they belong to impersonal constructions *(Se spun multe despre el.*=A lot is said about him, *S-a scris despre incident. *=The accident has been written about., *Se ştiu destule.*= Quite a bit is known.)*

1.2.6. Classification from the perspective of belonging to the vocabulary system

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Dumitru Irimia, provides a classification of Romanian verbs based on the logical-semantic criterion: "*from a semantic perspective, verbs are classified into the following categories*"[22]

a. perception verbs*: a vedea* (to see), *a auzi* (to hear), *a pipăi* (to feel), etc.

b. saying verbs: *a zice* (to say), *a spune* (to tell), *a afirma* (to state), *a răspunde* (to answer);

c. factitive verbs: *a fierbe* (to boil), *a cuminţi*, a *aprinde* (to light up);

d. motion verbs: *a intra* (to enter), *a ieşi* (to get out), *a fugi* (to run), *a înota* (to swim);

e. modal verbs: *a putea* (can), *a trebui* (must), *a-i veni* (to feel like).

A broader perspective on verbal semantic structure may lead to the identification of two major categories of verbs: subjective and objective.

Subjective verbs are considered those whose actions remain "*enclosed within the sphere of their agent*"[23]. This category includes:

- verbs that express an action which cannot be transferred to an "object" external to the agent: *a exista* (to exist), *a fi* (to be), *a trăi* (to live), etc.;

- verbs that express manifestations of a person's psycho-subjective activity: *a râde* (to laugh), *a plânge* (to cry), *a suspina* (to sob);

- verbs that express manifestations of physiological activity, especially human: *a strănuta* (to relocate), *a dormi* (to sleep), *a încărunţi* (to turn gray);

- onomatopoeic verbs: *a măcăi* (to quack), *a gâgâi* (to honk), *a cotcodăci* (to clunk).

The author considers *objective* those verbs whose action "*extends beyond the sphere of the agent*" („*depăşeşte sfera autorului ei*") being "*directed towards an external object*" ("*orientându-se spre un obiect exterior*"). Objective verbs include factitive verbs (*a deplasa*= to move), as well as verbs of perception (*a auzi*=to hear, *a privi*=to look).

This classification is considered to be relative by the author himself since, alongside strictly subjective or strictly objective verbs, there is also a category of verbs that are both subjective and objective. For example, the verb *a coace* (to ripen/to bake) is usually subjective: *Merele se coc în august.*

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[22] Dumitru Irimia, 1976, p. 17: *"sub aspect semantic, verbele sunt clasificate în următoarele categorii – original Romanian version.*

[23] *Ibidem*.: *"închise în sfera autorului lor"* – original Romanian version.

(Apples ripen in August.); but when used with factitive meaning, it becomes objective: *S-au copt nişte vinete pentru salată*. (Some eggplants were baked for the salad.).

1.2.7. Classification based on the etymological criterion

The same author provides, in the volume mentioned before, a somewhat original classification, arguing that verbs can be divided into abstract and concrete.

Verbs are considered concrete when their meaning can be "*represented at a sensory level*"[24], such as: *a aluneca* (to slip), *a înota* (to swim), *a săpa* (to dig), *a scrie* (to write), *a parfuma* (to perfume), etc.

The abstract category includes verbs whose meaning "*cannot be represented at a sensory level*"[25], such as: *a cerceta* (to investigate/ to research), *a avea* (to have), *a fi* (to be), *a vrea* (to want), *a putea* (to be able to), *a reprezenta* (to represent), *a începe* (to start)*.

If in traditional grammars, the classification of verbs is based on etymological criteria was simplified, in modern grammars, the etymological classification is more nuanced.

1.2.8. Aspectual verbs

According to GALR$_1$ aspectual verbs are "*lexical units whose semantic configuration includes one of the features [Inchoative], [Durative] or [Terminative]*".[26] These three features are "*related to the perspective from which a process can be conceived as a whole dividable into three stages: beginning, middle and end*"[27]. These verbs have full inflection and are capable of formally expressing oppositions and values of mood, tense, person, and number, as well as voice, but only in contexts involving temporal nouns.

Verbs such as *a începe* (to start)*, a continua* (to continue)*, a conteni* (to cease), *a înceta* (to stop)*, a termina* (to finish), *and a sfârşi* (to

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[24] *Ibidem.*: *"reprezentabil în planul senzorial"* – original Romanian version.
[25] *Ibidem.*: *"nu este reprezentabil în planul senzorial"* – original Romanian version.
[26] GALR$_1$, 2005, p. 457: *"unităţi lexicale a căror configuraţie semantică conţine una dintre trăsăturile [Incoativ], [Continuativ] sau [Terminativ]."* – original Romanian version.
[27] *Ibidem.*: *"legate de perspectiva prin care un proces poate fi gândit ca întreg segmentabil în trei etape: început, mijloc, sfârşit"* – original Romanian version.

end) are considered true aspectual verbs. In certain contexts, some polysemous verbs may also function as aspectual verbs, such as:

- *a se porni pe* (to start) – *S-a pornit pe dansat.* (He/ She started dancing.)
- *a se pune pe* (to set about) – ***S****-a pus pe scris.* (He/ She set about writing.)
- *a urma* (to follow) – *Mama şi-a urmat destinul.* (My mother followed her destiny.)
- *a se opri din* (to stop) – *S-a oprit din alergat.* (He/ She stopped running.)
- *a ajunge la* (to come to)– *A ajuns să-mi dea dreptate.* (He/ She came to admit I was right.)
- *se apucă de* (to begin) – *S-a apucat de învăţat.* (He/ She began studying.)
- *a se da la / în* (to start (talking)) – *Se dă în vorba despre ea.* (He/ She starts talking about her.)

If the aspectual feature integrated into the lexico-semantic is taken into account, aspectual verbs can be grouped as follows:

❖ inchoative verbs – those that are specific to the initial stage of the process: *a se apuca* (to begin)*, a se da* (to start), *a începe* (to start)*, a se lua* (to get down to)*, a porni* (to start)*, a prinde* (to catch)*;*

❖ durative verbs – those that refer to the middle stage: *a continua* (to continue), *a urma* (to follow);

❖ terminative verbs- those that refer to the final stage of the process: *a ajunge* (to reach), *a conteni* (to cease), *a se opri* (to stop), *a se lăsa* (to give up), *a (se) termina* (to finish), *a înceta* (to stop).

1.2.9. Other classifications

The linguist Ion Coteanu classifies verbs "*according to their meaning*"[28] in the following categories:

- verbs that describe a state of being: *a afla* (to find oneself), *a exista* (to exist), *a rămâne* (to remain), *a sta* (to stay);
- motion verbs: *a ieşi* (to get out), *a intra* (to enter), *a opri* (to stop), *a zbura* (to fly), *a trece* (to pass), *a merge* (to walk);

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[28] Coteanu, 1982, pp. 158-160: *"după înţelesul lor"* – original Romanian version.

- saying verbs (*declarandi* verbs): *a afirma* (to affirm), *a discuta* (to discuss), *a nega* (to deny), *a striga* (to shout), *a zice* (to say), *a şopti* (to whisper), *a vorbi* (to talk);

- verbs that express feelings, sensory actions, acts of will or affection: *a amăgi* (to deceive), *a ironiza* (to mock), *a uita* (to forget), *a ofensa* (to offend) , *a uimi* (to amaze), *a porunci* (to order), *a hotărî* (to decide), *a minţi* (to lie).

The same author also classifies verbs according to "the *way the action unfolds*"[29].

➢ durative – indicate that the action extends over a longer period of time and unfolds without interruptions or repetitions: *a repeta* (to repeat), *a gândi* (to think), *a umbla* (to walk), *a linişti* (to calm), *a petrece* (to spend), *a răbda* (to endure), *a lucra* (to work);

➢ momentary – the action expressed by these verbs lasts for a short or very short period of time: *a adormi* (to fall asleep), *a pocni* (to pop), *a sări* (to jump), *a decola* (to take off), *a aţipi* (to doze off);

➢ iterative – the action is repeated once or several times*: a bascula* (to tilt, to unload)*, a dădăci* (to baby-sit), *a reapărea* (to reappear), *a şuşoti* (to whisper), *a lătra* (to bark), *a forfeca* (to clip);

➢ eventive – indicate that, during the course of the action, the subject becomes what the verb denotes*: a albi* (to whiten), *a îngreuna* (to weigh down), *a înnegri* (to darken), *a ofili* (to wither), *a unifica* (to unify), *a înverzi* (to turn green), *a înfrumuseţa* (to beautify), *a simplifica* (to simplify);

➢ dynamic – the subject actively participates in the action and is very interested in it: *a se bucura* (to rejoice), *a căina* (to pity);

➢ causative or factitive – express the idea that the subject is the cause of the action, which is performed by someone else: *a se tunde* (to get one's hair cut), *a coase* (to sew), *a construi* (to build).

Conclusions

The analysis of the verb in modern Romanian grammars highlights the complex nature of this grammatical class and its central role in the structure of the sentence. Its classification is not limited to a single criterion, but

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[29] *Ibidem*, pp. 160-162: *"felul de desfăşurare al acţiunii"* – original Romanian version.

involves a multidimensional approach: morphological, syntactic and semantic.

The integration of these perspectives reflects an updated view on language, one that is adapted to the diversity of forms and functions that verbs fulfill in communication.

Therefore, understanding the typology of the verb requires not only the knowledge of formal features, but also an awareness of the role verbs play in the dynamics of the utterance, which calls for a flexible and context-sensitive approach to the study of grammar.

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IV. EVENTS

THE PARABLES OF JESUS
IN
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

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Abstract:
This study addresses the issue of biblical parables as presented in the *Gospel According to Mark*, the New Testament. Essentially, the parables found in Mark 4:1-34 convey messianic messages articulated directly and focused on specific, clearly delineated themes. Jesus Himself explains the first parable – the Parable of the Sower – to His disciples. However, Mark, being a product of Hellenistic civilisation, often tends to interpret each scene and concept within a parable's structure, sometimes rendering them more akin to allegories.

1. Saint Mark the Evangelist

As far as can be reconstructed from biblical and parabiblical texts, Mark (Gk. *Márkos*, Lat. *Marcus*) appears to have been somewhat younger than Peter and Paul, likely born around AD 20, seemingly to a Jewish mother and a Roman father – a young officer in the army accompanying the Roman administration in the East. As a young man with a relatively refined education, he spoke *koiné* Greek, the common language of the Hellenistic era, Latin, and likely had some knowledge of Hebrew. In any case, regarding the use of the languages prevalent in his time and milieu, Mark was the most proficient, which explains why he served as interpreter first for Peter, then for Paul, and again for Peter, acting as their secretary and companion at various points in their lives.

He is mentioned multiple times in the biblical texts. In *Acts* 12:25 and 13:13, he is shown accompanying Saint Paul on his first missionary journey (to Antioch in Pisidia, with stops in Salamis and Paphos, Cyprus), and later

parting ways with him at Perga[1] in Pamphylia. Paul himself refers to him in *The Epistle to the Colossians* 4:10 as his companion, alongside Barnabas, Paul's cousin. He is again mentioned during the preparations for Paul and Barnabas's journey to Cyprus (*Acts* 15:39). Mark reappears near Paul towards the end of the latter's life, being cited in *The Letter to Philemon* 24 while Paul was imprisoned in Rome. He visited Paul in prison, who entrusted him with a mission in Asia, as indicated in *Colossians* 4:10 and *2 Timothy* 4:11. His name – appearing as either Mark or John Mark – is also recorded in *1 Peter* 5:13, where he is called "my beloved son" by Saint Peter, a clear indication of his service to Peter, even prior to his acquaintance with Paul.

Mark was undoubtedly an active member of the early Christian Church in Jerusalem from its inception.

2. *The Gospel According to Mark*

The Gospel According to Mark was written in Rome, most likely between the years 64 and 69, specifically, after the death of Peter (AD 67) in Rome and prior to the fall of Jerusalem. According to other scholarly perspectives, it may have been composed or at least revised after the year AD 70, as suggested by the inclusion of episodes reflecting the life of the early Christian community interwoven into the Gospel narrative.

In any case, it is the earliest of the four canonical Gospels, even though it appears second in the *New Testament*, following Matthew and preceding the works of Luke and John. The other evangelists, especially Matthew and Luke, clearly drew upon Mark's account, although neither of them merely transcribed it; rather, each reinterpreted the events and theological meanings in their own distinctive manner.

The sources of the *Gospel of Mark* are threefold:

a) According to tradition, Mark recorded in his writing what he had heard directly from the mouth of Saint Peter, though he did so after Peter's death. This explains the vividness and credibility of the scenes: the author was still immersed in the atmosphere described by Peter himself.

b) On the other hand, it is known that certain episodes from the life of Jesus were already circulating in oral form, grouped into narrative units, as is often the case in the genesis of major spiritual texts throughout human history. Scholars have identified such fragments (preserved in other types of writings) within the fabric of the first Gospel, including thematic and lexical

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[1] From Perga in Pamphylia, the young Mark departed from Paul and Barnabas, returning to Jerusalem.

repetitions, as well as the so-called "agrapha," which often remain obscure in both meaning and origin[2].

c) Finally, Mark's text contains terms, episode fragments and ideas drawn from Paul's epistles, which is entirely understandable given their close relationship.

The content of the *Gospel of Mark* is straightforward and clear, and its style, as previously noted, is dynamic and vivid, focused on real-life events, divine miracles and verbal exchanges through which Jesus is gradually revealed as the Christ, the Saviour of humankind. The title has sparked considerable scholarly commentary: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Nearly two centuries later, the Church recognised that the modern sense of the term *euangelion* was deliberately employed by the author from the outset, signifying "Good News" or "Glad Tidings." In the early Church, the term was not yet used to denote a literary genre, nor were the authors referred to as evangelists – apostolic collaborators – until the end of the second century AD.

The structure of the *Gospel of Mark* is both simple and meaningful. It begins with John the Baptist preparing the way and with the "baptism and temptation of Jesus" (chapters 1-2); Jesus is introduced directly as an adult, selecting the twelve apostles (chapter 3), feeding the five thousand by the sea (chapter 6), the Transfiguration (chapter 9), the triumphal entry into Jerusalem (chapter 11), the Last Supper (chapter 14), the arrest, trial and crucifixion of the Lord (chapters 14-15), and the Resurrection (chapter 16). The early Church later added verses 16:9-20 as a necessary conclusion.

Exegetes observe that two major sections can be distinguished in Mark's Gospel, which otherwise does not strictly adhere to chronological or logical sequencing: Chapters 1-8 depict the gradual revelation of Jesus as the Saviour, while chapters 9-16 portray the earthly companions' understanding of the Way to be followed, regardless of worldly events. At the centre of the Gospel lies Jesus' pivotal question:

"*Who do you say I am?*" (Mark 8:29)

Each section concludes with a confession of faith:

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[2] The term *agraphon* (from the Greek *a-graphé*, meaning "unwritten") refers, in biblical exegesis concerning the genesis of scriptural texts, to two categories of words, expressions, or phrases deemed "non-canonical" yet found in ancient manuscripts. Some of these may have originated with Jesus or other biblical figures, as they exhibit semantic and lexical parallels; others are almost certainly inauthentic, interpolated by scribes across various versions, codices etc. (cf. DEB).

8:29: "*Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah!'*"

15:39: "*… the centurion… said, 'Surely this man was the Son of God!'*"

3. The Parables in the *Gospel According to Mark*

Verses from various chapters, and especially the entirety of chapter 4 of the *Gospel According to Mark*, are composed of parables, grouped in chapter 4 under the title given by exegetes and editors of the Gospel as the "Parables of the Kingdom." Saint Mark the Evangelist informs us that Jesus spoke many more parables (cf. 4, 11, 34), and in chapter 13 he records three additional ones, often referred to as the "Parables of the End Times."

The Greek term *παραβολή* fundamentally means "parable" or "illustration," designating a simplified explanation – through examples drawn from everyday life – of a more abstract concept. These are metaphorical teachings, crafted for ordinary people, often Gentiles, who listened to Jesus during His travels. As previously noted, according to the DEB, a parable "conveys a single, direct message." Yet Saint Mark the Apostle suggests that even the disciples were not always certain of the hidden meanings embedded in these everyday images, prompting the Teacher to explain them again in private, at least in some cases. Later scholars who studied the biblical parables in depth concluded that each component of a parable deserves interpretation, as these narratives often convey far more than they initially appear to.

However, this approach is more appropriate for allegories, where every detail should be interpreted. An allegory is a complex figure of speech composed of multiple simpler figures (epithets, repetitions, comparisons, metaphors etc.), conveying one thing by speaking of another[3]. In such cases, each concrete element points to an abstract idea, making it accessible to the audience.

In contrast, parables are brief narratives or illustrative scenes that convey a more compact, general idea.

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[3] A notable example is the death-wedding allegory in the Romanian folk ballad *Miorița*, where the shepherd's death is portrayed as a wedding, crafted for the ears and imagination of his aging mother, who is searching for her son. In the *Bible*, a famous allegory is that of the slave woman and the free woman in Paul's *Epistle to the Galatians* (4:21-31), or the entire *Song of Songs* in the Old Testament, interpreted as an allegory of divine love, depicted through the earthly love between two young people.

In Mark 2:22, we encounter the *Parable of the New Wine in Old Wineskins*. Here, the "new" represents the *Gospel*, while the "old" refers to traditional teachings and especially the customs of Judaism. This passage actually contains several parables and allegories: the Teacher and His disciples likened to the bridegroom and wedding guests – regarding the law of fasting (2:18–20); the patch of new cloth on an old garment (2:21); and finally, the allegory of "new wine/old wineskins," which becomes a parable for the new teaching in contrast to the old.

In Mark 4:31, Jesus uses the *Parable of the Mustard Seed* to illustrate the miracle of transformation and the continual development of human understanding, likened to the growth of natural elements. Just as a tiny mustard seed – the smallest of all seeds – grows into a great tree, so too will His teaching and mission, modest at first, eventually encompass the entire world. This has indeed come to pass over the centuries.

Before this, however, in chapter 4 of his Gospel, Mark includes two other parables spoken by Jesus on the shore[4]. The first is perhaps the best-known parable in the biblical tradition: the *Parable of the Sower* (Mark 4:3-8). Just as the sower scatters good seed, which only bears fruit when it falls on fertile ground, so too does the Teacher spread the new law, which takes root only in those who listen attentively and understand what they have heard.

This is also one of the few parables interpreted by Jesus Himself, as recorded in Mark 4:10-12 and especially 4:13-20. The seeds represent the *Word*, Jesus explains to His disciples when alone with the Twelve. The listeners "by the wayside" are those deceived by Satan, who snatches away the Word; the "stony ground" represents the fickle, who receive the Word with joy but abandon it under persecution; and those "among thorns" are people who neglect the Word due to desires for wealth, comfort and worldly pleasures. The Word bears abundant fruit only in those who hear it and guard it with care.

Next, in Mark 4:21-23, we find the *Parable of the Lamp*. A lamp is meant to give light, not to be hidden "under a basket." Likewise, the Word must be revealed, but for that to happen, it should be properly received.

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[4] In fact, this took place on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias, very near to Gennesaret, the place of His birth.

Conclusions

1. All the parables of Jesus, as presented by Saint Mark the Evangelist, testify to Jesus' unwavering confidence in the triumph of the Kingdom of God. It will come not when humans desire it, but when God has ordained it in His divine plan. Until then, it grows slowly but surely, despite all obstacles and temporary setbacks.

2. The parables were taken up by the evangelists Matthew and Luke, as confirmed by the correspondences established by New Testament hermeneutics, except for the parable found in Mark 4:26-29.

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REVIEW

Viorica Marian, 2024, Puterea limbajului.
Cum ne transformă mintea codurile pe care le folosim pentru a
***gândi, a vorbi, a trăi.* Translated by Iulian Comănescu,**
Bucharest: Editura Humanitas[1]

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Abstract:

This review of *Puterea limbajului. Cum ne transformă mintea codurile pe care le folosim pentru a gândi, a vorbi, a trăi* (original English title *The Power of Language: How the Codes We Use to Think, Speak, and Live Transform Our Minds*), authored by the psycholinguist Viorica Marian, aims to highlight the cognitive particularities of multilingual speakers, as revealed through experimental studies and tests – especially those employing *eye-tracking technologies* – conducted over the years on multilingual subjects.

Moreover, Marian's study innovatively addresses the evolution of communication codes in the context of contemporary technological advancements.

Keywords:
Language, thought, communication codes, multilingualism, *eye-tracking.*

Viorica Marian's work offers a nuanced and comprehensive analysis of the relationship between language and thought, with a primary focus on the *multilingual speaker*. In this monograph, authored by the renowned psycholinguist and professor at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, the complexity of multilingual cognition is explored, along with the ways in which knowledge of multiple languages shapes thought, enhances creativity, and fosters critical thinking throughout one's life.

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[1] The volume is the Romanian translation of the original English edition authored by Viorica Marian, *The Power of Language: How the Codes We Use to Think, Speak, and Live Transform Our Minds*, published in 2023 by Dutton/Penguin Random House.

Structured in two parts – *I. Self* and *II. Society* – this study undertakes a complex, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach. It draws on methodologies and analytical tools from psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and cognitive science, while also incorporating insights from neuroscience and philosophy, thereby enriching the scholarly value of the book.

In the *Introduction*, Marian invokes the biblical legend of the Tower of Babel to underscore the centrality of language in human interaction, stating:

> "*Language as the key to reaching heaven certainly asserts its power. The story of the Tower of Babel illustrates the way language can be used both to include and to exclude, to communicate and to hinder communication.*" (*Introduction*, p. 11)

This thesis on the power of language is further supported by references to *Una stella tranquilla*, a work by Holocaust survivor Primo Levi, in which the Italian writer reflects on the limitations of language and the human relationship with the external world. In this context, Marian discusses the constraints of the *language-thought* relationship, drawing on recent findings in machine learning. Neuroscience experiments conducted at Stanford University involved the application of large datasets to study how the brain organizes operations related to cognitive tasks such as reading and decision-making. The computational algorithms revealed neural activity patterns that did not align with human language-based classifications. In other words, these algorithms suggested the existence of "*constructs for which we do not have labels (yet)*" (*Introduction*, p. 12).

Building on these experimental directions, Viorica Marian argues that terms like *memory* or *perception* do not precisely describe the constructs emerging from machine learning, and that the vocabulary we use and the way we conceptualize these phenomena are inherently imprecise. Despite the existence of "*real categories out in the world*" (*Ibidem*), the author emphasizes the significance of linguistic and mental categories, as they have tangible consequences in areas such as perception, science, and even bigotry:

> "*Understanding the power of language also makes you more aware when you are being manipulated by others through words, whether those others are politicians, advertisers, lawyers, co-workers or family members.*" (*Introduction*, p. 15)

In the first part of the book, comprising six chapters, Marian examines how languages influence the individual, based on a series of tests such as the *Stroop* test and experiments involving *eye-tracking* technologies.

The first chapter, *Mind Boggling*, sets the stage for exploring the multilingual brain. Viorica Marian presents the results of several *eye-tracking* tests conducted on bilingual subjects, who were asked to move objects while their eye movements were recorded. These movements were influenced by the phonetic similarities between words in different languages (cf. *the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign*), such as: *marker* (Eng.) vs. *marka* "stamp" (Rus.); *glove* (Eng.) vs. *glaz* "eye" (Rus.); *shark* (Eng.) vs. *şarik* "balloon" (Rus.).

The interpretation of bilinguals' eye movements during these tasks reveals that everyday objects are perceived through the lens of the languages known and used at that moment. More precisely, the author describes the impact of multilingualism on the individual as extending beyond executive function to include psychological dimensions such as memory, emotion, and perception. Thus, learning a new language entail adopting a new way of structuring the world around us.

In the second chapter, *The Parallel-Processing Super-Organism*, the research framework based on *eye-tracking* techniques is further developed. These tests aimed to identify the degree of simultaneous co-activation of the languages known by multilingual speakers, regardless of whether a particular language was actively being used.

Marian reports that *eye-tracking* tests conducted initially on Russian-English bilinguals, and later on speakers of Spanish and English, Japanese and English, Dutch and English, German and Dutch, French and German, Hindi and English, and others, yielded the following results:

i) the brain does not duplicate its effort;

ii) the brain expands its parallel-processing capacity;

iii) the brain modifies its higher-order cognitive processes to manage this type of parallel activation:

"*The brain is, in essence, a parallel-processing super-organism, and even more so in multilinguals.*" (*Part One, Chapter II,* p. 38)

This section of the book offers particularly insightful and illuminating reflections on the conceptual networks activated when a lexical unit is triggered in the mind of a bilingual or multilingual speaker. Viorica Marian

illustrates a conceptual network that reflects the activation of the English word *pot* in the brain of a Russian-English bilingual (*Appendix 1*).

In the following chapter, *On Creativity, Perception and Thought*, the author explores the link between thought, creativity, and multilingualism, examining how cognitive architecture is shaped by the knowledge of another language. She presents the results of studies on the relationship between creativity and bilingualism, which show that bilingual speakers outperform monolinguals in creative tasks, such as identifying alternative uses for common objects. For instance, the *Alternate Uses Task* – a widely used tool for measuring creativity and part of the divergent thinking assessment – demonstrates that bilinguals perform better when switching between languages.

Marian also discusses various linguistic theories – such as cognitivism, structuralism, and linguistic determinism – to explain how the use of different languages by a multilingual speaker influences the conceptualization of emotions, perceptions, and interpersonal relationships, depending on the idiom employed.

Chapter Four, *The Word Made Flesh* – a metaphor echoing the biblical verse "*The Word Became Flesh*" (John 1:1-14) – addresses the theory that multilingualism alters both the structure and function of the multilingual speaker's brain and may even influence cellular-level chemistry.

To support her claims, Marian draws on examples from the Japanese language. For instance, the term *kotodama* ("word-spirit") conveys the idea that words can alter physical reality. She also references terms from Japanese mythology used to name historical eras, such as *Reiwa* ("harmony"), the codename for the current era.

Chapter Five, *Childhood, Ageing and In-Between*, discusses the neurocognitive effects of multilingualism on the human brain. Marian outlines the benefits of learning foreign languages, particularly the delay of dementia-related symptoms. According to her, using multiple languages fosters a more interconnected neural network, which can functionally compensate for anatomical deterioration.

Chapter Six, *Another Language, Another Soul*, explores the close relationship between language, thought, and social behaviour. Drawing on various surveys and tests conducted with bilingual and multilingual subjects, Viorica Marian argues that language influences the expression of emotions –

sensitivity or insensitivity –, decision-making, social interaction, memory, and attitudes toward traditions, superstitions, space, and time.

Regarding the mechanisms that shape psychological processes, Marian highlights structural differences among languages. She refers to the morphological distinctions languages make in expressing verb tenses – such as present and future. Languages that mark this distinction (e.g., French, Greek, Italian, Spanish, and English) are considered to have a strong future-time reference. In contrast, languages that do not (e.g., Mandarin, Estonian, and Finnish) are classified as having a weak future-time reference. This distinction correlates with a greater tendency among speakers of weak-future-reference languages to adopt behaviours that benefit their future selves.

The second part of the reviewed work, *Society*, opens with Section VII, *The Ultimate Influencer*, in which Viorica Marian explores the relationship between language and society. She expands her analysis to examine how language can shape individual choices and contribute to the formation of identity by broadening one's social perspective.

More specifically, the author discusses the power of language as it manifests in the structures and functions of society. The examples she provides span various domains – politics, administration, economics, and rhetoric. Notably, she references the term *newspeak*, coined in George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*, a language engineered by a totalitarian regime to control the population of Oceania and suppress subversive ideas such as free will.

In Chapter Eight, *Words of Change*, Marian addresses issues related to various lexical and grammatical categories and how individuals perceive the realities these categories reflect. She reviews differences in grammatical gender marking across languages – such as English, Russian, and German – and notes that speakers involved in experiments on grammatical gender perceive objects differently. For instance, German-English bilinguals describe the concept of *key* – a masculine noun in German – as *hard*, *heavy*, *jagged*, *metal* and *useful*; whereas Spanish speakers – whose language assigns the noun a feminine gender – describe it as *golden*, *intricate*, *little*, *lovely*, *shiny* and *tiny*.

The following section, *Found in Translation*, delves into the relationship between phonetic structure and word meaning, traditionally

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considered arbitrary. Here, Marian discusses the presence of phonetic symbolism in poetry, invoking sound devices such as euphony and alliteration, as well as prosodic elements, to support the idea that certain sounds may evoke specific thoughts or emotions.

In the chapter *The Codes of Our Minds*, Marian traces the evolution of languages and communication codes, from the Rosetta Stone to the most recent coding systems used in information technology.

A particularly compelling paragraph in this chapter explores the relationship between natural and artificial languages, which the author characterizes as symbiotic, yielding mutual benefits.

The final chapter, *The Future of Science and Technology*, addresses the origin of language in relation to thought:

> "*Studying the relationship between language and thought inevitably leads to the question of where language comes from. And, for that matter, where thought comes from. If language and thought are two sides of the same coin (an arguable view, as we saw in the discussion of linguistic determinism), then language would have to be derived from a source outside the human realm, because thought is impossible without language and before language there would have been no thought.*" (*Part II, Chapter 11*, p. 216)

The author presents several recent scientific and technological discoveries and their potential impact on the evolution of human communication – both positively and negatively. Marian argues that advanced technologies (such as microchips and neurograins) may enhance communication for individuals who have suffered trauma or were born without the faculty of speech.

In the *Conclusion*, Viorica Marian classifies multilingualism as a facet of multiple intelligences, adding that learning a new language can be facilitated not only by an individual's natural aptitude but also by social policies that support the emergence of multilingual communities.

She also presents the results of a study conducted by the U.S. Department of State, which outlines the number of hours required for a native English speaker to learn another language. The statistics are as follows:

i) Category I languages (600-750 hours, 24-30 weeks): Danish, Dutch, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Swedish, French;

ii) Category II languages (approximately 900 hours, 36 weeks): German, Indonesian, etc.;

iii)Category III languages (approximately 1,100 hours, 44 weeks): Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Nepali, etc.;

iv)Category IV languages (2,200 hours, 88 weeks): Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean.

Additionally, Marian offers practical advice for language learning, such as enrolling in language courses and engaging in travel.

In *The Power of Language*, Viorica Marian skilfully weaves together personal reflections with current research in neuroscience on the vast topic of human thought and the evolution of communication codes, placing particular emphasis on the complex relationship between language and thought.

Our journal is dedicated to the European Cultural Dialogue, with reference to universality, and features analyses regarding connections between particular and general, individual and collective, local and universal thinking, language, attitudes, behaviours, creation, and concrete action. The sections of each book entail different aspects of these topics:

- ideological, political, socio-economic, educational fundamentals of global and European cultural dialogue;

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