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Hieroschemamonk Daniil Sandu Tudor – Mystical Poet

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I. ANTHROPOLOGICAL STRUCTURES OF THE IMAGINARY IN SANDU TUDOR'S AKATHIST-HYMNS

The chapter „Anthropological structures of the religious imaginary in Sandu Tudor's hymn-akathists" focuses on a segment of Romanian literature less discussed, namely, Sandu Tudor's religious poetry seen from the viewpoint of iconic anthropology structure, of coagulation of religious images in his first liturgical composition – *The Akathist of Our Father St. Allpious Demetrius The New, Keeper of oxen in Basarabov* – in theological epistema. Structural analytical method applied in our research was designed to track the main nucleous religious pictures, images related to the archetype, constitutive chronotop, myth, but the intention was also to emphasise some significant ideas on the reflection of some mystical images in his poetic work. The explanatin of this type of analysis in terms of literary theology represented the element of originality. Author's mystical vocation requires the application of some terminological indicators – *Litheraturtheologie*⁴ and *Theopoezie* – two unique concepts in the Romanian critical space, theories taken from Karl-Josef Kuschel German writers, Gisbert Kranz, Georg Langenhorst, etc., which focuses on the anthropological structures of the religious imaginary.

Since the interwar period in American and English space, attempts were made in addressing profane literature with the critical tools in the theological field, especially when it was implicit or explicit texts with Biblical references, and conversely, *Biblical* interpretation with literary criticism tools. The studies T.S. Eliot, Stanley Romaine Hopper, Amos N. Wilder, Northrop Frye⁵,

⁴ T. S. ELIOT, *Notes towards a Definition of Culture*, London: Faber&Faber, 1948, *passim*.

⁵ Northrop FRYE, *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in religion*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.

John Breck, and others, the establishment of a special department („Theology and Literature") and the emergence of interdisciplinary journals on the subject developed the idea that there should be a discipline and a special method analyzing religious texts, whether they belong to religious authors or areligious. A relevant criticism can not be achieved only by entering into question the religious, claims T.S. Eliot: „Literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint [...]. The greatness of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards; though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only be literary standards"⁶.

I.1.Preliminary issues

The present chapter presents some aspects of the liturgical composition – *The Akathist of Our Allpious Father St. Demetrius The New, Keeper of oxen in Basarabov* – and it is based on the assumption that the greatness of literature must be determined by the „dialogue" with Divinity. The poetry search a reference point in the transcendent and the most sequences in the akathist of Sandu Tudor is imposed by the gravity of emotion, by purity and the ardour of the feeling. The paths created by mystical and iconic anthropology developed in its akathists require a thorough understanding, coherent with the Church tradition and the Christian vision of the dynamics of its transformation into words.

Regarding Theopoezia, two are the established meanings of this term, by American and German criticism: teopoetics would be the poems approaching prayer and transposing the divine mystery in some intelligible images, as much as possible, and that

⁶ T. S. Eliot, *Religion and Literature*, 1935, p. 10 http://books.google.de/books?id=klivP2b5l0wC&pg=PA10&lpg=PA10&dq=When+was+write+the+essay+Religion+and+Literature+from+T.S.+Eliot?&source=bl&ots=peoQ67p1WI&sig=o-zPQ_VbEv3NqXu2LhYPTTrZsrLYo&hl=de&ei=dQNETeGWNMvsgayvfHPD-g&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5&ved=0CEAQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q&f=true, accessed on 12.08.2020.

claim, both the poet and the reader, a certain kind of preparation for decoding the sent message.

Literary Theology - *Littheraturtheologie* - has as a research method the transcendental analysis and can be applied to Sandu Tudor's norm-poem because it is directly focused on the religious norm, the trend being to consider the Christian element not only *in form* but rather *in spirit*⁷. By the theology literary term does not takes into account moving from literature to theology as to a totally different subject, but the term should be understood as being theoretical part from the literature for the purposes of transcendental analysis.

The analysis from the perspective of *Theopoem* is justified, on the one hand, by the poet Sandu Tudor's intention to implement the divine mystery in some intelligible images as much as possible, which require a minimum theological culture for decoding the message of the pray-poem and by focusing on the tension between the word and the Word or between the non-word and Logos.

We analyzed *Allpious The Akathist of Our Father St. Demetrius The New, Keeper of oxen in Basarabov* through these innovative research methods, based on theological and literary skills, trying to separate the terms "anthropological comprehension" of the religious images in two registers - daytime and night time - and in two types of structures of religious poetry - ekstatic and enstatic, and finally, to follow the theme of human deification seen as overlapping of human and divine nature.

In presenting the structure of enstatic type I considered the inner lyrical images based on religious phenomena, how the image is built inside the religious sentiment. The focus moves from the escape image of self lyrical to learning of oneself as a result of a revelation, of internalizing of a sense/ religious act. In the tudorian lyrics we intuit, for example, an ekstatic momentum, through

⁷ Literary theology is, in this sense, a special theology but a theoretical part of literature that borrows the subject and working methods. For a broad treatment of the subject see Northrop FRYE, *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in religion*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.

the light image, used as expressions of love and thirst for knowledge which, similar to the vision of Blaga, can kill and a enstatism withdrawal to the contemplation of self materiality.

Revelation of the Christ is an anthropological revelation and religious consciousness of man is meant just to reveal the Christian consciousness of man.

1.2. *The Akathist of Our Allpious Father St. Demetrius The New, Keeper of oxen in Basarabov* - ecclesiastical sacerdotal poetry

The Akathist of Our Allpious Father St. Demetrius The New, Keeper of oxen in Basarabov emerged from poet's desire to dedicate to the saint patron of Bucharest - his relics are in the Patriarchal Church - a beautiful poem of spiritual comfort for the believers.

This Akathist will be the only one - from the five of the author - published during his lifetime, in 1942, at the Royal Foundation for Literature and Art, Bucharest, the edition being accompanied by a preface - "Some words" - signed by Sandu Tudor, which contains some clarifications on the importance and the role the Akathist plays in the spiritually journey of every believer: "The greatness and its mastery is doubled: one, outside, sound and color well measured; other, inner, of discovery and dogmatic meaning"⁸. In *Foreword* he tells the readers some biographical details that generated composing this Byzantine poem: "I started this akathist in

⁸ Sandu TUDOR, „Seamă de cuvinte” - introduce la „Acatistul Preacuviosului Părintelui Nostri Sf. Dimitrie cel Nou Boarul din Basarabov”, în: Hieroschemamonahul Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu TUDOR), *Acatiste*, prima ediție integrală, îngrijită de Alexandru Dimcea, Gabriel Moldoveanu, București: Editura Christiana, 2009 [A sum of words, Introduction to "The Akathist of Our Allpious Father St. Demetrius The New, Keeper of oxen in Basarabov", In: Hieroschemamonk Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu Tudor), *The Akathists*, the first full edition, edited by Alexandru Dimcea, Gabriel Moldoveanu, Bucharest: Christiana Publishing House, 2009], p. 10.

the twilight of the Dead people's Saturday, the eve of Holy Sunday of Pentecost.

There are fifty days after the passing away of my youngest.
A repentant prayer to the Saint Lord,
The one with the name of mystery,
The one who is above our thoughts,
The Hope from age to age.

It was created in order to settle in a quiet place the soul of my brother, Eugene."⁹

The term *akathist* comes from the Greek "akathistos" which means "holy song standing" and is an old hymn to a holy person. Fixed form poem, specific to Byzantine cult, consists of a series of twelve Kontakion and canticles, its structure following, at the symbolic level, the evolution of a cycle of the year, that is twelve steps, spiritual poetry cores, in the natural evolution of the subject for the twelve calendaristic months. The only deviation which is permitted in the architecture of the poem lies in the ability to vary the cycle, the process that Sandu Tudor uses and expands akathist to thirteen episodes, the second part of the last song being not developed. The Akathist has, however, as a whole, the roundness of a circle, being a hymnic prayer that is perpetuated infinitely for the anthem is meant to be restarted from the beginning, in his natural utterance at the end of its gradual cycle: "Anthem of a wide vision or better, a whole hymnology, the Akathist is a fulfilled cycle of religious poetry. It is like a total, gathered as a continuous chain of songs, and returns itself to flow endlessly, revealing one by one: dramatic songs which are overlapped with other epic hymns and linked with purely lyrical litanies"¹⁰.

The word "kontakion" used to designate in the old times the stick on which the paper or parchment manuscripts were wrapped

⁹ Ieroschimonahul Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu Tudor), *Acatiste...* [Hieroschemamonk Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu Tudor), *The Akathists...*], p. 13.

¹⁰ Ieroschimonahul Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu Tudor), *Acatiste...* [Hieroschemamonk Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu Tudor), *The Akathists...*], p. 10.

on, and in Greek has the meaning of "boudoir", and take the form of a private prayer, "that is always a dramatic dialogue with God"¹¹. The term "oikos" - means in Greek "monument" and entailed summarizing the life of the praised saint "hymnal largest and narrative piece, which in turn ends with a litany, song of praise"¹².

If in the kontakion the structure is accomplished dramatically, as a consequence of the intimate dialogue with God, in case of the canticle the organisation is somehow more narrative, it meaning a description of the glorious moments of the honoured person's life, in this case St. Dimitrie the New Basarabov, which in turn divides, the final part being a litany, a song of praise, easily recognizable by resuming obsessive leitmotif: "Rejoice ...". The care to elaborate a text according to Orthodox teaching and traditional ritual is even certified by the author, after the first moment of the broad composition, which poem consists of thirteen Kontakions and twelve canticles, each having a particular number of lines, reviews and completes the work in 1928, adding the metric and the rythm of the old Byzantine Akathist. At the same time this submits to approval of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church of the blessing to print it:

"Your Holy Highness, with deep humility I am adding, along with it, the attached «The Akathist of the Holy New Dimitrie Basarabov» written by me in lyrics after metric and rythm of old Akathist of Byzantine rhythm, adding extra modern rhythmic, asking you to kindly arrange to be examined and approved by the Holy Synod and possibly to be used by the pious believers in their readings and spiritual consolation without fear of heresy or inappropriate innovation of the teaching of our Holy Orthodox Church. May 28th, 1928, Bucharest, Sandu Tudor, writer"¹³.

¹¹ Ieroschimonahul Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu Tudor), *Acatiste...* [Hieroschemamonk Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu Tudor), *The Akathists...*], p. 10.

¹² Ieroschimonahul Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu Tudor), *Acatiste...* [Hieroschemamonk Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu Tudor), *The Akathists...*], p. 10.

¹³ See †Antonie Plămădeală, *Rugul Aprins*, Sibiu: Editura Arhiepiscopiei Sibului, ediția electronică, 2002 [*Burning Pyre*. (2002). Sibiu: Sibiu Archdiocese Publishing House, electronic edition], p. 7 and Christiana Publishing House's

The work, published in the journal lines "Thought" is perceived by the readers at that time as a composition quite demanding that revives old language sermons. The paper did not leave indifferent upper bodies and so, after reading it in the meeting of May 20th, 1928, obtained the blessing of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church for the publication: "To Mr. Sandu Tudor. In response to the petition you submitted, we have the honour to let you know that the Holy Synod, in the meeting of May 20th, 1928, reading your paper entitled "Akathist of St. Demetrios the New Basarabov" and appreciating its value both in terms of literary and of the keeping intact of the true teachings of our Holy Church praises approved printing of this work. July 13th, 1928, Bucharest, President Pimen, Metropolitan of Moldova"¹⁴.

Thus the poem, Byzantine type, falls within the tradition, improving with its value of prayer. Writer innovations consisted of the construction of new metaphors with symbolic value and caring to support lyric musicality without affecting classical structure.

Therefore, the text lends itself to an analysis from the perspective of literary theology – *Litteraturtheologie* – because it does not priorly subordinate to aesthetic purpose, but wished to be valuable for the orthodox literature, the Christian element being observed both in *form* and especially in *spirit*. Akathist-Hymn is one of the many forms of lyrical genre, a text which is primarily a cultic role, invokes and honours the holy person. Unlike other traditional species of laic expression, – sonnet, washers, triolet, gazelle – which, over time, were subjected to thematic level, multiple metamorphoses and retained only the formality versification

note on the article „Sandu Tudor – «o biografie imposibilă» [“Sandu Tudor – «an impossible biography»”], chapter from Fr. Constantin Jinga, *Ieroschimomahul Daniil Sandu Tudor – omul și opera*, București: Editura Christiana, 2005 [*Hieroschemamonk Daniil Sandu Tudor - man and work*. Bucharest: Christiana Publishing House, 2005], pp. 143-158. [http://www.editurachristiana.ro/cuvantul-christianei/26-cuvantul-christianei/241-cuviosul-daniil-de-la-raru-48-de-ani-de-la-plecare-muceniceasc-la-ceruri](http://www.editurachristiana.ro/cuvantul-christianei/26-cuvantul-christianei/241-cuviosul-daniil-de-la-rarucuvantul-christianei/26-cuvantul-christianei/241-cuviosul-daniil-de-la-raru-48-de-ani-de-la-plecare-muceniceasc-la-ceruri), accessed on 09.04.2020.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

– which sometimes, was passed through a process of renewal. The Akathist, promoted especially by the church leaders, taken into account the spiritual needs, did not turn over time and did not accept structural changes, but with very few exceptions, proved itself a model in which form and content can and must achieve a perfect unity of ideas and poetic expression.

Therefore, this text-norm did not supported structural changes, but with few exceptions and proved rigorously conservative. Moreover, the place and role determined for the Akathist in the consecrated ritual system religious processions in the liturgical calendar year and the economy's joint of liturgical Administration determines this configuration.

Sandu Tudor's Akathist is kept within these classical frames of a worship song that gravitates around the life and work of a saint, whose evoked personality is ruled by a strong and humble emotional feeling, in a discovery approach, an emphasis of a dogmatic meaning, embeded in an oratorical musicality which at first glance may seem austere, but with this melodic cold enciphers mystical solemnity. This cultic production, "brilliant exactly because of the absence of superficial subjective lyrical originality" identifies itself with the collective objective lyric of the Church Tradition, with the "assuming and creative varying of the motifs, of its symbolic and archetypal images of great religious depth is transfigured in prayer, and art in spirituality"¹⁵.

Sandu Tudor's preoccupation to recover archaic vocabulary and syntax of old Romanian language – which we admit that untrained readers –justifies the application of hermeneutics from the perspective of *Theopoem*, the poet being concerned, on the one hand, to recover the sacred aura of prayers uttered with the same words able to translate divine mystery in some understandable pictures to a person who has a minimum initiation into the mysteries of the Christian vision and so to restore the authentic dialogue be-

¹⁵ Arhid. Joan Jr. ICĂ, *Daniil Sandu Tudor-poet, schimnic, neoimnograf și martir*, in: „Revista Teologică”, [*Daniil Sandu Tudor – poet, hieroschemamonk, neo hymnologist and martyr*. In: „Theological Review”], year I, Sibiu, no. 2, 1991, p. 110.

tween ancestors and descendants. The word, the soul expression, manifests the image and the relationship between complete units, between faces that communicate with each other. Poetic identity is grounded at a prereflexiv, preanalytical level, within the pure act of own utterance of the soul.

The Auroral Status of the poetic utterance points to the first state of the soul in the theological sense. In the poet's akathist-hymns the creative act of writing is put into service of the *discovery* of the transcendent, toward it aspires to, but also the unsuspected inners of the heart, in which God makes He present. Writing, in his view, is not only a path to the core of things and creatures, but becomes a proof of the presence of God in the human heart. In this context, the poet's options for religious hymn, litany, text-norm are justified¹⁶: "The Akathist is a great spiritual canticle typical of Eastern Christian piety. Of all the great solemnities of Constantinople, perhaps the greatest, most impressive was just the sermon of «the Prayer» which in Greek means «holy song standing» (...)

When hearing it, you need to remain steadfast as a candle burn in frozen glory"¹⁷.

So the semantic level of the Akathist has tripartite functionality: dogmatic, historical regarding the mentioned saint and liturgical: "Akathist is part of the liturgical mystics of what is known in Orthodoxy as Uninterrupted Worship» or «constant glorification». Akathist supposedly never stops and is always renewed(...) Akathist hymn is one of those stairs in spirit that gives the possibility to climb up there to the horizon where you can be covered by the Vision without breaks and without blemish through this"¹⁸.

Invoking the Holy New Dimitrie Basarabov does not have only a *latreutic* role, for worship, but also allows the creation of a spiritual *channel*, needed for education and sensibilisation of the

¹⁶ Laura BĂDESCU, *Sacris litteris. System test*, In: „Romanian Life”, XCIV, January-February, Bucharest, nr. 1, 1999, p. 18.

¹⁷ Ieroschimonahul Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu TUDOR), *Acatiste...*, [Hieroschemamonk Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu TUDOR), *The Akathists...*], p. 9.

¹⁸ Ieroschimonahul Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu TUDOR), *Acatiste...*, [Hieroschemamonk Daniil de la Rarău (Sandu TUDOR), *The Akathists...*], p. 9.

soul. Moreover, Sandu Tudor himself defines his own creation using a term - „icon hymnal” which Pr. Constantin Jinga writes that „is original capitalization in a unique context, typological reading as hermeneutic approach”¹⁹.

1.3. Poetic aside: The link between diurnal and nocturnal in the Tudorian religious imagery

The perspective that Gilbert Durand opens in *Anthropological structures of the imaginary*²⁰ suggests a suppression of the limit between rational and imaginary and the presentation, structuralist, of the anthropological “*paths*” of the imaginary²¹. The basic components of general human imagination are, in his vision: diurnal and nocturnal. In religious poetry, light symbols, numinous and sofianism are categories of emphasizing the divine epiphany either in the form wisdom, either in the light flowing and intelligible level, through the thoughts or feelings revealed. Light is special attribute of the rise, which has no direction as the arrow or the bird, for example. It's more a presence felt, which reveals one thing, a being, which refers to someone and, more rarely, something.

In the context of Romanian poetry religious poet who has the merit of play style transcendent lands indigenous descent, using the images transcendental, Sofiane, is Nichifor Crainic and re-

¹⁹ Pr. Constantin JINGA, *Ieroschimonahul Daniil Sandu Tudor – omul și opera*, în colecția: Corifeii Rugului Aprins, București: Editura Christiana, [Fr. Constantin JINGA. *Hieroschemamonk Daniil Sandu Tudor - man and work*, Bucharest: Christiana Publishing House], 2005, p. 201.

²⁰ Gilbert DURAND, *Structurile antropologice ale imaginarului. Introducere în arhetipologia generală*. Traducere de Marcel Aderca, București: Editura Universul Enciclopedic [Anthropological structures of the imaginary. Introduction to general archetypology. Translation by Marcel Aderca. Bucharest: Encyclopedic Universe Publishing House], 2000.

²¹ Gilbert DURAND, *Structurile antropologice ...* [Anthropological structures...], p. 19.