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FACULTY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY**

**The John Cassian's
ANTHROPOLOGY IN LIGHT OF
NEW RESEARCH**

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Summary

There are today enough and many reasonable researchers who claim that St. John Cassian occupies a place of honor in patristic literature, reason that we decided to we approach in our work a theme that relates to the teaching of St. John Cassian about man, as it reflected in his work, and for which we will seek to present in what follows somewhat historiographical and dogmatic the mode how the his work was received, as well as personality of this great Father of the Church Romanian and universal.

The main objective for this stage of the research in which we find consists of an analysis. Undoubtedly, research in the area of Romanian monastic life has preoccupied early Romanian historiography, being investigated aspects of Romanian monasticism, spiritual life that emanate from the monasteries and cultural-artistic role of monastic fireplaces. In other words, historiographical concerns about monasticism did not stop in time to our own time. And if most farthest investigation are reduced in number, research novelty of present-day is somewhat a zonal and geographical-historical investigation of Romanian monasticism.

Scythia Minor, homeland of St. Cassian - Dobrogea today - is for us, the cradle of Christianity Romanian and makes this statement, relying we by an ancient religious tradition recorded towards the middle of the fourth century by historian Eusebius of Caesarea (Eccles. Hist. III, 1) which, in turn takes information from older writings of Origen (In Math. Comment, series 39, ad. Math, 24, 9) in which express : ” according to tradition, Andrew him fell it to the drawing of lots (to evangelize) Scythia”. And the historian J. Zeiller concludes that by Scythia converted by apostle Andrew we must understand Dobrogea territory of today, organized as a province under the name of Scythia (Minor) by Emperor Diocletian in 292.

Between patristic personalities who stood among the monks oldest-romanian and Romanian, who have worked and have perfected for God, making us some part of the their Divine glory, I saw fit to present in this paper on St. John Cassian, who was made worthy by God to outstanding achievements in spiritual treasure of our Church, and whose influence has been reflected throughout the Christian Church, who became prominent in Western Europe of his time, and contributed to the European heritage of Christian humanism, by his apostolic and ecumenical perfect doctrine, by the his monastic ordinances, by its various pastoral and canonical activities, and by his dialogue based on theological knowledge and values of Eastern Christianity.

For the wealth of information available to Romanian and foreign historiography, I chose the topic of this paper and we structured it into two big parts, each with substantial chapters and subchapters, as follows:

The first part deals in a general way and includes information about life, travels, spiritual formation and characterization of the unique personality of the saint John Cassian.

In **Chapter I: The patristic personality to St. John Cassian**, I tried presenting the unique personality of Saint John Cassian, to put this famous monk among parents from IV-V centuries of which the most famous were his friends.

Chapter II: The St. John Cassian contribution to the development of patristic literary heritage; I proceeded systematically to describe and present teachings, the work and its institutions in Marseille, his influence in time concerning the monks and ascetics Western.

Part II is specific, and covering priority the St. John Cassian doctrine about man.

Thus in **Chapter I: The Anthropology of St. John Cassian**; I tried to present the essential dimensions of anthropological teachings to Cassian, which we sought to integrate them and individualize them in the broader context of anthropology western church which adopted him. Here we treated extremely important issues such as freedom, grace, sin, possibility to "deification" and others.

Chapter II: Diseases of the soul and St. John Cassian conception for their healing; is also a specific chapter where practically apply the doctrine about man and the ways of perfection with God's help.

Finally, Chapter III: The actuality of St. John Cassian teachings about man; focus before concluding the essential ideas that St. John Cassian has presented in occident regarding man and his destiny according to God's will.

These chapters and subchapters I ended **Conclusions**, and for all these I supported the whole thesis discourse with a substantial and **Selective Bibliography**.

Rich informational material does not allow us to expose all data related to the topic of thesis, because, only the personality of St. John Cassian may be the subject of one specialized study, due to the multiple facets of his ecumenical ministry.

The topic of our thesis was suggested us by our concrete reality, by observing current trends and issues of ecumenism. Thus, in the last decades of the twentieth century, but especially since 1989, mentality of Europeans experience a constant transformation, due to geopolitical, social and economic changes that have known countries of Central and Eastern Europe, after the fall of communist regimes and also in terms of European Union enlargement, where the absurd discriminations aren't tolerated, nor restriction of the freedom

of each citizen to recognize and practice their faith openly. It sustain increasingly a mutual openness to understanding, acceptance and cooperation, and, not least, to ecumenical dialogue on several issues, between that is noteworthy here the issue between autocephalous Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church from European space.

In this context, naturally arises the answer to question why I approached a theme as the exposed one in this thesis, because in a multi-confessional and pluri-religious world, we can't propagates Orthodoxy through excruciating isolation, but through dialogue and cooperation, by mutual sharing of experience and accumulation of spiritual values. Today is inevitable contact and dialogue. And in terms of our engagement in the ecumenical movement, the Romanian Orthodox Church is not alone. If we use ecumenism as an opportunity to make known Orthodoxy is a benefit. But if we lose our identity, if we dissolve, if us we are going dissolve when we are going talk, of course this it can be dangerous. Therefore, a genuine ecumenism, in favor of Orthodox Christianity, it can make him, only the one who knows the interfaith realities, knows the perennial values of Orthodoxy and at the same time, it also knows who are the common or divergent points of other faiths. In fact, St. John Cassian model's not remain isolate in promoting ecumenism past and present, because many prominent theologians from us, have made a major contribution to the theology development of all times. In this regard, we remember parents who shone like real stars in Dobrogea (Scythia Minor), Romanian cradle of Christianity, and between them, prominently being John Cassian, Teotim bishop of Tomis, and Scythian monks, who they impressed both by theological culture, but also through scientific erudition, writing and dialoguing in a respectable and dignified mode for institution which was represented by them.

Even since the V-VI centuries are mentioned "Scythian monks" in Scythia Minor - Dobrogea today, but before of these we hear news about St. John Cassian (c. 360 - c 435), author of important theological works, honest both in the Eastern Church as well in the Western Church, where he founded two monasteries, one for men and another for nuns, to whom gave the good monastic life ordinances drafted by St. Basil the Great. And at the beginning of the fourth century, Christian monasticism was already an established institution, gaining more followers, through the moral authority who it he exercised in the Church.

Also, we can talk extensively about personality and work of all "Scythian monks" and a conclusive evidence about existence of pure Orthodox monasteries, which they had life jointly organized, especially in Scythia Minor, is even the confession of John Cassian, originating in Dobrogea, that from childhood - a pueritia - came in the company of monks, striving to imitate their way of living.

And if we have only the Christian calendar calculated of Dionysius the Less, the hymn *Te Deum*, created by St. Nicetas of Remesiana, "the formula" of the Scythian monks, the theological works of John Maxentius and Leontius of Byzantium, alongside existence the Diocese and to the Metropolis of Tomis later, since early in the fourth century, with more than ten holders known, as well as other 14 bishops in Dobrogea, documented in the sixth century, would still be enough to have it evidence that in this province there were monasteries with a rich life, because the rulers for these bishoprics were recruited, usually from among the monks. But even more, it proves how strong and fruitful was the monastic life in Romania since its inception, as well the ecumenical dimension of monks theology.

While all the major cultures of the past (and can be added, most cultures who have not yet entered the sphere of influence of modernity) have experienced with the improvement ideal of man, and therefore, with the improvement idea of man, modern European culture does not seem to be too interested to the evidences about man's spiritual stature, perfect not only in the resources, on which knows how to create and use them, but also in inwardly plan.

Vladimir Lossky suggests an explanation observing that the way in which modern Western man has become accustomed to seeing the world, as Borderless, lacks a center and theological significance, a model of dissolution, was passed and by the man himself; basically, he has now become what he thought about the world that it is.

In contrast, "The prevailing conception of man in the Christian East is based on the ortodox notion of "fellowship" (participation) to God. Man was not created as human being an autonomous and self-sufficient, because his nature is really itself, only to the extent that it exists "in God" or "in grace."

And the man of patristic tradition is not the man of sins and virtues legal-moralist interpreted, but the conflicting trends, of greatness and modesty, dynamism and freedom. If he lives intensely the duplicity of his own fallen condition, the man described by Fathers not remain fatally divided between good and evil, because it can to lead to unify the its better trends, to transfiguration of his movements from irrational passions to the virtues of conformity with the model of perfect humanity, archetype of the Christ - being able to complete their entire being and life in Christ. Which does not mean a simplification, in that meaning speaks Berdyaev. What remains specific the patristic anthropology is that not confined to partial descriptions, but develops a vision of the whole, a vision that builds on the column of archetypal pattern, by revealing the consequences of sin and culminating with the path from passions to deification, in the fire of transfiguration. The patristic anthropology is not just "anthropological" but theandric and theanthropic. The man of Fathers tradition is

never a solitary hero, his creativity is not triumphant and aberrant (make for to make "performance"), but an effort which he builds himself and participate in the reconstruction of the cosmos, in Christ and in the Church.

In a place of honor, in the patristic tradition is part of Saint John Cassian, about which his anthropology we try to talk in this paper. In Saint John Cassian's theology, one of the most difficult aspects of his thinking is to understand his anthropology. And there are several reasons for this. First, the his "opinions" about what is man there are for us based on assumptions or beliefs inherited, because he didn't mention explicitly in the anthropological sense, to the way that today describes as anthropological, to explain in his letters. In the second place, the anthropology drawn from the writings of St. John Cassian is relational and practice, concrete to appropriate needs of the time it was written, rather than philosophical and systemic as we are used to today. St. John Cassian is mostly preoccupied with human beings regarding their relationship with God, evil, the world, and mutually engaged in the process of perfection. Therefore, the anthropology is intertwined with other various elements of his theology as a whole. And thirdly, we find a variety of anthropological terms in the anthropology of St. Cassian, some which we find them in the Eastern tradition and others in the ascetic tradition from Desert. Nowhere, however, St. John Cassian not present a classification to the nature of human being, qualities or the component parts. As a result, sometimes, there is a little puzzling definition, regarding use diversity of terms. Moreover, the difficulty of understanding the teachings of St. John Cassian is a feature of the sacrament of Christian, being simultaneously rational and spiritual, because do not forget that the Savior speaks to the crowd in parables, and for this reason, any scientific study about the Christian teachings is ultimately a translation of "parables", accessible only to the few and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

On the one hand, St. John Cassian may use different terms to mean the same thing anthropological, and, on the other hand, he can use the same term to describe different things. In addition, many of the specific terms of casian's theology, occur with varying frequency in the writings of St. Cassian, and all this are a lack of terminological and conceptual systematization who contributing to the complexity of his anthropology.

However, the writings of St. John Cassian oriented to human perfection, contain an extremely rich anthropological conceptual material which formed the subject of various investigations, and from whose results we present some into the bibliography accompanying this thesis.

And if some people manifest some formal doubts we will affirm that undeniably, St. John Cassian provide sufficient specific data and general, who help us to the knowledge of the Christian patristic anthropology of IV-V century, if this is the science about man in his body and spiritual composition. But an anthropology conceived only for this purpose, don't cover and don't form the most important part to St. Cassian's anthropology. Saint Cassian not follows in examining to bodily and spiritual constitution a purely descriptive purpose. He not intended to teach us what thinks about human composition, to eventually impose us this view and doesn't want to train us in the sense of the natural sciences and to stop only at that. The anthropological data of St. Cassian are an auxiliary that we detach they in a study focused specifically in this sense. Man in St. Cassian writings is always considered in relation to God.

Overall, St. John Cassian doesn't describe the man, itself, but rather describes the various conditions and relationships between the believer and God in its perfecting process. Then, anthropology's terms of St. Cassian not designates parts of man, but rather, aspects of the whole man, but seen from different perspectives and who sees in this part of the anthropology of St. Cassian, only anatomical element or the psychological, that one didn't comprehend the depth of St. Casian thought. All that says St. John Cassian about human constitution helps us to fully understand his conception about the salvation accomplished in Christ.

Studying the writings of St. John Cassian we noted that in the Saint's theology the importance of anthropology is obvious. Without to him sit on man in heart of its concerns, place that is reserved for Jesus Christ, the writings of St. John Cassian offers a leading place for man and also the one of the most vivid interests. St. John Cassian is not only a man concerned about speculation, and its practical purpose is seen virtually immediately because his anthropology is permanent concerned about the contact between the ones up and ones down. The soteriological teaching of the St. Cassian's writings is dominated by religious speculative concerns but especially practical, which is explained by the orientation that had it his activity of missionary monk in the Church.

Although interested to learn, St. Cassian didn't has written to develop a theological system, speculative and abstract, but to make the believers' community to whom spoke it, to return to a permanent and practical faith in Christ, the fountainhead of salvation, and to a life in harmony with this belief.

Obviously, in the work of St. John Cassian there are theological theoretical exposures, however, these exposures are tailored to practical matters, but in this way the writings of St.

John Cassian have an anthropocentric character very marked, in sense that his concern dominant, is the situation and the human destiny.

We encountered many difficulties in exposure of the St. John Cassian's Anthropology, because it is impossible to separate from the whole, and to draw it out from the whole theology of Saint.

The writings of St. John Cassian offers us an amount of anthropological data with which we can reconstruct the system of St. Cassian's Anthropologie, but don't offer us the system itself. His writings aren't scientifically treatises made according to academic standards and are rather the fruit of some concrete needs, designed to create a stream of new life in the western demand conditions. His writings aren't scientifically treatises worked according to academic standards and are rather the fruit of some concrete needs, designed to create a stream of new life in the demand conditions in the west. Or, this life is the Christian life on which recommends her, offering his own personal example, because, as we know, him himself had tasted the blessings of this life, before speaking of it, with the overwhelming conviction that breathes from his every word.

Choosing anthropology Saint Cassian as a topic for our thesis was determined by the timeliness and its importance, both in the society life and of Church.

The human problem is today increasingly the researches heart of the theologians, philosophers and scientists. After main philosophical discipline was successively the metaphysics, epistemology, sociology, psychology, philosophy of culture, today, in forefront emerged the anthropology. In our era is manifested intense the concern for human and towards the human being in what is specific to it, good or bad. And St. John Cassian can help us, if we study what can be his anthropological conception.

The experience and the high ascetic ministry, but especially the outstanding achievements of St John Cassian on monastic plan in Western Christianity, are sufficient and justified prerequisites which supports our theme. Of course, this is not easy to do, for several reasons. First, in the fifth century the anthropology wasn't explicitly formulated as a science, thing that has happened relatively recently, in the modern era, although there have always been concerns and teachings of great men - between laymen and of the saints – between the christians, and here we can consider him on to St. John Cassian, involved in disputes with the anthropomorphism, Nestorianism and Pelagianism which fall within the scope of anthropology, without his claims to cover all the issues required by modern anthropology, and without avoid the essential ones and required for each interested person to salvation by Christian perfection in Christ.

Then the difficulty comes also from our time because of the fluid total manner how it shows the anthropology concept. Thus, although it expresses a lot of strong convictions, there isn't a full agreement between experts laymen and theologians, nor even among specialists theologians of the three Christian denominations on definitions, objectives and methods of the study of anthropology as a science.

We know that modern anthropocentrism and the whole fabric of modernity who are the majority in our world were processed under Western Christianity vision about man, while the orthodox conception or is lacking, or it's very poorly represented internationally. True, formally, premises of modernity can be found in the antitraditional reactions of the Enlightenment etc., but really, viz spiritual, they are in the genesis of the mental structures of Western Christianity, born by planting Christianity over the structures that had born the Roman Empire, mentalities that have not been abandoned ever, and only have perfected in parallel with exercise feudal of Monarchy, and they was upgraded under hybrid form to papal institutions just apparently sacramental because it is simultaneously (and) political more than religious.

Knowing the strong influence of St. John Cassian over the West will understand why we believe it is necessary to pay attention and what is needed, to refer us especially in Anthropology research of St. John Cassian, not both at its source, ie what we call the Orthodox Christian anthropology - biblical and patristic - but rather at Western theologians and anthropologists. Do not forget that this approach had even St. John Cassian, when he formulated e.g. the "Institutes" monastic adapting them to the Western mentality.

Romanian Orthodox monk, gifted by God with rich gifts, Saint John Cassian had accomplished an important role not only in Romanian church life, and to strengthen and empower entire Orthodoxy, through the all services, achievements and his personality. Because of him the our spiritual life pulsates today with the same intensity as in the past.

And with St. John Cassian, all the monks, through all the work of cultural and spiritual, monks and monasteries still continues the beautiful traditions of the Romanian Orthodox monastic spirituality, prayers woven work and the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage and national orthodox universal.

The name and memory of great deeds of their illustrious life, over which could not into oblivion, are major signs of the blessing of the Lord of faith and piety of the children of our Church, as of the exceptional care of our heavenly Father to our orthodox nation.

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