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**THE THEOLOGICAL MESSAGE
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
IN ROMANIAN CAROLS**

PhD Thesis

Summary

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THE THEOLOGICAL MESSAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN ROMANIAN CAROLS

In order to know and understand a man you must know his family and social environment. In order to know and understand people, you must know their history. But if you desire to know and understand the existence of people, you must know their spirituality, traditions, customs. The desire of assembling in a new light the Romanian popular Christian image reflected in carols, and furthermore the rediscovery of these jewels of Romanian spirituality in the contemporary society, were the motivation of choosing the theme of this PhD Research Paper.

For Romanian people a great place is occupied by *CAROLS*, real pearls on the tiara of national spirituality. The *CAROLS* present the biggest joy of the world since its creation – the birth of the son of God himself and of Virgin Mary in the shabby cave of Bethlehem, alongside with all the major events of Christian religious year. A lot has been spoken and written about carols, about the way our ancestors felt and lived them. We can identify in carols the ancestors' soul filled with faith in God above. From this rich thesaurus of carols, widely spread in Muntenia, Moldavia of Stephan the Great and Saint, Transylvania, Banat and Dobrogea and in all Romanian - inhabited parts, one can detach powerful evidence about the constancy, true faith and our Christian and Romanian continuity.

In order to establish a bridge between past and present, **the first chapter** shows the foundation for the Romanians - the only orthodox latin people. Romanians, born from the Daco-Roman osmosis and sanctified by the Gospel, are the only ones who step into history as a Christian nation. Romanity and Christianity are the two coordinates that define it, customizing it among the nations of the earth.

Despite the hard times experienced in the past by our nation, Romanians came out victorious every time, fulfilling, with God's help, the goals and the mission in their long

history. Here, between the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea, our fellows reinforced their existence by writing their own national, cultural and religious history¹.

This situation made the famous Ioan G. Coman to say that “Romanians are the only neo-Latin people of the Orthodox faith and the only Latin Orthodox people”². This situation is possible through the preach of Saint Andrew on our country’s territory, situation testified by old historical sources, the place names and the religious traditions that present ancestors’ Christianiser, St. Andrew. Herodot, the father of history, said about the Gets in Dobrogea who fought with the Persian army of Darius that “are the bravest and most just of the Thracians” (Histories, IV,93)³. This is considered a proof of our strong nature that managed to hold on to all waves of migrating people. Starting with second century BC, elements of Roman civilization are penetrating the Geto-Dacians, so, in 106 AD Decebal – Dacia’s leader is defeated by the Emperor of Rome – Trajan, after the second Dacian-Roman War. Tis way Dacia becomes a Roman province.

In order to reinforce his domination in Dacia, Emperor Trajan brings here, besides legions of Roman soldiers (V of Macedonia and XIII Gemina) “endless crowds of settlers from all Roman Empire, alongside with traders willing to make commercial exchanges”⁴.

No doubt that from all the settlers brought from Syria, Asia Minor and the Balkan Peninsula, there were Christians, too. There were also traders who promoted the new doctrine while staying in Dacia⁵. Ethnogenesis refers to the process of formation or emergence of ethnic groups. About Romanity and Christianity in the context of ethnogenesis of the Romanian people, the famous historian Radu Vulpe said: “We are a nation par excellence Romance. Latinity is the essential nature of our language, our culture, our conscience. It was our ethnic incentive energy whom we owe the power of survival, resilience, willingness of freedom and unity,... spiritual values of roman civilization that were kept and treasured as the chief characteristics of our nation”⁶. As Radu Vulpe wrote, An

¹ Pr. Conf. Dr. Alexandru M. Ioniță, *Church and our country's past*, Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2001, p. 5.

² Ioan G. Coman, *Ancient church writers*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1979, p. 364.

³ Mihai Bărbulescu, Dennis Deletant, Keith Hitchins, Șerban Papacostea, Pompiliu Teodor, *The history of Romania*, Editura Corint, București, 2002, p. 27.

⁴ Constantin C. Giurescu, Dinu C. Giurescu, *Romanian history from ancient times until today*, ediția a II-a, Editura Albatros, București, 1975, pp. 93-94.

⁵ Pr. Prof. Dr. Mircea Păcurariu, *Romanian Orthodox Church History*, Editura Episcopiei Dunării de Jos, Galați, 1996, pp. 13-14.

⁶ Prof. Univ. Acad. Radu Vulpe, *Romans and Christianity, coordinates of Romanian ethnogenesis*, în volumul, *De la Dunăre la Mare. Mărturii Istorice și Monumente de Artă Creștină*, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului și Dunării de Jos, Galați, 1977, p. 16.

incentive is something that motivates an individual to perform an action, so, indeed we the Romanians have a powerful latin vein that will never vanish.

It is known that we, Romanians, have been and remain the cornerstone of Christian Latin East Europe. The importance of Christianity as a social phenomenon and historical spirit of the Roman world has led many historians to study deeper and deeper this subject. Along with the Romanization, a Christianity essential factor in the birth of the Romanian people, has often been stressed. As part of Greco-Roman civilization, Christianity is a strong argument in favor of our ethnic continuity. The Romanization Christian vestiges occupy a special place in the interpretation of historians due to their inner value.

In *Acta Sanctorum* we can identify the following statement: “many of barbarians received with simplicity Christianity and they preferred the faith in Christ”⁷. The steadfast faith in Christ of our ancestors had often as a means of expression and teaching *the carol*. This is the reason why, in the second part of my first chapter I display this ancient custom.

The caroler, who is a singer of carols, proclaims each year the Nativity and the main sequence of events from the Holy Scripture, as we will see in the future chapters. The carolers act as angels from ancient times who sang above the cave of Bethlehem: “Glory to God in and on earth peace among men of good will” (Luke II, 14). This old custom of singing carols was, at first, a ritual meant to highlight the magic power of the word, of the gesture, in order to make favorable the new temporal cycle⁸.

Singing carols is a roman custom at its origins, as the famous writer Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu stated. He said that at the time when the Romans were brought to Dacia by their emperor “they did not forget to bring with them the beliefs, customs, religion and language - this great thesaurus of our ancestors”⁹. Nevertheless all the carols have their roots in ancient winter festivals of the Romans. We can also predict that, etymologically speaking, the Romanian term “carol” comes from the latin word “calendae”, the conservation of consonant “l” in intervocalic position, where they have become “r”, due to Alexandru Rosetti, the influence of Slavic term “kolenda”¹⁰.

This term appeared due to the cyclical view of time, its etymon could be the greek word “kalindo”, which means turning, solstice (a solstice is an astronomical event that occurs

⁷ Haralambie Mihăescu, Gheorghe Ștefan, Radu Hâncu, Vladimir Iliescu, Virgil C. Popescu, *Romanian History Sources*, Editura Academiei Române, București, 1970, p. 725.

⁸ Vasile V. Filip, *The Romanian carols' universe*, Editura Saeculum I.O., București, 1999, p.12.

⁹ Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, *The folklorists*, volumul II, ediție critică, note, variante, comentarii de Ioan Oprișan, Editura Saeculum I.O., București, 2008, p. 172.

¹⁰ Alexandru Rosetti, *Romanian religious carols*, Librăriile Cartea Românească și Pavel Suru, București, 1920, p. 18.

twice each year as the Sun reaches its highest or lowest excursion relative to the celestial equator on the celestial sphere).

The custom bounds, in principle, archaic meaning of the feast as the end of the cycle time and also the beginning of the new year (lat. "annulus" = ring); durability accepted so tenacious that extended the Christian horizon, that determined migration from yuletide carols into the Easter (celebration of spring, associated agricultural events and perhaps the new year as we celebrated New Year like ancient Romans during the Republic¹¹). *Yule* or *Yuletide* ("Yule time") is a religious festival observed by the historical Germanic peoples, later being absorbed into and equated with the Christian festival of Christmas.

Regarding the etymology of the word *Christmas*, the linguists views are divided. The learning russian Miklosich proposes a strange hypothesis, the one that it derives from the slavonian "Kracun", not considering that the ancient Slavs borrowed the word from the Romanians. The authors of the Glossary published by the Romanian Academy early last century, Laurian – Maxim proposed the etymology of the word Christmas from "Carnatione", the Incarnation of the Word.

The great Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu proposes the latin "Crastinum" (tomorrow); Professor Aron Densușianu supports the etymology Christmas - "Creation" (birth). Pericle Papahagi proposed the etymology of Christmas - "calationem" "(calling, the call), calls from the crowd by priests, the first day of the month to receive news of the holidays that began.

Father professor *Emilian Cornițescu* thinks that "The philological meaning of the word Christmas can refer to the source of biblical source in which we can identify *cara* – to call, to to cry, to shout followed by the ancient romanian term *cea* – ground to which we can add an archaic termination *un* - could be a cardinal number¹². Although linguists opinions remain divided, most scholars consider to be right the etymology of "Creation", birth, creation, but the discussions are far from being over.

Romanian carols are kept and valued for their theology. They are particularly a fragrant scent of our Christian piety and ancestral, they are a popular played form of our Orthodox Faith. They are inspired by the Holy Scripture and Sacred Tradition, and the iconography of religious services. In the carols there is a powerful Christian spirit that breathes heavily and that kept some of tenderness spirit of primary Christian worship.

¹¹ Vasile V. Filip, *op. cit.*, p.13.

¹² Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Emilian Cornițescu, *Old Testament - the spiritual source of the Romanian language*, Editura Europolis, Constanța, 2008, p. 167.

They present listeners of Orthodox dogma dressed in idyllic robe and naive popular version of the carol. None of the basic teachings of the Christian faith are forgotten and unused in our Romanian carols¹³.

In **the second chapter** of the Research Paper romanian carols are presented, but also their biblical foundation. In our romanian regions, carols are words of the Holy Scripture, the theological truths, the patristic definition of man, transmitted orally from father to son, straight and true, unbroken by anything, updated annually by every Christian house heralds the Incarnation of the Son of God.

As a result, the chapter begins with the presentation of the Nativity carols. Romanian religious carols race to describe the lyrics full of rare tenderness of various adventures that Our Lady had to pass along the road to Bethlehem, seeking a favorable place for the birth of the Son of God.

Romanian Christians are listening today with emotion the carols of Nativity and nature active participates in the many rough times through which the Mother of God and her sufferings regard all actions and her gestures and feeling at the end, after many tests full of unrestrained joy, sincere and childlike at the news of Baby Jesus. Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, "the Messiah the is desired"¹⁴ is revered through religious carols in a completely solemn atmosphere. The joy is seen both on the earth and in Heaven. All creation exult in endless love of God which is His Son to be born miraculously of an innocent virgin. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah VII, 14).

Popular imagination takes this picture of Jesus Christ's Birth, the most wonderful colors with various tones and finest feelings. The picturesque setting in which the action is carried include all natural grandeur and simplicity, a moment that went deep in the popular mind and reached the heights of inspiration and creation. The action takes place in the Holy Land. Starting with Virgin pilgrimage within the broader nature of searching and finding this place to give birth. The Star Birth leads the magi - shepherds. They worship, angels rejoice. Herod was troubled and he decided tokill babies. Virgin and Child flees to Egypt.

It is interesting to note how, at one time, the action takes place in the Romanian Country. The Virgin Mary is looking for a place to give birth:

¹³ Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Necula, *Carols in the life of Romanians* , în "Glasul Bisericii", anul XLVIII, 1989, nov.-dec., nr. 6, p. 65.

¹⁴ Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicu Moldoveanu, *Anthology of Christmas carols for mixed choir*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1999, p. 10.

“P-ângă Murăș, p-ângă Tisă”¹⁵.

In order to escape Herod the Virgin Mary, is no more running to Egypt:

“Pruncu-n brațe că-și lua,
Căărăuia-și de-apuca.
Căărăuia drept la munți,
Drept la munți, la munți cărunți”¹⁶.

As the travel route indicates for the Virgin Mary the Hungarian Country, Saxon and Romanian Country, they are all embedded in one and the same beautiful country, our homeland, Romania. In this way Romanians reinforce the idea of national unity.

In this way, the Nativity, predicted by the Old Testament prophets, arrives in simple lyrics but with profound dogmatic meanings: Son of God, ever before, was incarnate "the fullness of time" (Galatians IV, 4), and was made man; the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and the Incarnation of his divine nature was united with the human in the person of Jesus Christ. So the Son of God becomes the Son of Man, the man returns to the greatness of the son of God. Along with the prophecies of the old law, who spoke about the Incarnation and birth of Christ, the most important being that of the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us" (Isa. VII, 14), carols constitute the extension and maintenance of these prophecies, generation after generation, through the voices of the carol singers, to those of us today. Reliving the Nativity each year shows that Christmas is no longer an abstract celebration, it is the permanent presence of Christ among us:

„Astăzi S-a născut Hristos,
Mesia, chip luminos.
Lăudați și cântați,
Și vă bucurați”¹⁷.

Humans are not the only ones who jump with excitement at the birth of the Messiah, the whole nature enjoys and takes part at Nativity. Nativity is the richest opportunity for Romanian orthodox people's spiritual joy. Because all messianic threads enjoy the

¹⁵ Sabin V. Drăgoi, *303 carols*, cu text și melodie, Editura Scrisul Românesc, Craiova, 1925, colindul nr. 216.

¹⁶ George Breazul, *Carols*, culegere, editată de Fundația Culturală Regală *Principele Carol*, în colecția *Cartea Satului*, cu desene de pictorul Demian, Tipografia Scrisul Românesc, Craiova, 1938, colindul nr. 34, p. 50.

¹⁷ Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicu Moldoveanu, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

permanence means that the same revival is part in the nature of the Nativity. "Apple blossom", "white flowers" are renewed every year in so-called *going carols*, and they are waiting for their Saver. We can rightly say that the Nativity - this fundamental truth that was built around the dogmatic Christian - found strong echo in the hearts of believers. They depict the extent of their powers according to their life experiences, but also live deeply, far more than those who seek to help and explain with no reason.

The arrival of the Magi from the East to worship the Savior, it is also seen in the carol lyrics. Knowing the purity of their hearts, God descended to them and discovered their way of reading the stars - the birth of Christ. Two thousand years ago when the Savior was born, astronomy was advanced enough to state that the three wise men from the East could read the sky and the emergence of new stars and much brighter than the other proclaims the coming to the world of a great King.

Holy Church gave the name of Magi, the word means scholar, trained in the religious sciences, philosophy and astronomy. The star that guided the wise men could not been missing in this paper, being treated diachronically, by presenting the oldest known stars carol of our country and left for posterity with the help of an ancient manuscript from 1787. The old text is placed face to face with the current version of the carol Star, vary greatly reduced in scope and wealth of information, which forces us to rediscover the values stored in the old carols.

The first part of the second chapter is rich of the presentation of carol lyrics about the flight into Egypt, in order the Divine Child to be protected from the anger of Herod, Herod himself ordering the killing of babies.

In the middle of the second chapter are highlighted carols belonging to the Easter period. It begins with the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, preserved in a beautiful carol from Bucovina, land Dorna, carol dating from 1874. The carol, collected by Father Simeon Florea Marian, literally narrates the whole story from the Gospel of St. John Apostle and Evangelist. This is a proof of Romanians attachment to biblical truths that they have received from the Church and have preserved them throughout the centuries.

After the resurrection of Lazarus and the Bethany lubrication, Christ knew that his end was near. Pharisees and Sadducees knew that he would be given to the court, because the leaders of the Jewish people wanted a political Messiah, so hope to get rid of Roman rule. Law of the Old Testament Messianic prophecies were not considered. Judaism became a religious teaching time, more or less applied by those who considered themselves "chief

priests and scribes”¹⁸.

Furthermore, the paper highlights the carols depicted from the Last Supper, the Lord's Passion, Crucifixion and burial. The unique way the carols, the big news of the Resurrection of the Lord is not brought to the world by women prude, but the one who kept the Lord's body while he was in the tomb - centurion Longinus. Of Sacred Tradition know that not all soldiers who had guarded Jesus Jews have accepted bribes. This indirectly confirms it even St. Matthew's Gospel when he says: "some of the watch came into the city, and proclaimed bishops" (Matt. XXVIII, 11), the word "some" does not designate a whole, so not all soldiers were bought out. This confirms the centurion Longinus tradition, along with two other soldiers who refused the money given by the Jews to deny the Resurrection¹⁹.

Although apparently this contradicts the reports of scriptural Tradition of the Holy Church, we confirmed by Synaxar day October 16 that the first witness of the Resurrection was the centurion Longinus. Synaxis Orthodox Church includes the October 16 memorial Holy Martyr Longinus the Centurion. He lived in the time of Emperor Tiberius (14 BC-37 AD). He come from parts of Cappadocia and served in the army as a centurion in Palestine during the rule of Pontius Pilate.

He was ordained in his command, to serve the Lord Holy Passion and Crucifixion. He is the one whom Jesus with his spear pierced the side and he, along with soldiers, made after the burial of the Lord guard, guarding the tomb of Jesus until the resurrection. "Witnessing the signs that were made to the passion of Christ, such as earthquakes, changing sun dark angel glow Resurrection, lighten the heart, and believing in the Lord, together with two other soldiers in the fog, he said truly this was the Son of God "(Matt. XXVII, 54). Wherefore, he received pieces of silver which were given by the Jews, to deny the Resurrection and false witness that the Lord's body was stolen by his disciples²⁰.

Romanian Christians of old times, knowing this information less accessible (something that proves their perseverance and faith in the Resurrection of Jesus) have composed a carol of the story of the centurion Longinus and his discussion with Caiaphas the high priest, and the refusal to let centurion bought proving uprightness, a certain virtue and a characteristic of our nation. Continuing with lyrics, there are narrated the appearances after

¹⁸ Diacon P. I. David, *Seek and you shall find ... patriotic missionary preaching all year celebrations at St. Mary, the pious, preachers and Romanian confessors Romanian*, ediția a V-a, Editura Europolis, Constanța, 2002, p. 113.

¹⁹ Preasfințitul Gherasim Timuș, episcopul Argeșului, *Hagiographical Dictionary*, ediție îngrijită de diac. Gheorghe Băbuț, Editura Pelerinul Român, Oradea, 1998, p. 545.

²⁰ ***, *Prologues*, vol. I, diortosite și îmbogățite de Arhim. Dr. Benedict Ghiuș, Editura Bunavestire, Bacău, 1999, p. 163.

the Resurrection and the joy occasioned by this great Feast in the world. This period is terminated by carols celebrating the Pentecost.

A special place in the carols is dedicated to Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. This "popular Romanian Mariology" is the fruit of piety and devotion of Orthodox Christians, standing in full accordance with the teachings preached by our Holy Church. Dogmatic ideas they express carols about Virgin Mary not deviate at all from traditional fixed line Orthodox Church. Purity, moral and spiritual height that believers worship Romanian Orthodox Church. It is probably obvious that this cult was born with the Christian faith and that he is not an anachronistic legacy of the old pagan cultic practices. In witness stand religious carols and how they expressed in their lyrics simple but full of tenderness, understanding and feeling our Orthodox Romanians "most pure Virgin Mary"²¹.

The third chapter of the paper predicts religious carols and their normative value - true popular Christian moral codes. Revolving around the sacred space of the Church, the spiritual life of our people was strongly influenced by the "truths of faith formulated, defended and taught by the Church"²².

Romanians, sensitive soul, inclined to the spiritual tenets of the Church expressed in a way their own feelings and thoughts, translating them into carols and explaining the manner popular, because it is known that the seniority are tied between religion and folklore. Renowned French folklorist Arnold van Gennep said that "the relationship between folklore and science of religion, or historical events are intimate"²³.

Thus, the dogma of Romanian religious carols should never be denied, but need to be highlighted to enhance the spiritual importance in the eyes of contemporaries such specific popular creations of our nation. The whole history of salvation of the human race was fixed in consecrant carols. Starting from sin, continuing with dogma of Redemption, praising the virtues, ideas and haiting philanthropic passions, carols go until the Parousia, presenting the end of the world, universal judgment, Heaven and Hell. This proves dogmatic and moral intrinsic values of the carols, true guiding lights to the haven of salvation. Of course, believers not express truths of faith, nor dogma decreed religious carols.

In them there is a strong Christian spirit. From age to age among people living in the darkness of ignorance the only salvation came from church, and stayed true to the Bible

²¹ Gheorghe Alexe, *Virgin Mary in Romanian religious carols*, în "Studii Teologice", București, anul V, 1953, nov.- dec., nr. 9-10, p. 661.

²² Pr. Prof. Dr. Isidor Todoran, Arhid. Prof. Dr. Ioan Zăgrean, *Orthodox Dogmatic*, Editura Arhiepiscopiei, Cluj, 1997, p. 14.

²³ Arnold van Gennep, *Manuel de Folclor français contemporain*, premier tome, Paris, 1943, p. 7.

unwritten spoken carols every year, major holidays, with the help of the angelic voices of children. The carols, more than ballads, represent a large part of the Romanian soul.

Listening to carols, one can feel "the thrill of holiness that comes from somewhere far through the ages, and go from house to house and soul in soul."²⁴ Believers have felt the need to wear their religious feelings ornament poetry. The religious carols are nothing but natural extension of Songs from the church.

Bringing mostly of our traditional songs into a popular carol lyrics, **the fourth chapter** presents the life, work and echoes of St. Andrew, St. Basil the Great and St. John the Baptist. St. Andrew could not miss the carols because when a new soul is born Christ the Savior Church became a Christian through Holy Baptism, the priest. St. Andrew the First Called by Christ to the apostles had a large part of his life, missionary activity and work done in Scythia Minor; and a sum of the personality of the Apostle Andrew is sketched with carols, traditions and folklore creations of Dobrogea because he brought Christianity to our people. In this heavenly earth (Dobrogea = sl. Dobro + gr. gea = good ground) seed was planted of early Christianity since apostolic times.

Here came and preached St. Andrew, the first called to the mission of Christ the Saviour²⁵, coming from Byzantium shore on the Black Sea, warmed by the sun and sent us new orally, priceless treasure of the Gospel of Christ. Although DM Pipidi refuses Apostle Andrew's preaching in our country, considering it as "fanciful"²⁶ Church tradition and ancient writings disagree, confirming the work of the Apostle Andrew in Dacia.

St. Hippolytus (Hippolytus) (c. 170-c. 236) recorded a tradition that St. Andrew "proclaimed (the Gospel) Scythians and Thracians"²⁷. Also great patristic theologian and writer Origen († 254) recorded in the third book of comments from Genesis, the Apostle Andrew Scythians, the words, "When the Holy Apostles and disciples of our Saviour were spread throughout the world, Thomas, as tradition says, received (for evangelism, by drawing lots) Parties (Persia) and Andrew Scythia "²⁸.

The "Syriac Doctrine of the Apostles" is showing that evangelized territories of St. Andrew are: "Nice, Nicomedia, Bithinia and ... Gothia "called up" this way in the need to

²⁴ Mihail Vulpescu, *Romanian folk song*, București, 1930, p. 128.

²⁵ † Dr. Teodosie, Arhiepiscop al Tomisului, *Byzantine Music -preserving Christian values*, în "Sfântul Apostol Andrei", Editura Europolis, Constanța, anul V, 2001, august-decembrie, nr.9, p. 14.

²⁶ D. M. Pippidi, *Contributions to the early history of Romania*, ediția a II-a, revăzută și mult adăugită, Editura Științifică, București, 1967, pp. 488-489.

²⁷ Hipolit Romanul, *About the Twelve*, în *Fontes historiae daco-romanie pertinentes*, (Izvoare privind Istoria României), volumul I, București, 1964, p. 713.

²⁸ Pr. Dr. Nicușor Morlova, *St. Andrew, Father of Romanian Christianity*, în colecția Dobrogea Creștină, volumul I, *Izvoarele Creștinismului Românesc*, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului, Constanța, 2003. p. 12.

understand the eastern part of Carpathian Dacia²⁹ ".

In a homily of Pseudo-Athanasius it states that St. Andrew "made mission among Greeks and barbarians" from which "could be counted and Scythians." Passion of St. Andrew, recorded the Synaxis of the Church of Constantinople, on November 30 states that St. Andrew "preached in Pontus, Thrace and Scythia"³⁰.

Therefore, we can say with certainty that part of the territory of our fathers has been evangelized by one of the disciples of our Saviour, St. Andrew. The presence of the Apostle Andrew and our ancestors are proven abundantly and Romanian folklore and customs. These are related to the person and the sanctity of this worthy disciple of the Savior, keeping in Romanian consciousness and spirituality. The fact that St. Andrew preached the gospel in Scythia Minor was kept alive throughout the centuries in our nation's consciousness (especially in the area between the Danube and the Sea), resulted in different stories, folk carols and other works.

In one of Dobrogea folk creations entitled "Cave of Saint Andrew", held in two and transformed nowadays in a carol called "Carols St Andrew", we can find the Apostle teacher of Christian doctrine and Traian alongside with Decebal holding the lesson of religion at the beginning of the century. The reality of Apostle Andrew's preaching to our ancestors, was recorded in ancient sources by ecclesiastical writers of the first centuries of Christianity, then taken into books, folklore creations, beliefs, carols, customs and practices (related to the person and to the day of remembrance November 30th), held in our country, but especially in the Danube limes and sea, is of paramount importance for natives of Tomis, who have welcomed the Apostle Andrew. Dobrogeans consider today as their protector and intercessor and they lay prayers to God in this "oasis of Orthodoxy"³¹.

The middle of the fourth chapter of the paper is reserved to St. Basil the Great, a leading personality in theology that could not be missed by the anonymous authors of carols. The personality filled with holiness and wisdom of St. Basil the Great was not only selected by the famous hymnologists, but also by anonymous carolers of our nation who have brought their feeling, praising the great Orthodox hierarch in our ancient carols.

The last part of the fourth chapter presents Baptism as described in Christmas carols,

²⁹ Pr. Prof. Ioan Rămureanu, *New considerations about Christianity*, în "Ortodoxia", Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, anul XXI, 1974, nr. 1, p. 169.

³⁰ ***, *Sinaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitane*, opera et studio H. Delehaye, în *Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, Bruxellis, 1902, col. 265-266.

³¹ Adriana-Claudia Câteia, *Ecclesiastical institutions the west coast - Pontic, in light of the archaeological, literary and epigraphic IV-VII centuries*, Editura Muntenia, Constanța, 2006, p. 18.

while evoking in all the verses of the carol, the image of St. John the Baptist, "the greatest man born by woman" (Matthew XI, 11). Immediately after birth, Jesus is baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. It would seem that here carols real contradict the historical truth. The people, however, take into account the usual practice. After birth, the child is baptized shortly. If the baby cries a lot, says the people that ask for baptism and be calm after receiving the Sacrament. So in their tenderness, Romanians thought is the Christ Child crying in the arms of His Mother, and shall not be calm until the promised Baptism:

“Taci, Fiule, nu mai plânge,
Nu vărsa lacrimi de sânge,
Că eu Ție că Ți-oi da,
Luna cu lumina sa,
Și vasul botezului!
De botez cum auzi,
Fiul se și liniști”³².

Being destined by God with great sensitivity, in various carols Romanian people depicted the life and work of St. John the Baptist. St. John the Baptist is the first to do what they preach, by temperance and the hard life he leads. Rough garment of camel's hair, not eating bread nor drinking wine, only feeding on locusts and wild honey (Matthew III, 4), as a true angel in the flesh, as it shows icons. Erminia Byzantine paintings describe him as having a sober face "with camel hair garment and leather belt"³³. Same sobriety as characteristic of St. John the Baptist echoes in its images by carols.

In **the fifth chapter** of the thesis there is a description of the communion of man with nature and special the care for babies in carols lyrics. Of all human destiny trilogies (birth, marriage, death), Romanian people's habits are largely related to birth, because our birth is regarded as a holy one, a gift from heaven filled with earthly joy. Therefore Romanian carols about the Nativity of Jesus as topic are more numerous because they are related to children's lives. It can be said that these carols sung by tiny persons at homes were illiterate Romanian Catechism of the past. They remember the miracle of Bethlehem and innocent children sing about the journey of the Magi, the bright stable where Jesus was born: "Messiah's bright

³² Simeon Florea Marian, *Holidays at Romanians, Volume I, Cârniligile*, ediție îngrijită și introducere de Iordan Datcu, Editura Saeculum I.O., București, 2011, p. 277.

³³ Dionisie din Furna, *Erminia of Byzantine painting* Editura Sophia, București, 2000, p. 169.

look³⁴.

Along with the love for all children there is presented in chapter five, the love of nature surroundings - one of the key features of the Romanian soul as revealed in carols. This love that betrays almost organic relationship between man and nature, proves the Romanian folk art creations, but especially this can be seen in ancient carols. In this world, the man lives in constant contact not only with people like him, but also animals, plants and nature in general (general perspective on life on Earth).

The cosmic feeling of solidarity between man and nature is no stranger to the Eastern Orthodox spirituality. This feeling full of tenderness towards the surrounding nature can pursue a passionate interest not only to us, Romanians, but also the Russians, the Greeks, the Bulgarians, in general the people who have embraced the Orthodox faith. The power transforms the popular spirit in the Christian sense; in our case, the Eastern Orthodox spirituality does this. In the Romanian Orthodox carols one can learn about the relationship between man and nature, that is well crystallized, as carols, bred from "furrow age" and blossom under the wings of eternity, which carries the undying spirit of the Popular Orthodox spirituality.

After the teaching of the Holy Orthodox Church, God created the whole universe for Adam, who appears as a culmination of the divine work. After Holy Scripture and by the Fathers of the Church, the man has a huge role in the midst of creation: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis I, 28). He must be an active, dynamic, able to transform and transfigure with the grace of the Creator. Man, body and soul, is bound by the body of the material and the spiritual soul³⁵.

An orthodox faith believer should not to be confused with nature, but rather is concerned with sympathy and compassion, striving for labor and prayer and lifting it to a higher degree of perfection. Carols have an endless range of human feelings in relation to the surrounding nature. A whole range of plants, trees and cattle, causing us sympathy or antipathy, by the way they shall not give or lend to worship the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. On this occasion the whole nature rejoices with man. Human initiative in this cosmic celebrations is evident and very resourceful.

The end of the last chapter is made up of the presentation of 'cultic materials' origin (wheat, wine, holy wine and basil) as the code of popular carols. Fascinated by the teachings of our Holy Orthodox Churches, but equally by the benefits of what God gives us everyday,

³⁴ Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicu Moldoveanu, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

³⁵ Pr. Prof. Dr. Isidor Todoran, Arhid. Prof. Dr. Ioan Zăgrean, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

our ancestors asked themselves about wheat, wine and holy wine, three essential elements in a religious life, but also in everyday life. The answer could be found in church services depicting the Saviour's life, especially the last part of it, passion and sacrifice on the cross, displayed graphically in Denia before Passover feast.

In Orthodox liturgical symbolism, the wine is the blood of the Lord, the matter indispensable in the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. Therefore, our people thinks that the wine has its origins in the drops of blood that he shed on the cross Savior during torture. The two terms without which you cannot commit the Holy Eucharist is wheat. Wheat is often mentioned metaphorically, on the one hand bread prefigured the Church - the Body of Christ, composed of many members, like bread made of many grains of wheat flour. In popular spirituality, the grain bears on it the stamp image of Christ, to the part that attaches to the ear resulting from the processing of the bread being called by carol "before Christ". Therefore, the body is crucified - the Saviour (traditionally the root source of wheat). Passion on Calvary, hot climate due to physical exhaustion and Savior Christ shed on the cross course that not only drops of blood, but sweat. Knowing this, Romanians consider ointment as welders worship Lord extension while offering himself to the world.

Along with the three essential liturgical Orthodox worship elements: wine, wheat and holy wine, as a custom in the church we can find the basil. According to popular tradition, basil used by the priest at the consecration of the houses on the eve of Epiphany has miraculous powers helping older girls to marry. With abundant poetic sensitivity, the Romanian people carols explain the origin of the basil. According to folk spirituality, while the Saviour was taken on the way to Calvary, they pressed the crown of thorns on his head and his hair fall to the ground. God the Father has not left to perish Jesus strands of hair, but blessed them, turning them into stems of basil. Romanians living through this proves that cosmic Christianity is seeking the origin of things everyday in the sacred space of the church founded here by St. Andrew.

Our ancestors for centuries at the confluence of Greek and Roman world, have formed the "breath of heaven" - a very special spirituality. These habits are beautiful occasions and uplifting hearts moments. During their long and hard history, our nation has created its own way of understanding and living the great events in the Christian life, their story through carols. Carols mean going from place to place, searching for something and carolers are those people who turn and exhibit the joy of Christ in the world, of our union with God. Carol is nothing but a popular gospel, an unwritten Bible about Nativity and other prominent festivals of the Orthodox Church, presented by the Romanian soul with the help of carols' lyrics.

In all tumultuous times of its history, the Romanian people has made steadfast anchor of the Christian faith, that kept him in connection with the Creator of all - God. Our ancestors have known the Saviour Christ and preached Him, not only from the words of Scripture, but also by the lyrics of carols. Carols were our people extend to the Gospel message, clothed ancestral speech from the sacred space of the church to the Christian heart Romanian windows everywhere. In each winter, Romanians Orthodox spread the news of Nativity through a carol image of the mysterious message. Carols are the living testimony of our people's faith in eternal life.

Carols are living proof of the continuity of the Romanian people in the land of our country, contributing decisively to maintain the unity of nation and language between Moldavia and Banat, between Transylvania and Dobrogea, between different regions and Maramures. For Transylvanians, carols keep a special resonance, proclaiming their unity with their Moldovians and mountaineers. Whether the carols have been sung in Suceava or Caransebes or Dorohoi, or maybe Oradea, Sibiu and Iasi or Brasov, Bucharest, Constanta or in mountain villages the music with richness in language and meaning proclaimed the joy and glory to God at the same time. For all this, carols, these jewels of Romanian folklore, are seen as true rituals of worship inherited from our forefathers.

Theologians, folklorists, musicologists, and all national culture lovers try to bring to light the huge spiritual treasure of Romanian carols, songs of Star, Plugușor, Sorcerer. To pick carols means to collect pollen on the wings of butterflies. With trust in the mercy of our God, I hope I managed to emphasize the importance of carols - Popular gospel truth - the faith and spirituality of the Romanian people. What is characteristic of this invaluable treasure inherited from the forefathers, is that they sing, as I said, in verses of poetry, the abundance of active Romanian Orthodox values.

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