

OVIDIUS UNIVERSITY FROM CONSTANTA  
DOCTORAL SCHOOL

# **SUMMARY OF THE PHD THESIS**

*HISTORICAL REFERENCES  
REGARDING MISSIONARISM IN  
THE DANUBIANO-PONTIC SPACE  
IN THE THIRD AND FOURTH  
CENTURIES*

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## 1. Argument and research objectives

The PhD thesis *Historical landmarks on missionary in the Danubian-Pontic space in the third and fourth centuries* aims to bring to the fore the integrating and dynamic dimension of the Christian faith preached in Romanian space in the first Christian centuries. From this consideration, the staging of outstanding personalities of Christian teaching (bishops, theologians) is essential, with the contribution of each to the configuration of Romanian Christianity. In our research we will also identify the elements of identity of the Romanian Christianity, along with a chronology of the missionary facts. The relevance of such research lies in the fact that it can provide a framework of generality in the contemporary understanding and assumption of the importance of Romanian Christianity in the first centuries, a Christianity that has been imposed as a way of life since then, which has been the way of life of the Christian today. Highlighting the continuity of Romanian Christianity over the ages is an element that recalls us in evangelical values, so relevant to today's man, as norms for the recovery of contemporary society which is in decline.

## 2. Relevance of the topic in the context of current research

In this context, not only a simple review of the first Romanian bishops in the Dobrogean space, but also the contribution of the theologians in the development and crystallization of Christian teaching through the participation of some of the first ecumenical councils and some local synods in the southern Danube area.

Bishop Evangelicus (290-300) is the first known bishop of the diocese of Tomis (today's Constanța), from Pontic Dacia (Scythia Minor - Dobrogea). Bishop Evangelicus has pastored the Geto-Daco-Roman autochthonous Christians from the mouths of the Danube and from all Pontic Dacia in the last decade of the third century. The Diocese of Tomis existed, of course, well before this date, since Christianity was sown on the territory of our country by the Apostle Andrew, the first called since the middle of the first century, as Eusebius of Caesarea (t 340) said in his book, "Church History", III, 1.

Bishop Evangelicus, a native of Thrace, converted to the faith in Christ many of the inhabitants of Scythia Minor that had remained in the darkness of Paganism. He is remembered in the martyrdom of Saint Epictetus the priest and the monk Astion, who were martyred for Christ at Halmyris (today Dunavat), an ancient Greek fortress, located on the southern Danube, "on July 8", during the persecution of Diocletian. In this document it is stated precisely that "His Beatitude Evangelicus was the bishop and the forerunner of the holy church of God in this province," namely, from Scythia Minor (Dobrogea). In the martyr's act, the parents of Saint Martyr Astion, descendants of Asia Minor, who came to Tomis in search of their son, were converted to Christianity by priest Bonosus and then baptized by Bishop Evangelicus at Halmyris on the fourteenth day from the martyr of the Saints Epictetus and Astion. It is believed that Saint Evangelicus himself received the crown of martyrdom through the same emperor, for his great love and zeal for Christ.

The second known bishop of the Diocese of Tomis, who occupied the Pontic Dacian pastor's seat for a while, after the attestation of the Greek and Latin synaxes, was Saint Martyr Ephraim. He was born in the south of the Danube of Christian parents, who raised him since he was young in fear of God. Going to worship the Holy Places, he stayed here and was made a priest and minister to one of the churches. At that time, the Roman Empire served in Greek, Latin, Syrian, and Thracian languages.

He was then disciple of Patriarch Hermon of Jerusalem (300-314), being prepared from his youth to preach the gospel of Christ to the "barbarian" people from the Mouth of the Danube and around the Euxinus Pontus (Black Sea). At the beginning of the fourth century Patriarch Hermon was sent to shepherd the Daco-Roman believers of the Diocese of Tomis, converting many Dacians, Romans, Goths and Scythians to Christianity, and redeeming many slaves from death, then Christianizing them.

During the pastoral period of this blessed bishop, were martyred for the faith in Christ dozens of Dacian-Roman, Scythian, Byzantine, Thracian, Greek and Cappadocian Christians who were exiled in Pontic Dacia, whose relics Bishop Ephraim was redeeming, burying them in hidden places, raising churches of wood or stone over them, and ordaining priests to minister at night the Holy Liturgy. In the great persecution of Diocletian in the years 304-305, the blessed Bishop Ephraim was captured, imprisoned and tormented in Kherson (Crimea), to deny the true God and worship the idols. In "Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae", col. 517, on 7 of March, when the Holy Martyr and Ephraim are celebrated, the following is said: "March 7th. During the reign of Diocletian, Hermon, bishop of Jerusalem, sent bishop Ephraim to Scythia, and to Chersonese bishop Basil". Although there opinions that Ephraim was a bishop in Scythia, they are not founded, for in the Epistle of the Epictetus and Astion there is mentioned at Tomis, in Scythia Minor, a bishop Ephraim.

During the time of Saint Constantine the Great, the process of Christianization in Pontic Dacia (Dobrogea) and Dacia itself, which form the present Romanian Carpathian-Danubian space, unfolded openly, without any internal resistance and without any external constraints. In the seat of the Episcopate of Tomis, instead of the martyrs, now there are episcopal theologians and apologists, deeply connoisseurs of the Holy Scripture, able to defend the Orthodox faith in Jesus Christ, both with the spoken and written word, and with the example of their lives.

The name of the Tomitan bishop during the time of Saint Constantine the Great (after 323), unfortunately, is not known to us. From the testimonies we have, he was a great defender of Orthodoxy, appreciated by the emperor and numerous hierarchs of his time. Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, in his work "The Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine", naming the bishops present at the Great Synod of Nicaea (325), besides the two bishops of Dacia and "Bosporus", also Theophilus of Goths, states that "nor the Scythian was absent from the crowd". And this was, of course, the Bishop of Tomis, who took an active part in the Ecumenical Council and fought against Arie's heresy, demanding his conviction.

This Tomitan bishop has carried out an intense missionary activity in Pontic Dacia to convert to Christianity and to defend the right faith in his diocese against Arie's heresy. He built, of course, basilicas in cities such as Tomis (Constanța), Histria (Istria), Calatis (Mangalia), Axiopolis (Cernavoda), Adamclisi, Halmyris, Niculițel and Noviodunum (Isaccea) and has given rise to the monastic life in his eparchy. Also now, it appears the ascetic life in the caves and in the secular corners of the Dobrogea Plateau and Măcin Mountains, where later the

great Dacian-Roman theologians, John Cassian, Dionysius and Joannes Maxentius, renowned throughout the entire Empire, or those famous "Scythian monks", known to Rome and the dioceses of Africa.

Special care was taken by Bishop Tomis in this thriving age of the relics of the saints killed in Pontic Dacia for the love of Christ. He gathers some of these relics in martyr's crypts, over which he builds rotunda churches or true basilicas, and ordains priests to commemorate them. Such a martyr crypt was built, probably at his command also that of Niculitel, discovered in 1971, unique in Romania, where the relics of the Saints Martyrs Zotic, Atal, Camasie and Filip were placed, preserved today in the church of Cocos Monastery - Tulcea.

Another bishop who contributed greatly to the preaching of Christianity in the space was Vetranius. The martyr acts mention some bishops in Tomis, today's Constanta, as early as the end of the third century and the beginning of the next, such as Evangelicus, Ephraim and Titus. The historian Eusebius of Caesarea of Palestine wrote that at the work of the first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325, "neither the Scythian was absent from the crowd", that is, the bishop of the province of Scythia Minor. It is believed that his name was Mark.

After him, another bishop in Tomis was known only in 369, namely Vetranius (or Betranion). After the *Acta Sanctorum Januarii*, it is celebrated every year at Tomis (Constanța) Saint Bretanio or Brettanio (n) or Betranion (364?-381?), the bishop of Tomis and the Roman province of Scythia Minor (Dobrogea), officially named with this title from the great administrative reform of Emperor Diocletian (284-305), since 292.

He is the fourth bishop of Tomis, known from documents and inscriptions, the first being *Evangelicus of Tomis*, who pastored between 290 and 300. It was most likely that Saint Bretanion originated from the province of Cappadocia, Asia Minor, belonging to a Christian family. He was therefore a childhood Christian. We do not know any other details of his life, and by what circumstances he has become a *bishop of Tomis*. He was a pastor at Tomis years before 369, when Emperor Valens (364-378) met him personally on the occasion of his visit to the Tomis Cathedral in the summer or early autumn of 379 when he made peace at Noviodunum (Isaocea) with the Goths from the North of the Danube. Valens, the Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, was throughout his entire reign a supporter of the Aryan heretics, making continuous efforts to impose Arianism in the Roman Empire, and so in Scythia Minor, to the detriment of Nicene Orthodoxy.

During his visit to Tomis, Valens entered the episcopal cathedral here and attempted to impose upon Bishop Bretanio and the Orthodox believers the heretical doctrine of the Arians. But Bishop Bretanio, renowned for the virtues and purity of his life, has shown himself to be a daring and courageous defender of the fine faith established by the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Synod at Nicaea in 325, and immediately left the cathedral with the faithful, leaving the emperor in the church, along with his companions.

According to the opinion of the Romanian researchers, the basilica in which the conflict between Emperor Valens and Bishop Bretanio occurred was that of the High School yard no. 2, on Traian Street in Constanta, near the seaport, the only one, built at the end of the fourth century, discovered around 1960, because the other three basilicas of Tomis - Constanta, discovered in the years 1960-1961, dates from the fifth to the sixth centuries.

Some historians and patrologists, in the desire to further raise the person of Bishop Bretanio of Tomis, tried to argue that Saint Basil the Great addressed two letters of gratitude,

no. 164 and 165, for the transport of the relics of Saint Sabbas the Goth from North-Danube Gothia to Cappadocia.

In fact, this view cannot be supported by valid arguments, first of all because Saint Basil the Great has sent letters of gratitude no. 164 and 165 to his friend and compatriot, Archbishop Ascholius of Thessalonica, as shown by their addressing formula at the beginning of the two letters. *To Ascholius, the Bishop of Thessalonica.*

Saint Bretanio had as a successor for the Diocese of Tomis – Constanta, Bishop *Gerontius* or *Terentius*, also called *Terennius*, who also took part in the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381, during the reign of Emperor Theodosius the Great (379-395).

Saint Teotim was Bishop of Tomis, the oldest episcopal seat on the territory of our country. Pastored between the fourth and fifth centuries. The only certain date that we hold about his pasture is the year 392. This year, he is mentioned in the seat of Tomis, being named by Saint Jerome (+419/420), in his work *De viris illustribus*, "Theotimus Scythiae Tomorum episcopus". The archaeologist and epigraphist Ion Barnea, referring to the period of his pasture, in another context, he states that Teotim led the diocese of Tomis between 392 and 407, without giving arguments in support of his words". We therefore have information about him from Saint Jerome and the Historian Sozomenus, the latter being the only one who gives us more details about him. Of the Romanian theologians who dealt with Saint Teotim, we mention Father Professor Ioan G. Coman, the greatest Romanian patrologist, Prof. Emilian Popescu, Archimandrite Prof. Ioasaf Ganea and others.

From the appraisals of Jerome, Socrates, Sozomenus, and Saint John Chrysostom, it is clear that Scythian-Dacian Bishop of Tomis was a man of a deep and excellent culture, admired by contemporaries for his writings and life, for his rich missionary activity, for his intervention in the defense of Saint John Chrysostom. When he was accused of Origenism (at the Synod of the Oak in 403), and finally, for what Saint John Damascene (+749) recorded in his work *Sacred Parallels*.

Saint Teotim had two fundamental qualities to be a good missionary: a thorough theological training and a high moral life. The missionaries always had these qualities, beginning with the Apostles who represented role models for the upcoming missionaries.

And as the Apostles first lived in the presence of the Savior for three and a half years, whom they often called Him "Teacher," learning what they in return would teach others according to the commandment given to them by the Savior "Go and teach all nations..." (Matthew 28, 19-20), so Teotim also learned with great zeal and wisdom the mysteries of theology, having relations with great theologians of the time, during the period called in the history of the Church, of the Christian literature, "golden", participating and being mentioned, nominally and textually, at the synods of the hierarchs of his time.

But in this missionary work he was not alone. He was also supported by Saint John Chrysostom, whose help, apparently, had asked for. It is not known when and how Saint Teotim came in contact with Saint John Chrysostom. If Jacques Zeiller, the Christianity historian of the Danubian provinces of the Roman Empire, only asserts that Teotim has taken over the missionary work of Saint John in the regions of Lower Danube, Professor Emilian Popescu demonstrates this fact thoroughly. Professor Popescu, in a study dedicated to the missionary activity of Saint John Chrysostom, points out that although the Patriarchate of Constantinople "had not yet been established and had not been officially recognized its judicial area in which

it had the right to exercise its authority, this occurring much later (at the Fourth Ecumenical Council in 451), yet the Diocese of Thracia, where the Danubian provinces were also part, was traditionally linked to the seat of Constantinople. The bishops of these provinces felt as a spiritual authority the bishop of Constantinople, who at the second council was ranked first after Rome, being called "New Rome."

The fact that the bishop in the Empire's capital was in the same place as its leadership, to which he could call in case of need, gave him a prestige and influence, which the metropolitans and bishops of other cities took into account. And if we consider the attention enjoyed of the regions of the Lower Danube in the empire, they being considered of strategic importance, we also understand the religious collaboration and the help that the hierarch of Constantinople gave to strengthen the Christian mission, namely to Bishop Teotim. What was the situation in the Danubian parts from the missionary point of view? Here, besides the Goths who were seated after the Adrianople disaster (378) and after the treaty concluded with them by Theodosius I (379-395), there were now another pagan people, the Huns. These Gentiles, however, had to be evangelized. As this work was not very easy, the bishop of Tomis, who was responsible for the missionary work, informed Saint John Chrysostom, asking for his help. This explains the sending of missionaries in this area. Undoubtedly the theologians and Scythians also contributed to the missionary work, which had both good theological missionary training and good relations with the Church's authority in Constantinople. We recall Saint John Cassian, who spent many years in Constantinople, being ordained deacon by the great Chrysostom, about which he would say later: "I am the disciple and the work of John."

However, Saint Teotim had, we could say, a special, friendly relationship with Saint John Chrysostom. He often visited Saint John Chrysostom, since in 403, when he was accused by Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria (+412), Teotim was in the capital of the empire and defended the great hierarch. What is it about?

Socrates and Sozomen tells how Epiphanius of Salamis (+403), coming to Constantinople, was subject to a condemnation sentence of Origen's books (185-254) for the bishops gathered in the capital, without any reason for condemnation. Origen's conviction, however, meant, implicitly, also the condemnation of Saint John, the Bishop of Constantinople. Among those who opposed signing this condemnation was Teotim. Being forced to sign the condemnation, he replied: "I Epiphanius, do not want to dishonor the one who has long fallen asleep in a beautiful way, and do not dare to blaspheme, condemning things that those before us have not removed, especially because I know that in the books of Origen there are no bad teachings. Those insulting these forget that they are insulting the very things that these books treat."

It is not clear how Origen's books were related to Saint John Chrysostom, but it is known, from other sources, that the patriarch was accused, among other things, of Origenism, and the condemnation of Origen's books meant, as we have already stated, the condemnation of Saint John Chrysostom. From here Epiphanius' zeal to collect as many signatures.

Teotim defends Origen's books also with the purpose to defend Saint John, his friend. To be noted the sudden courage and wisdom with which Saint Teotim defends Origen. He uses three arguments in his defense: 1. Origen being dead could no longer defend himself from the accusations brought to him and *died beautifully*, namely as a martyr (254), arguments of a rare delicacy and moral depth that once again attest the greatness of his "philosophy"; 2. His

predecessors did not condemn Origen's writings; 3. Condemning Origen's books, meant condemning perhaps even the Scripture. The fact that out of the crowd of those who did not condemn Origen's writings, the author notes Teotim - even in textual terms - this demonstrates the great prestige enjoyed by the Bishop of Tomis among the bishops of the times who were neither anonymous nor few. Moreover, Teotim's prestige was so great that an archimandrite Karusos, accused of deviating from the right faith at the Fourth Ecumenical Council, defended his innocence by referring to the fact that he had been baptized and educated by Saint Teotim.

But from defending Origen we can deduce that Teotim was Origenist? The lack of sources does not give us the opportunity to draw firm conclusions. Rather, it can be said that he, like Saint John Chrysostom or other great theologians and saints, appreciated at Origen what was good. In the same way, Saints Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianz have collected passages and teachings from his work by publishing the first Philokalia. And although they used Origen, no one accused them of Origenism. We also believe that Saint John Chrysostom was reading Origen for the beauty and depth of his thinking, as the one who was a pioneer in theology in a time when the Church's teaching had not yet been formulated by the Ecumenical Councils. More, with the exception of the Synod of Oak, Saint John was not suspected of any local or ecumenical council to be an Origenist. That Saint John read Origen was a natural thing. According to a great contemporary theologian, "a careful reading of Origen's works could rise admiration for the incomparable pages devoted to the problems of *philosophy*, that is to say, the problems of monastic life. These were the pages - and today they are – all that are left of the most appealing, useful, and above all, free of heresy, as Origen had elaborated."

Unfortunately, neither Socrates nor Sozomen speaks anything about Teotim's literary work. He wrote Greek, for the believers of his diocese, but for the mission on the outskirts of his diocese, he would use the native languages: Getae, Scythian, Gothic, and of course Latin. From the work of Saint John Damascene, the *Holy Parallels*, it appears that Teotim wrote a homily for the words of *Matthew*. And the fact that the great theologian, Saint John Damascus, the Synthesizer of patristic theology places him always between the great Cappadocians or his great friend, John Chrysostom, proves the renown enjoyed by Saint Teotim among the theologians of the time.

Another element that comes to the attention of the research are the southern Danube Synods of the fourth century and especially the Synod of Sardica. The Synod of Sardica represents a moment of church's history in which the Eastern and Western Churches have begun to no longer reach the same doctrinal, spiritual and organizational consensus. The main reason for convening the council was the settlement of orthodoxy of the bishops' condemnation at the Synod of Antioch in 326 or 327, and Tyr, Marcel of Aneyrei, Eustatius of Antioch, Asclepius of Gaza, and Saint Athanasius the Great. In addition to these reasons, the abuses and violence of the Semi-Arians against the clergy and believers who did not accept communion with Arians and Semi-Arians were also investigated. The synod was summoned by the imperial authority of the two emperors, Constans (337-350) and Constantius II (337-361). The bishop of Rome, Julius II (337-352), had the initiative of gathering a synod since the end of the year 341. The Eastern Bishops paid no attention to the invitation of the Bishop of Rome until the two imperial sovereigns intervened to clarify the situation. The Bishop of Rome did not want reconciliation, but rather wanted to dictate his own solution without taking into account the two sides. No canon allowed the bishop of Rome to engage in solving the problems of other provinces. Rome's

attempt to exercise a universal authority must be qualified as a "political effort to extend the authority of the Roman Church". Pope Julius was commissioned to bring to the knowledge of the Eastern Church the decisions taken at the Synod of Rome. In autumn 341, a great synod gathered in Antioch, attended by over ninety Eastern bishops. On this occasion, the counselors had formed and approved "three new formulas of faith". The "second formula" has long been considered the "Faith of the Church of Antioch". Because a meeting of Eastern and Western bishops failed in one synod, and to clarify the issues that appeared either in Rome or Antioch, Bishops Julius and Osius of Cordoba asked Emperor Constans to persuade his brother in the Orient, Constantius, that only a new council could solve the problems of the Christian Church, as well as the situation of Saint Athanasius the Great.

Among the outstanding theological personalities of the fourth century is mentioned Saint John Cassian. Appeared on the historical stage of the triumph of Christian faith after the end of the persecution and its reception as a state religion, that is, at a time when the heavenly kingdom had to follow the worldly and earthly eon, Saint Cassian "pleaded through his life and his whole activity for the supreme value of the Byzantine life as a means of defeating the sinful life by departing from the world and uniting with the Creator of all through asceticism and contemplation. Thus, were highlighted the values of the Hermits - as continuous prayer and contemplation, authority from God through union with Him - and the coenobitic ones, emphasize the silence and obedience, which do not exclude the latter ones, but aspire towards them. It is the foundation, somewhat simplified, starting from the practice of ascetic virtues and evangelical timeliness in Egypt". It will extend after the death of Saint Cassian through his writings and by the leaders of the Western Church - which is also what the Eastern one will be aware of, through translations in circulation and overhead lights like Photios - extending to Ireland and circulating throughout Western Europe. Saint Benedict, the great inspirer and organizer of monastic life in the West, will update, universalize, and permanence him as a true follower of the Holy Apostles.

Columba Stewart recalls that "his age records two personalities that dominated him: Saint Augustine and Saint John Cassian. Dominated by the invincible spirit of evangelical humility, so without his will and intent, Saint Cassian will be involved in a dogmatic polemic, to which he will not replicate anything, although it will continue for years. There will be other personalities involved, his disciples and Saint Augustine - pro and contra - sometimes even his own, against him, but him not. It was about the relationship between the divine grace and human freedom, whether man should participate in his salvation - which was in fact the central issue for Hermits in general, who sacrificed everything for their salvation - without thereby taking credit. Prosper took a stand against Saint Cassian's claim that God comes with his full help where he sees a spark of goodwill on the part of man".

The Eastern Church, with Saint John Chrysostom ahead — also with the Father of the Hermits, Saint Anthony the Great — accepted this formula. But some contemporary theologians, both of the Roman Catholic Church, such as Dom Pichery and Guy, as Anglicans as O. Chadwick and others — without taking into account that Augustinian predestinationism was officially accepted only by the Reformed Church — this predestinationism was further supported along Saint Cassian's history. This polemic shrouded him somehow; but it couldn't make its spiritual authority disappear, which was unintelligible. And in the present, the issue of the importance of Saint Cassian's work for Christian spirituality has given him a new impetus,

the discussions of his origins showing an absolute momentum of the catholic spirituality for the theologians.

Patriarch Photios, through his writings, reminds that before the tenth century there were abbreviated Greek translations, which, therefore, satisfied the shortcomings of the Christian Greek world. There have been found, for instance, summaries of the Second and Seventh "Spiritual Conversations." C. I. Diouvouniotis also discovered Greek translations of the First, Second, Seventh and Eighth "Spiritual Conversations" and, in 1913, published them. It was also partly included in the Orthodox Philokalia, Greek, Russian and Romanian (except for the Russian Bishop Thofan who published most of his works).

Some of the popes were most enthusiastic about the spiritual masterpieces of Saint John Cassian. We first recall his contemporary, Saint Leon the Great, who surrounded him with constant appreciation and sympathy all the time, him being the one who insisted that Saint Cassian would give the Christian world, before the Ephesian Synod, the dogmatic work against the heresiarchs Nestorian. In 597, Saint Gregory the Great wrote a letter to the abbess of a monastery from Marseilles, built in honor of "Saint Cassian", strengthening the Marslian cult in honor of Marseilles' great spiritual patron. The patrology specialists found that Pope Gregory the Great was commonly used by Saint Cassian works, for which he displayed a true worship.

Throughout the ages, Saint Victor's Monastery - the foundation of Saint Cassian - has become a spiritual center of the spiritual life in Catholic France. At the demise of the city of Marseilles, in 1362 her abbot became Pope Urban the Fifth; he has not forgotten his monastery and its great founder, at whose tomb, built on four pilasters, continuously a light was burning. He commanded his head to be adorned with a silver pendant, upon which a gold and silver mound of precious stones lay; the shako commanded to grave the words "Saint Cassian's Head". But Saint Cassian has forever won spiritual primacy in the West by incorporating his teachings into the "Benedictine Rule". Chapter 27 of this Rule requires one of the brethren to read at the table for the public from "Spiritual Conversations", or from "The Lives of the (Egyptians) Fathers", or from other books of edification. And in chapter 73, he recommends the fulfillment of the spiritual void with meditations on the Father's Bible, on the cenobite "Conferences" or "Assemblies" of Saint Cassian, or on the Rule of Saint Basil the Great. It is found that continuous meditation on the writings of Saint Cassian led to a mutual influence of the Rule and of the works of Saint Cassian from the beginning to the end, one continuing and fulfilling the other, perfecting it and updating it continuously".

Mystics also contributed to the preservation of his glory, especially the majority of the great medieval theologians that made of the Cassian works, their favorite daily reading. Among them are: Alquin, Petru Damian, Dominic, Toma de Aquino, Ignatius de Loyola, Tereza de Avila, Francisc de Sales.

The accusation that Saint John Cassian is guilty of semi-pelagianism, because of the phrase "a spark of good on the part of man brings the help of divine grace," led the Westerners to discuss his teachings without being able to bring the shadow of his spiritual authority to the Church altogether. Thus, because of Prosper's accusations, immediately after Saint John's death, an admirer of his work revised his work and published it in abridged form. Faustus, who became the abbot of the Lerini monastery after his death, became the great apologist of Saint Cassian's work and the vehement critic of Augustinian predestinationism, especially after becoming the bishop of Riez. Instead, the African Bishop Victor will publish a purged edition (the 13<sup>th</sup>

Spiritual Conversation and others), and Cassiodorus forced the monks from Vivarium - in South Italy - to meditate continuously on the two main works of Saint Cassian, warning them however against the teachings about the grace-freedom relationship at Saint Cassian. In this atmosphere of relative adversity, maintained by the predestinarianists, Bishop Cesarius of Arles - a former monk in Lerini, who later became the ruler of the Augustinian stream, - asked a bishops' assembly to sanctify a Church in 529 to condemn the Cassian teaching, for the first movement of the will can be done without divine grace, but at the same time condemned the predestination and quoted the Zacheu models, the repentant robber and Cornelius the centurion, remaining ambiguous by dividing the opinions of those present. There also circulated until the sixth century other documents, which included among those discussed Saint Cassian. In this category he puts Saint Cassian and Dionysius Exiguus (a monk of the scythe) in his great collection of canons brought to the Pope in Rome in the sixth century. All these diminishes in various forms have been left without any trace, because they were local and lacking authority in the Church.

More importantly, it was an edict of a Pope, issued, uncertain, and was assigned to Pope Damasus (366-384), Pope Gelasius (492-496), and Pope Hormisdas (514-523) - to the end remaining assigned to a Roman synod under the chairmanship of Pope Gelasius, embedded in the Burchard collection of Worms and that of Gratian". This edict condemns the same teaching point, but has failed to completely diminish the authority of Saint John. An Augustinian as Fulgentius of Ruspe was so impressed by the reading of the "Settlements" and "Spiritual Conversations" that he then undertook a pilgrimage to Egypt. Another Augustinian, Caesarius of Arles, the inspirer of the Synod of Orange in 529, extensively used the "Conversations" in drafting the rules for the monks. In the different western monastic centers, the works of Saint John Cassian, along with those of Saint Basil the Great, were commonly used, for the emergence of Benedictineism to definitively generalize the importance of the Cassian work, widely used and imposed by the great founder of the best organized order the Benedictine one - obviously with changes and amplifications over the ages. Neither Smaragdus - with the "Diadema of the Monks", from 819, being accompanied by "Own Conferences", nor Grimlaic, with the readings from the "Words of the Fathers of Egypt," added later, did not succeed in replacing it. The apogee of the Middle Ages, even dogmatic or mystic, remained further under the general influence of Saint Cassian. However, it has been observed, that in the West the Gelasian edict admitted a certain shadow over Saint Cassian; it manifested itself in the Western calendar. Marseilles took no notice of it. Pope Gregory the Great, building a monastery in his honor and holding the feast of Saint John Cassian's death on July 23, held since the fifth century with a single event in southern France, casts total light on this shadow. And the adornments of his grave, given by Pope Urban the Fifth, gave an impulse to the spread throughout the Christian Church of his cult. The Greeks introduced his day in Menaion on February 29, in bisect years, and on February 28 for the rest of the years, with a short description of his life.

"In the continuation of the Augustinian-Cassian struggle, the eulogy of Saint Augustine's extraordinary literary talent, not taking into account the unique beauty of Saint John Cassian's spiritual work, and what impressed all the admirers of the Saint: humility, and attributes some merit and exudes beauty other than the divine. On the other hand, avoiding the exaggerations of predestinarianism, he highlighted the stern demands of the hermitage and then showed that life in the monasteries is much easier, thus ensuring common salvation and peace. This gave Western monasticism a wise foundation, better suited to his religious aspirations, creating a

new tradition in Christian monasticism. Thus, with a rich experience of decades in the wilderness of Egypt and an exceptional psychological breakthrough, living in the world of great Christian saints of his time, Saint John Cassian could offer Christianity a map of the happy soul climb to the bright lights of the heavenly kingdom in unceasing prayer and divine light".

The Roman Catholic Dom E. Picher concludes his introductory study on the works of Saint John Cassian with the appreciation that "even outside the monasteries, he was increasingly regarded as the master of the ascetic and mystical ways of excellence. His works extended their action to the entire Church and exerted a major influence on the development of Catholic spirituality. Until the modern centuries, in spite of a partial eclipse whose reason could not be hard to find, either in the decline of the great monastic order, or in the new character that spirituality encompasses in many environments, they do not cease to be tasted and used; many translations are making them more accessible to a larger audience, the souls who will learn to know him, surprised and delighted by such an ancient work and yet so new, will not be content to drink from this ever abundant tasty water".

Ultimately, our research addresses the missionary continuity of then and today. The Church as the secret body of Christ Jesus whose head is, as a divine-human institution, unfolds in history in a Christian, private responsibility engaged in a process of promoting, sustaining and capitalizing on the gospel of Christ. This reality draws a missionary profile to the Church.

Etymologically, the term mission comes from the Latin word missionis, a noun derived from the verb mitto, ere = to send. The mission of the Church is thus "a fundamental aspect of the work of the theandric institution of salvation founded by the Savior Jesus Christ, namely that it is sent into the world, as the Son was sent by the Father to bring through the Holy Spirit to all men the good news of salvation. The gospel of eternal life". The mission expresses the essence of the Church being sent into the world to make people who believe in the gospel of Christ and receive the grace of the Spirit, partakers of God's gracious blessing and salvation.

In its various forms of manifestation, Christian life is a reflection of intra-Trinitarian relationships; any argumentation of one or other aspect of the theological life invariably leads to the use of the Holy Trinity model, which becomes the model of earthly life in the form of which the human being was lived. Indisputably, the motivation of any action of God to man as a historical or generic fact, as well as the mandate of the communion of the unique human nature, is love.

The mission therefore means sharing the life of triumphal love from the time of earthly life, having as actual visible means the Word of the Gospel and the grace-giving Sacraments, through which the Spirit of Truth works.

### 3. Short frame of the paper

The doctoral dissertation is structured in four major chapters, trying to best fit the missionary factors in Danubian-Pontic space.

CHAPTER I - Dobrogean space: an effervescence environment for Christian witnessing in the sec. III-IV. Historical-religious coordinates of the particularity of tomitan Christianity - aims to present the architecture of Tomitan Christianity from the beginning. The following ideas were considered: 1.1. Dobrogea - a space of excellence with missionary vocation. Historical

frame; 1.2. Historical arguments confirming the apostolic identity of the Romanian Christianity; 1.3. Church organization at Tomis in the 19th century. III-V: an incontestable reality that legitimizes Tomitan missionary dynamism; 1.3.1. Tomisul - a religious, cultural, economic, political center of the first centuries; 1.3.2. The episcopal seat of Tomis in the 19th century. III-V - arguments confirming the canonicity of the Dobrogea hierarchical structure; 1.3.4. Metropolitan Seat of Tomis in the 16th century. VI. Metropolitan Valentinian; 1.3.5. The Metropolitan Church of Tomis (VII - XI) - continuity in the ecclesial structure.

CHAPTER II - Factors of the Christian Mission in the Danubian-Pontic Area: Tomorrow's Martyrs and Bishops - highlights the missionary factors of Tomitan's Christianity: 2.1. Testimony and martyrdom - structures for assuming Christian values; 2.2. Martyrdom in Dobrogea: a catalyst for assuming Christianity at the social level and hierarchical organic development; 2.3. The Missionary Contribution of Bishops Vetrani and Timothy I to the articulation of Christianity in Dobrogea - 2.3.1. Bishop Vetrani; 2.3.2. Bishop Teotim I.

CHAPTER III - Promotion of the Right Faith in the Toman Area according to the decisions of the ecumenical councils of the sec. IV - brings to the forefront the context of the development of the Southern Ecumenical Synods (IV century), events that played a significant role in preserving the authentic Christian faith: 3.1. Participation of the Ecumenical Councils in the Ecumenical Councils - Ecumenical Presence and Testimony of Orthodoxy; 3.2. The apologetic dimension of keeping faith in tomitan space; 3.3. The Synod of Sardica (343); 3.4. Councils from Sirmium (348-258).

CHAPTER IV - Dobrogen theologians of the sec. III-V - Factors of Testimony and Orthodox Faith and Proponents of Spirituality Rising in the West - emphasizes, first of all, the contribution of tomitani theologians to the preservation of Orthodoxy: 4.1. Elements of Orthodox teachings and spirituality reflected in the experience of Tomitan Christianity in the sec. III-V. Historical-epigraphic testimonies; 4.2. Saint John Casian - a monument of missionary theology and Eastern spirituality; 4.3. Saint Dionysius Exiguul - a refined theologian theologian with complex missionary valences; 4.4. John Maxentiu; 4.5. Missionary and ecumenical dominants to the Scythian theologians; 4.5.1. Historical context of the missionary activity of the Scythian parents; 4.5.2. The complexity of the missionary exercise; 4.5.2.1. Missionary journeys - a way of theological and cultural interaction of tomist and foreign values; 4.5.2.2. The relationship of synodal fellowship with the other bishops; 4.5.2.3. Ecumenical Bishops and theologians - mediators between Sunrise and Sunset in mission dynamics; 4.5.2.4. The practical dimension of the Scythian mosque; 4.5.2.5. Anchoring in the theological patristic consciousness of the sec. IV-V; 4.5.2.6. Preserving the Orthodoxy of the Faith - the testimony of the actual Scythian involvement in the Orthodox universal treasure; 4.5.2.7. Christology of Scythian parents - identity of heresy education; 4.5.2.8. Philocalic elements in the Scythian mission-experience experience; 4.5.2.9. Scythian Monasteries - radiating centers of spiritual life; 4.5.2.10. Translations - a way of connecting to the theological thinking of the great theologians of the time; 4.5.2.11. The ecumenical dimension of the tomites.

CHAPTER V - Actuality of the missionary message of Danubian-Pontic space in today's Europe. The legitimacy of Christian identity in the face of contemporary challenges - is an analysis of the current situation of Dobrogea Christianity and to what extent this multicultural and multiethnic space can respond to the challenges of religious pluralism: 5.1. Christian mission - criteria, framework and vocation of proclamation of the Christian identity; 5.2. The

exhaustive character of the principles of the Orthodox mission: criteria of legitimacy of the testimony; 5.3. The Testimony of Faith in Postmodernity: Theological Discourse in Post-Christian Society; 5.4. The challenge of religious pluralism for Christian Europe and the relevance of Dobrudja space as a matrix of good-life cohabitation; 5.4.1. Pluralism - an inconceivable reality of the European social framework; 5.4.2. Christian / post-Christian Europe - the legal framework of religious pluralism; 5.4.3. Tomitan space - a model of interreligious and interethnic relationship.

#### 4. Research Methods Used

Since our analysis is about an historical analytical research exercise, the general method we used is the historical one, because by its method we have managed to put as much as possible the structure and relevance of the Christian mission in Dobrogea.

As sources, we used the historical documents present in the two editions *Patrologia Grecae* and *Latin Patrology*, manuscripts, history and specialty treatises, and a very comprehensive literature on the subject under study.

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