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NEW TESTAMENT GROUNDS OF ICON'S THEOLOGY

-SUMMARY-

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Orthodox iconography brings before us the written or spoken teaching of the Church about the Savior Christ, the Mother of God, or about the saints. The Church distinguishes the usual part from the metaphysical aspect of the image, contemplating in what is seen, what is eternal. In this sense, it can be said that the true icon expresses the spiritual experience of holiness. There are two dialogical axes in the icon: the first is the dialogue of the iconographer with God, communication that leads to the other axis, the secondary one, of the Christian. It is unquestionable that the Orthodox icon is the most meaningful object that should delimit our liturgical, social or familial space. The Church cultivated an artistic language that expresses the same truth as the spoken liturgical language, and this language of holy painting is clear and precise. The dogmatic content of the iconographic image blends harmoniously with the historical realism and the spiritual reality of the eternal life.

Rooted in the very human nature of the incarnated Logos, the icon reveals the Unseen and expresses the Inexpressible One. It does not "*pretend, but reveals[1]*" the One who appeared in the flesh in order not to confuse the "carved image" (the idol) forbidden in the Old Testament with the icon, the image of the Incarnated Word. The image of the Word, the icon is a silent word about the Word, His life and deeds of salvation. Contemplating in the Spirit, it communicates the power of life of divine grace and represents a real fact, enrolled in historical time, significant in the icon of salvation. It "*is a saving memory because it shows Christ in His birth, baptized, doing miracles, crucified, buried, risen, ascending to heaven.[2]*"

In order to preach the truths of faith, the Church has created from the beginning its own sacred language, different from the word, but with the same power of communication and expression of the Truth revealed[3]. Considered as such, Christian art had the power of conversion to Christianity,greater than words. Its purpose was to communicate the message of the divine Word, to preach and strengthen faith in Jesus Christ[4].

The icon is a way of transmitting Divine Revelation, showing faith and participation in the Divine Truth. It is not the Truth itself, but it expresses the truths of Christian religion in

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[1]Alexandru Schemmemann, *Taina Împărăției,*translation by   Pr. Boris Răduleanu, Publishing Anastasia, București, 1993, p. 52.

[2]Chr Schonborn, *Icoana lui Hristos,* translation and preface by Pr. Vasile Răducă, Editura Anastasia, București, 1996, p. 180.

[3]Vasile Voiculescu, *Gânduri albe,* Publishing Cartea Românească, București, 1986, p. 451.

[4]Paul Evdokimov, *Cunoașterealui Dumnezeu în Tradiția Răsăriteană,* translation and preface by Pr. lect. univ. dr. Vasile Răducă, Editura Cristiana, București, 1995, p. 122.

the image and always sends it to a different world beyond the immanent one, incorporating in itself a relational presence of the Model it represents. It is an "Image of Eternity," a preparation and anticipation of the eschatological vision of Christ. By looking at it, it allows us *"to overcome time and to see the future age in the trembling mirror of the faces[5]."* Being part of the very essence of Christianity, it is a faithful bridge between the believer and what he believes in, the sacred place of encounter with the Godhead, showing him that the object of his faith, of his cult is not a fiction but a reality[6].

The icon is a true spiritual mentor and a living model for those who love the higher, spiritual, and prayerful life, expressing in colours a personal example of virtue in which the powers of the soul intertwine with the senses. The icon shows us in a magistral way, what we have to do with our lives to mirror the image of God in each one of us, speaks of the life and virtues of the saints, and shows us the way for their acquisition. It addresses us the call that God makes through His Word, expressing through images the eternity and communion with God. "*The purpose and the value of the icon are not in objective beauty, but in what it represents: a picture of beauty as divine resemblance.[7]"* The icon reveals the human nature transfigured by grace and at the same time asks man to participate in this spiritual renewal, showing him how to organize his life and what he must become. The road to final settlement in churches and the veneration of icons (843) was marked by attitudes for and against the religious image, and imperial political interests were also involved, so some of the emperors led a true icon defense policy, and others fought against the icons , considering themselves as the only representatives of divinity on earth, assuming themselves, the capacity of religious leaders for the people. Despite all the actions of rejecting the image of Christ, the icon continued its ascending route into the spiritual space of Christianity.

Argument (Motivation of the theme choice)

Generally, there has been written a lot about the icon over the time. Romanian theologians have carried out scientific researches of patristic iconology studies in this field: St. John Damascene, St. Theodore Studite, St. Gherman I of Consantinople, St. Nichifor the

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[5]P.Florensky, *L'icone,* în „Contacts", 1974, nr. 7, p. 325, apud. Pr. dr. Ilie I. Ivan, *Icoana - mijloc de propovaduire a evangheliei,de aparare și de întărire a dreptei credinte,*în „Mitropolia Olteniei, anul LI, nr. 5-6, Craiova, p. 63.

[6]Maria Grazia Siliato, *Misterul Sfântului Giulgiu din Torino,* translation from Italian by Nicolae Luca, Saeculum I. V. Publishing and   Vestala Publishing, București, 1998, p. 129.

[77]Gabriel Marcel, *Dialoguri cu Pierra Boutang,* translation by Aurelian Craiuț și Cristian Preda, preface by Mihai Sora, Editura Anastasia, București, 1995, p. 117.

Confessor's. In the scientific researches of patristic iconology, the Romanian theologians highlighted the historical context and the dogmatic foundation of the holy icons, especially on the basis of St. John Damascene and St Theodore Studite's patristic texts translated into Romanian. In Romanian theology, there are a small number of studies elaborated on the basis of texts written by St. Gherman I of Constantinople, St. Nichifor thr Confessor, texts that were not translated into Romanian. There were also elaborated dogmatic and spiritual iconology studies in which are highlighted the foundation and the dogmatic content of the icon, the relationship between the icon and the dogma, between the image and the word. Last but not least, we must mention the existence of the liturgical iconological studies that explain in detail the special importance of the icon's worship in Orthodoxy, as well as the catechetical ones that highlight the didactic-educational role of the icon. In this context of the scientific researches carried out in the field of iconology in our country, one can observe the existence of a small number of studies presenting the icon in the light of the Holy Scriptures, highlighting the scriptural grounds of the theology of the icon.

Synthesizing the above, we can say that, in its general terms, the field of the theology of the icon was a real temptation for researchers. In this context, there is a need for a thematic thoroughgoing study, for a development of a monograph to address the theology of the icon from several perspectives: scriptural, symbolic-dogmatic, historical, canonical, cultic, aesthetic, artistic. The elaboration of such a monograph is the overcoming of the common perimeter and the banal repetition.

The motivation for which I chose this subject for my PhD thesis is that of the desire to undertake a thorough study, having as main objectives the presentation of the icon in the light of the teachings of the Holy Scripture, the highlight of scriptural grounds of the theology of the icon, also revealing the relationship between iconology, christology and pneumatology and their spiritual-anthropological implications: "The grace of the Holy Spirit writes with light on the human face" discovered in prayer" the unseen image of God transforming the saints into mystical mirrors or icons of Christ[8].

The scriptural motifs of the theology of the icon are the creation of man in the image and likeness of God and the reality of Incarnation of the Word of God.

Although "*the Spirit is God*" (John 4:24), and *"no one has ever seen God", "it is natural to attribute figures to Him who is without a face and forms to Him who is without a*

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[8]Drd. Gina Scarlat, *Teologia icoanelor în Biserica Ortodoxă Română,* în „R. T", an XIX(88), 2006, nr. 3, p. 24.

form, because of our ability to comprehend, ability that can not rise directly to intellectual considerations without concepts and trends of the same nature.[9]"

The Savior Jesus Christ extensively depicted His teaching to the Apostles, and the people admitted that "*no man spoke like this man.*" However, the Holy Apostle Philip, speaking in the name of all the holy apostles and the entire human race, addresses Christ the Savior with the prayer: *"Lord show us the Father and it is enough for us"* (John 14, 8). The icon is addressed to this general human need. This "*theology of Beauty,*" as the art of the icon was called by the great theologian Paul Evdokimov, is the fruit of a long struggle that the Church has fought over the centuries with the enemies of good. The teaching of icons has become the very emblem of Orthodoxy since its official proclamation in March 843.

The great French Orthodox theologian Jean Claude Larchet highlights the fact that a distinction must be made between Orthodox icons and "false icons," respectively between Orthodox icons and religious paintings. Researching the publications of contemporary Catholic theologians, we noticed that they do not make a difference between the icon and the religious picture. They call icons, the religious paintings of famous painters: Cimabue, Giotto, Rafael, Leonardo da Vinci, Tizian, etc. In order to carry out a correct and authentic analysis of the dogmatic, cultic and canonical content of the icon, the differences between Orthodox icons and religious pictures, we researched: Holy Scripture, patristic and post-patristic writings, canons, cult books, apocryphal sources and historical texts and classical Greek philosophers treated by aesthetics.

Difficulty in approaching the theme

As mentioned above, there is a small number of works, studies, articles in Romanian, which present the icon in the light of the Holy Scripture, the scriptural grounds of the theology of the icon. As a consequence, it was necessary to research and translate studies, articles, works from foreign languages, bibliographical references that refer both to the scriptural foundations of iconic theology, as well as to the historical, canonical, dogmatic, artistic and plastic ones. This bibliography in foreign languages consists of 150 papers, studies, articles in Italian, English, French, German. To this, we may add 420 in Romanian. In this Ph.D thesis, I conducted a broad research of the icon content from a scriptural, patristic, dogmatic, cultic, canonical, aesthetic and artistic point of view.

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[9]Pr. Prof. Ioan Bria, *Dicționar de teologie ortodoxă,* București,1981, p. 203

Objectives

1. The explanation of the phrase "theology of Beauty" attributed to the theology of the icon

2. The presentation of the notion of beauty in the light of the Old Testament, the New Testament, the patristic writings and in the Greek philosophers' thinking.

3. The presentation of the evolution of the icon in the history of salvation: idol-symbol-icon

4. The highlighting of the scriptural foundations of the icon, its functions, differences of symbolic-dogmatic, cultic, canonical and technical differences between the icon and the religious painting.

5. The highlighting of the scriptural grounds of the theology of the icon

6. Identifying the Old Testament Grounds of the Theology of the Icon: Creation of Man in the Face and Similarity of God and Messianic Prophecies

7. Presentation of the Essential Theory of the Theology of the Icon: Incarnation of the Word of God

8. Presentation of the Christological dogma, as an essential theme of the theology of the icon, in the synoptic gospels, the Ioanic and the Pauline writings

9. Presentation of the notion of "beauty" and "face" in scriptural, patristic writings, apocryphal sources, historical texts, canons, cult books

10. Description of the historical background that generated the struggle against sacred icons, the presentation of the two iconoclastic periods

11. Presentation of remarkable personalities who contributed to the crystallization of the teachings of the icon in the two iconoclastic periods

12. Description of the contribution of Russian tradition and theology in deepening the teachings of the icon

13. Presentation of the evolution of the iconographic representations from the representation by symbols and figures to the representation of human figure.

14. The highlight of the moment of rupture of Western Christian art with Byzantine Eastern tradition

15. Description of Byzantine and post-Byzantine art

16. Presentation of the Byzantine art in Romanian Countries and the description of the activity of the Holy Father Pafnutie -Pârvu Mutu Zugravu, called "Rubliov" of the Romanians

Originality of the theme

The originality of the theme consists in the detailed presentation of the scriptural themes of the theology of the icon, as well as in the identification of the texts about "beauty" and "the image of the Savior" in Holy Scripture, Holy Tradition, Greek philosophy, historical texts,

apocryphal sources. A note of originality of this work is conferred by the extensive research of the contents of the icon from several perspectives: scriptural, philosophical, patristic, dogmatic, cultic, canonical, aesthetic and artistic based on 150 bibliographic references in foreign languages and 420 in the Romanian.

The actuality of the subject

From a spiritual point of view, one should mention that the need for an Orthodox icon often appears as an instinctive projection of consciousness to the so-called disorder, the spiritual ugliness that has invaded everyday life. History repeats itself, and this phenomenon of "rediscovery of the Orthodox icon" (mentioned by the theologian John Breck) appears in the context of an antagonism, meaning that the need for icon, manifested both on an artistic level as well as on the spiritual, dogmatic, cultic one, tends to be stifled by a so-called "contemporary iconoclasm". In the secularized contemporary society, without moral markers, there are many voices who stood up against the icon, considering it a stressor and discrimination factor, advocating for forcing it out of school on the grounds of bigotry or pietism. That is why we must return "ad fontes," because iconography developed freely in the "platonism of the eastern patristic writings, in its philosophy of transcendence, because it implies a certain symbolism: the renewal of the sensible through heavenly roots."

The significance of the study

Through this work we aim to present the theology of the icon in the light of the Holy Scripture, of the Holy Tradition, but also of the other theologians who have written on this subject since the fifteenth century. We also want to highlight the differences both from the symbolic-dogmatic, canonical, cultic point of view and also from technical, plastic one between Orthodox icons and religious paintings, between "false icons" (Jean Claude Larchet) and authentic icons.

Research questions

a. Why was the art of the icon surnamed "the theology of Beauty"?

b. What are the scriptural grounds of the theology of the icon?

c. What is the content, meaning and functions of the icon?

d. Is the icon an object of art or an object of worship?

e. are the image of the Savior and the notion of "beauty" presented in the light of written sources?

f. What are the origins of Byzantine iconoclasm, as well as the fundamental elements of Orthodox theology of the icon?

g. What are the origins of Christian art and how did iconographic representations evolve over time in the East and the West?

h. What are the symbolic-dogmatic, canonical and cultic faults that appear in the writings of some Western theologians on this subject?

The stake of research

We intend, following the scientific research that we will achieve, to obtain a well-grounded work that will both highlight an authentic teaching about the icon in the light of the Holy Scripture and patristic writings, and outline, on the basis of sound scientific documentation, the dogmatic , canonical, cultic and technical differences between Orthodox icons and "false icons", between Orthodox icons and religious paintings.

Methodology of research

The first method I used to accomplish this work is documentation, bibliographic research and analysis. To this end, we have collected bibliographic material from the county library in Constanta, the National Library, the Academy Library and the Holy Synod in Bucharest. The next step consisted in the thematic systematization of the acquired information.

The longitudinal chronological method has been used to highlight the evolution of iconographic representations over time. The fourth method I used to draw up this paper is the quantitative one by bringing together as many and varied as possible a number of bibliographic materials in Romanian, English, French, German and Italian to address directly or indirectly the theme of the icon. This method is closely related to the comparative method, by which we checked the quality of the information we selected.

Scientific research on this topic also required the use of the deductive method by which, based on the formulation of certain hypotheses, the obtaining and the selection of information, we deduced new elements.

Stages of research

In order to achieve a coherent theological approach, I structured this thesis in the following five chapters: I. Teofania Beauty by icon; II. Scriptural motifs of the theology of the icon; III. The image of the Savior, the foundation of all Christian iconography in the light of written sources; IV. The iconoclast crisis and the elaboration of the fundamental elements of

Orthodox theology of the icon; V. Evolution of iconographic representations throughout the history of Christianity.

In the elaboration of this doctoral thesis, I have completed the following stages:

a. Analysis of selective bibliography

In this first step, I have identified as many bibliographic references on this topic, we have researched and compiled reading sheets

b. Definition of content

In the second stage, based on the bibliographic material found, I elaborated a table of contents in which I discussed all the research aspects of the chosen theme

c. Development of bibliography on the table of contents

As far as advancing in research and discovering new issues, it was necessary to identify, purchase and research additional bibliographic materials.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis contains five chapters with more subchapters, preceded by an introduction in which we presented the technical details related to the elaboration of this paper: argumentum, the difficulty of the chosen theme, originality, the actuality of the chosen theme, the significance of the study, research questions, the stake research, research methods, research stages.

In the first chapter of the paper titled: **"TEOFANIA OF BEAUTY BY ICON"**, we presented the theological premises on the basis of which, the theology of the icon was associated with the theology of Beauty. The first subchapter of this first chapter entitled "Be Light - Being Beauty - Beauty in the Sacred Scriptures" highlights the existence of a rich treasure of testimonies of beauty in the texts of Holy Scripture. After a detailed study of biblical texts, I found the existence of some grounds of beauty in Sacred Scripture that open a new horizon to man: the aspiration for moral perfection.

The subchapter titled **"Beauty in the Light of Old Testament Writings***"* presents the basics of beauty in the Old Testament writings, during which the beautiful appears as a leitmotif. In the Book of Creation, the beauty and greatness of creation are the "*refrain of divine beauty*," a term of comparison that highlights *"the supreme beautiful that is God Himself*. The participation of the Word, the Logos embodied in the act of creation is rendered by the exclamation" through which the will of God becomes deed. By saying the words: "*Be Light!,""the uncreated light of God is activated, He Himself is Light*" and Absolute Beauty. The creation of man according to the *"image and likeness of God"* (Genesis 1, 26)

presupposes the aspiration of man to the likeness of grace with the Creator, to that Absolute Beauty, the source of all values. The image of God in man, through its dynamic character, implies an eternal thirst of man after that Absolute Beauty and infinite.

In the following subchapter entitled **"Beauty in the Light of New Testament Writings,"** the symbolism of light and beauty focuses on the person of Christ the Savior, "*the light of the world*" (John 9,5) which "will light the darkness" (Luke 1, 78). The teaching of the Church on the Holy Trinity is the essential content of the Gospel, and it is also the source of all values in the world, especially of the beauty and good, the ontological characteristics of the entire human existence.

The subchapter titled "**Beauty in the Thinking of Greek Philosophers**" presents a brief history of the notion of beauty, presuming the Greek philosophers' vision on the subject. Patristic writings are grounded both on the revelation of the Holy Scriptures and on some reasoning of Greek philosophy, for which, in order to form a broader view of the patristic texts of beauty, it was necessary to research some texts of Greek philosophers on this subject .

In the next subchapter "**Beauty in the Light of Patristic Writings**" we are introduced to the idea that the beauty of God is reflected in His creation and all the animated creatures proclaim the Beauty of the Creator. We have presented the vision of the beauty of the Cappadocian Fathers, St. Athanasius the Great, Dionysius Areopagit, Clement Alexandrin, Blessed Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Maxim the Confessor, Simeon The New Theologian, John Climax.

The fourth subchapter titled "**The Icon in the History of the Salvation of the Human Nation. Evolution of idol-symbol-icon** " emphasizes that, from the perspective of spiritual development, the history of salvation naturally embraces the history of art and follows an ascending course, evolving from the idol, to the symbol and hence to the icon. The first two subchapters describe the differences between the idol forbidden in the Old Testament and the admitted symbol as the theme and prefiguration of the icon. The third subchapter, **<<The New Testament Icon," The Mystery of Presence "and" Theology of Beauty**">>,highlights the theophaneic function of the icon, which is essentially the sublime and mystery of the Christian icon. In Orthodoxy, "the divine dimension opens up from the human face". Through the coming of the Savior Jesus Christ in the closest proximity of man, "to us" and "in us" becomes possible for us to know the truth of the eternal in the Father, the Son making the Father Himself known to us. Moreover, God the Incarnated Word brings us a superior knowledge of ourselves, a new knowledge of the sense, the calling and the worthiness of our humanity. " The following subchapter "**Icon between Aesthetic and**

Religious Experience" includes the analysis of the writings on icon of some representative philosophers, painters or aestheticians, emphasizing that they have confined themselves to the idea of pure aesthetics that knows only aesthetic values, being far from the authentic beauty. This esteem, left outside the Spirit of Beauty, opens with ease to demonic deviations. In order to understand the universe of the icon, a Christological vision is required which requires a unified approach to art and culture, in which the values are related to the person of the Savior Jesus Christ and His work of salvation to the human race. In the last subchapter: "The content, meaning and function of the icon", I presented and described in detail the four functions or roles of the icon: the didactic-instructive role, the educational moralizing role, the cultic and haricultural role, as well as the decorative role of the icon.

Chapter Two is of particular importance and is titled "**ICON'S SCRIPTURISM THEMES.**" The first subchapter "Creating God's image and likeness" describes the special act of building man according to the biblical account of the Holy Trinity. By carrying out a thorough research into the patristic texts that interpret the notion of "face," I have emphasized that some of the authors of these texts, speak of man over the created world, others about man's reason or his freedom. The image of the man restored to the first state of his beauty, renewed by the grace of incarnation of the Son of God, is represented in the icon. The icon is depicted not only of the image of man, but also of that of the whole being, of the unreasonable world, in a state of expectation, of sighing after the redemption of corruption, in order to be partaker of the magnification of the sons of God. Between the rational creature, man and the unreasonable is a close comunion. For this reason, the possibility that a plastic composition can be considered an icon is given precisely to this state of incorruptibility of the world represented in the icon. In the chapter "**The coming of the Messiah in light of the Old Testament prophecies**," I have presented the Messianic prophecies of the veterotestamental texts.

As can be seen from the following subchapter, the essential and fundamental foundation of honoring the holy icons is the Incarnation of the Son of God. The icon is fundamentally grounded in the Christological dogma and, as a result, the theology of the icon is closely related to the theology of the Incarnation of the Logos. Christ was revealed to humans in a kenotic way, in human flesh, and "it is not a mistake to represent him iconographically in this transfigured humanity." The following three subchapters present Christological dogma in the synoptic Gospels, the Jonn's and the Pauline writings.

The third chapter of the work: THE FACE OF CHRIST, THE FOUNDATION OF THE ALL CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY, IN THE LIGHT OF WRITTEN SOURCES,

presents the different ways in which the Savior's image was described in Old and New Testament writings, patristic, historical texts, apocryphal sources, cult books. The subchapter titled "**Patristic Writings Before the Iconoclastic Crisis**" presents the various attitudes of the Holy Fathers to iconographic representations and the cult of holy icons over time. The subchapter titled **"The Holy Canons"** presents the connection between the icon and the dogma, presenting the main canons that have been elaborated on the cult of holy icons.

The fourth chapter of the paper is titled "ICONOCLAST CRISIS AND THE ELABORATION OF FUNDAMNETAL ELEMENTS OF ICON'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGY". The first subchapter describes the origins of Byzantine iconoclasm. The second subchapter: "The first iconoclastic period (715-780) and the convening of the 7th Ecumenical Synod "presents the historical context that generated the iconoclastic crisis, the first stage of the struggle against the holy icon, the restoration of the cult of the holy icons in the the seventh Ecumenical Council. The next subchapter titled **"Defenders of the holy icons of the first iconoclast period"** presents the iconology of the three remarkable personalities who were involved in the Orthodox movement for the defense of the holy icons during the first iconoclastic period: St. Gherman, the patriarch of Constantinople, the monk Gheorghe of Cyprus and the Saint Ioan Damaschin. Third subchapter: "**The second iconoclastic period. Deepening the teachings of the icon** "presents the historical context that led to the convocation of the Synod of 843 and the triumph of Orthodoxy, as well as the iconology of the two personalities who have remarked in defending the sacred icons in the second iconoclast period: St. Nicholas the Confessor and Saint Theodore Studit. The fourth subchapter, "**The Contribution of Russian Tradition and Theology to Deepening the Teaching of the Icon"**, is of special importance to the theology and Slavic art in the continuation of the Byzantine tradition after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. In this context, remarkable importance on the artistic and theological level is the work of the great iconographer Andrei Rubliov. From the doctrinal point of view, the Stoglav Synod of 1551 (Synod of the 100 chapters) and the Epistle of St. Joseph of Volokolamsk.

The last chapter of the paper is titled: "**THE EVOLUTION OF ICONOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIVES IN THE TIME OF THE CHRISTIAN HISTORY**". The first subchapter presents the origins of Christian art. The second subchapter includes the description of the iconographic representations in the catacombs until the sixth century: the representation of the Savior and biblical scenes by symbols, the Savior's representation and biblical scenes of the figures, as well as the portrait the Savior and some characters holy of Scripture. The following subchapters describe iconographic representations in the East before

and after the iconoclast crisis, highlighting the features of Byzantine art during the Macedonian Renaissance (842-1057) Comnenus (1057-1059, 1081-1185) and the Palaeologus (1261-1453). Of particular importance is the sucapitol titled "Iconographic Representations in the West after the Iconoclastic Crisis" which shows the definitive rupture of Western art by the Byzantine tradition in the pre-Renaissance era. The last two subchapters present the universal post-Byzantine art as well as the Byzantine art in the Romanian Lands, describing the evolution of the church painting in Romanian and the presentation of the personality and work of the greatest Romanian church painter: Saint Pafnutie - Pârvu Mutu Zugravu, the one called "Rubliov "Of the Romanians.

In the contemporary world, there are many pressures and temptations to idolize the material world, all of which appear in a context in which many Christians have lost faith in the sacredness of the world. The theological and spiritual tradition of the Orthodox Church supports the dogma of Creation and Incarnation, the icons representing the interdependence between matter and spirit, in a world where we easily break one another. Icons are a window to the "beyond world," a meeting point between divine grace and human need. Moreover, we could say that icons are a way through which we penetrate deeply into our own inner world. In this journey to our inner world is facilitated by the different points of view from which we look at the icon: theological, historical, aesthetic, artistic, spiritual.

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