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Theologie and Mistique in the Work of Saint Cyril of Alexandria

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A prominent exponent of exegetical school in Alexandria Egypt is St. Cyril, bishop of the city between the years 412 and 444. Concerned about the True faith of victory on the night of unbelief and heresy, St. Cyril sought to present content in clear revelation without equivocal, arguing his theological statements and thoughts patristic biblical verses. This approach is part and work constructively exegetical, which was retained until further an important, facilitating knowledge exegetical methods, discovered the meaning of Sacred Scripture depth value of Supernatural Revelation. As a representative of the Alexandrian exegetical school stands less as creator of meaning and more like receptor sacred text and word meanings stated above for the words, especially the exegetical school of Alexandria.

For the New Testament era, Alexandria is defined as the center of interpretation of the Gospel. Even if you cannot support the thesis writing the Gospel of Mark in the cultural center of Antiquity, its author, Mark, “apostolic man”, “disciple of the Apostles” and their servant, has interpreted the words of Peter and preached until his death Gospel martyr here, not just saying the word, but also serving or ministering to

1 Gospel of Mark, though not legally precede the temporal Matthew as trying to demonstrate even in Orthodox theological backgrounds, was probably written in the cultural center of antiquity, which contributed to the development and translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek as the Septuagint. Synoptic problem apparently is not a "problem" for many biblical scholars. The existence of "Q" is so clear in all approaches to the authenticity of the biblical text, that even the most competent theologians must present arguments against those who share different pericopes in springs or less spread during the writing of the Gospels. Due to historical criticism, so widespread, contrary to tradition two thousand years of temporal primacy of the Gospel to others, the Gospel of Mark was reconsidered, the first case cited in parallel texts. Moreover, Ioannis Karavidopoulos in his commentary on the Gospel of Mark argues literal temporal relocation writings synoptic Gospels. Prof. univ. dr. IOANNIS KARAVIDOPOULOS, Comentariu la Evanghelia după Marcu, trad. Sabin Preda, Ed. Bizantină, București, 2001, p. 21-24. However, even if the Greek text of the Gospel of Matthew is part of the temporal order, Aramaic Matthew certainly preceding year 45.

2 Quality Mark for "interpreter of Peter" is affirmed by SF. IRINEU al LYONULUI, Contra ereziilor, III, 1, 1.

3 Mark was a servant, not only because he wrote the liturgy that bears his name, Alexandria. St. Paul says to Timothy that he "Get Mark and take him with you; for he is of use to me in the work" (II Tim. 4:11), and St. Luke, in Acts: "at Salamis they were
the Word of Life.⁴

Before St. Mark in Alexandria, Philo Moses agree with Plato and Gnosticism dressed its most philosophical form.⁵ Therefore, before Panten, considered the founder of the school of Alexandria exegetical, there is didaskaleion sacred sciences that has been preserved by Eusebius of Caesarea, “led by the ablest men in philosophy and theology”.⁶ Clement of Alexandria, and Origen especially, have developed the exegetical school, making it the place allegorical interpretation of Scripture, in opposition, even the school of Antioch, where the predominant grammatical or literal -historical exegesis.

Antiochenes frequently rejected Alexandrian allegory, especially the work of Origen. This indicates a different methodological basis in the two schools.⁷ “The debate between typology and algorism has a methodological dimension. But what is decisive for both traditions is not the method, but the set of attitudes”.⁸ Before following the path or method, the interpreter was trained to read and appreciate the Holy Scriptures, avoiding aberrant meanings soul and its passions, especially pride. Therefore the study was in perfect harmony with the ministry, both part of the same approach as today's liturgical preaching has its place well established within or at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

Scripture text that was used primarily Cyril both liturgical ministry of the Word and in the exegetical, was the specific of this school. In an attempt to reconstitute the text can only begin to study the quotations Alexandrian exegetical center representatives. “It is obvious that the chief source of information about the Alexandrian text is the quotations in the Alexandrian Fathers, especially in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, and Cyril. Their evidence ought to be tabulated and considered carefully, but until the text of all the Fathers themselves has been properly edited with an adequate apparatus criticus it is useless to attempt a task which could not be satisfactorily

preaching the word of God in the Synagogues of the Jews: and John was with them, helping them” (Acts 13:5).

⁴ EUSEBIU DE CEZAREEA states that Mark owed founding the Church of Alexandria Egypt: "About this Mark is said to have been the first sent to preach the Gospel in Egypt, as he wrote it, and he founded the first church there". Istoria Bisericească, II, 26,1 in PSB, vol. 13, Ed. IBMBOR, București, 1987, p. 82.

⁵ Pr. prof. dr. IOAN G. COMAN, Patrologie, Ed. Sfânta Mănăstire Dervent, 2000, p. 68.


completed”. The conclusion reached is that the Alexandrian text of Scripture has experienced three stages in its evolution, corresponding to the period of Clement of Alexandria (150-215), Origen (185-254), which uses manuscripts kept in Caesarea and in the ago, St. Cyril appropriate stage. In this last step, can be traced Antiochian influences. But this “evolution” is nothing but the natural development of religious literature, concentrated, most times, the reading and interpretation of the Holy Scripture, preserved in variants manuscripts, which allowed a gradual correction of errors introduced inadvertently by copyists. This religious literature known also three stages: from its origins to the Edict of Mediolanum in 313; from 313 until the death of St. John Chrysostom (410) and 410 to 527.

Evolution is as natural, normal, if we take into account the specific doctrinal struggles periods and stages are set only methodological considerations and didactic. “Christian literature in Greek of the first century and the mid-sixth century, takes place in an undeniable continuity, because we cannot find any break on it”.

This anti-heretical Alexandrian exegetical tradition developed especially anti-Aryan speech, “Cyril helped to form distinct polemical style”. Saint Cyril, heir to the Alexandrian exegetical tradition, at the same time introduce new nuances content previously made. He resumed his predecessor’s broad categories: the literal and spiritual meaning, purpose, gnosis of Mysteries, a Christological concentration much higher.

It is easily noticeable that St. Cyril’s exegesis is moving towards pnevmatical theoria. Finding spiritual meaning of Scripture implies theoria, opening the heart to the mystery of Christ. But “the vision is «Pnevmatical», spiritual effort because his soul is helped by the Holy Spirit to overcome what might be called the face of the letter and the shadow of apparent reality”.

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10 IBIDEM, p. 80.
15 IBIDEM, p. 403.
Developments in the Alexandrian exegetical school, St. Cyril marks a breakthrough in two respects: he acknowledges that some texts from the Old Testament has no spiritual sense and admits, as St. Gregory of Nyssa, there is a literal metaphor.  

After raising his episcopal seat in 412, Cyril began writing biblical commentaries which, in time, would cover the entire canon of Scripture. Seven of the ten-volume work *Patropologia Graeca* Cyrilian collection edited by Jean - Paul Migne, contain Biblical commentaries. “This fact alone marks Cyril as one of the most prolific biblical commentators of the entire early Christian period. For many students of patristic theology, however, the extent of Cyril's interest in the Bible is unknown”, with Origen and St. John Chrysostom.  

Among the exegetical works of great significance, we mention *Adoration in Spirit and Truth* in 17 books, *Glaphyra* allegorical work in 13 books, commentaries on Isaiah and the smalls prophets fully preserved. Fragments have been preserved reviews Psalms, Kings, Song of Solomon, Proverbs and great prophets. Regarding the New Testament books, the most important work of St. Cyril's exegetical commentary on the Gospel of John made, drawn shortly before the year 429. Fragmentary comments have come down to us from St. Cyril Matthew, Luke, I and II Corinthians Romans, Hebrew and Syrian 156 homilies on the Gospel of Luke.  

Concerning the method of research, we note that the Fathers believed that St. Cyril, his predecessors were fed with evangelical and apostolic doctrine, which was found in Scripture. So it was not

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16 IBIDEM, p. 405.  
19 "This paper shows that the gospel removes the power of the letter of the law but not the spirit", Pr. prof. dr. IOAN G. COMAN, *op.cit.*, p. 101.  
20 IBIDEM, p. 101.  
invented doctrine has been codified in the language of each generation, although it was believed or lived with someone feeling the need for a scientific theorizing, as happened when heresies arose.

Today theologians understand the value of patristic comments unmatched and cannot ignore the results of the exegesis of the Fathers, even hostile backgrounds exegetical Holy Tradition. The issue of interest to them follower’s historical criticism is what the Fathers sought in ancient biblical commentaries? In other words, the method of research was Scripture that patristic writers applied it?

In an attempt to identify postapostolic writers who put truth above method, it was concluded that it can be said, based on research writings preserved, that Diodorus of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia were using historical criticism in the modern sense. They “resist efforts to get to know Christ in the Old Testament and follows strict literal interpretation program”. But this “resistance” made by the two authors cited to become and remain heretics. Even if the results of this method led to heresy for the two, Richard Simon theorized this method, gaining many adherents both among Protestants and among his fellow Catholics.

We must admit that reading the text causes a mild or literal understanding of it. The literal meaning is considering ways perceived realities, and also attributes and activities characteristic of human nature, either individually or in community.

Early Christian exegetes—including Cyril—were not preoccupied with method; they were, rather, motivated by the “fundamental conviction that Scripture was intimately bound up with the life of a religious community”. Cyril was influenced by specific historical model exegetical school of Antioch. Antiochenes not motivated rejected allegory of Use universal historical meaning. “Rather, significant exegesis seems to have been governed primarily by a desire to defend the integrity of a text against the seemingly anarchistic and arbitrary interpretations of those employing allegory”. The Bible is not seen as a

25 JOHN J. O’KEEFE, art. cit., p. 137.
26 IBIDEM, p. 136.
27 IBIDEM, p. 138.
29 BERTRAND DE MARGERIE, art. cit., p. 401.
historical text books but from the perspective of most value to faith.\textsuperscript{32}

Cyril begins his work with the reveal from the books of Moses Savior urge Jews to search the Scriptures (John 5:39 ), “showing very clearly that he cannot get someone to eternal life, to not poke as a treasure letter of the law seeking hidden pearl in it, that is, Christ”.\textsuperscript{33}

Since the beginning, the Holy Father announced his program of study of the books of Holy Scripture: passing through the letter of the law, looking for the hidden treasure in it to be even Christ. Direction to point the spiritual sense should include the purpose of Christ, or research is not only useless, but also harmful or heretical. Thus Scripture research appears as an end in itself but as a means similar candlestick in the Christian way to Christ. Therefore “no it will not be a need for those who praise equally blameless life and decide to acquire what is best and highest for all, and to fill the heart with divine light, like that to the boundless deep words of God and to make Scripture as a lamp, as the Psalmist crying, saying, «Your word is a lamp to my feet» (Ps. 118:105)”\textsuperscript{34}

A sense of Scripture without relationship with Christ cannot be spiritual, can only be literal. “Admitting the possibility of such respect, its reality in most cases, is a radical development in relation to the Origen”.\textsuperscript{35}

Here Glaphyra explicit program: “We will expose so usefully, the first historically committed chip; then clarifying them properly, they 'll show stories that form and shadow, and we will clearly indicating their meaning. And so the word will lift us to the mystery of Christ, taking Him as the end, because it is true that Christ is the end of the law and the prophets” (Rom. 10:4).\textsuperscript{36} Therefore, the methodology of St. Cyril is Christocentric.\textsuperscript{37}

The method can be defined as the St. Cyril stepped understanding of God's Word. Starting from the letter, that basic grammatical sense, spiritual understanding climb the steps precisely to reveal Christ especially in the books of the Old Testament.

“The scope of Scripture is inspired to discover the mystery of Christ in the midst of innumerable objects (...) Scripture does not neglect anything knowing that scope”.\textsuperscript{38} Σκοπος term, represents the basic text

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{32} ROBERT L. WILKEN, \textit{art. cit.}, p.154.
  \item \textsuperscript{33} SFÂNTUL CHIRIL AL ALEXANDRIEI, Glafire, p. 7.
  \item \textsuperscript{34} IBIDEM, p. 7.
  \item \textsuperscript{35} BERTRAND DE MARGERIE, \textit{art. cit.}, p. 402.
  \item \textsuperscript{36} SFÂNTUL CHIRIL AL ALEXANDRIEI, Glafire, p. 8.
  \item \textsuperscript{37} JOHN J. O'KEEFE, \textit{art. cit.}, p. 140.
  \item \textsuperscript{38} BERTRAND DE MARGERIE, \textit{art. cit.}, p. 401.
\end{itemize}
orientation. Prologues the exegetical works contain prefaces each dedicated to discovering assumptions (ὐπόθεσις) or σκοπός the text under consideration.\(^\text{39}\) The scope of Scripture is to our present lives of the patriarchs, but everywhere reveal the mystery of the Savior, who became for us the way and the truth.\(^\text{40}\)

Grammatical method used in Antioch and then to St. Cyril in his work requires precise steps:

1. Studied is considered accurate text;
2. Meter is made to complement its own sacred text;
3. Difficult name, places unknown, obscure historical detail and remarkable literary qualities were then explained;
4. Moral value of the text was highlighted, by way of example to follow.\(^\text{41}\)

Overall Cyril remains faithful to its interpretative method, especially in making comments to the Old Testament books. For each new text it starts with an explanation of the meaning literally and then move to spiritual interpretation. He takes care to explain literary contexts, the name difficult and obscure vocabulary and sometimes compares the Septuagint with Bible Hebraica.\(^\text{42}\)

The distinction between the literal and the spiritual author extrapolates actually issue: human vests literal sense and the spiritual, divine authority. “The distinction between the literal and the spiritual aims, above all, not the intention of the subject (human or divine) but considered objects: literal meaning belongs to what is human and what is spiritual, what is divine”.\(^\text{43}\)

The Commentary on Malachi St. Cyril interpretation depend less on his method and more than the first five centuries of the Christian understanding of this book.\(^\text{44}\) However, note that the prophet’s speech is always obscure. Therefore, those who want to clarify the places subtle and hidden spiritual meanings must be satisfied in his mind exactly historical meaning and interpretation resulting from spiritual

\(^{39}\)“In any case, the effort to identify the υ.πόθεσις or the σκοπός a text stems from the conviction that texts actually had an identifiable point to make and that they possessed a basic unity and coherence, something allegorical interpretation seemed to ignore”. JOHN J. O’KEEFE, art. cit., p. 140.
\(^{40}\) BERTRAND DE MARGERIE, art. cit., p. 401.
\(^{41}\) JOHN J. O’KEEFE, art. cit., p. 138.
\(^{42}\) “This attention to detail, he believed, enhanced comprehension and helped prepare the way for Christian interpretation”. JOHN J. O’KEEFE, art. cit., p. 139.
\(^{43}\) BERTRAND DE MARGERIE, art. cit., p. 401.
\(^{44}\) JOHN J. O’KEEFE, art. cit., p. 137.
contemplation.\textsuperscript{45} “The prophets, it is therefore nothing but the faculty of interpreting 
ermineutica prophets”.\textsuperscript{46}

Christian prophet has no historical future but the gift of knowledge to understand the reality of Christ in the words of those who have received this gift. “Christian prophet is one who got charisma to recognize the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament in the New”.\textsuperscript{47}

Typical sense, so appealing to the Old Testament, is no longer suitable and if the New Testament, so that “the interpretation of the New Testament books, it's most literal”.\textsuperscript{48} Moreover, St. Cyril warns that not all Scripture passages lend themselves to spiritual interpretations and attention to the literal meaning of the text is essential exegetical process.\textsuperscript{49}

In the New Testament emphasis is on explanation of doctrinal nuances of great finesse. Jesus was true man and true God since the incarnation. “The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14). The first part of the verse talks about the Incarnation: the Word becomes flesh (body and soul). St. Cyril wants to draw attention to the real Jesus lived as a man, so he was seen as Adam.\textsuperscript{50}

The followers of St. Athanasius the Great polemic style used in homilies against the Arians. Cyril continued this interpretive tradition, “he extended the genre of Christian homiletics beyond \textit{paraenesis} and exhortation”.\textsuperscript{51}

Cyril was familiar to exegetical solution Athanasius exegetical problems of the Gospels. Thus explains why Jesus' baptism has its place in the life of God Evangelical description immediately upon the Incarnation of the Logos. St. Athanasius the Great sees baptism at the Jordan when the Holy Spirit and sanctification Body Adam's death is truly the beginning of life, for as in Adam all men die, so in Christ all live the new life.\textsuperscript{52} Receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit by Jesus is presented to the Holy Father in his commentary on the Gospel of John, as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{45} IBIDEM, p. 139.
\item \textsuperscript{46} SF. CHIRIL AL ALEXANDRIEI, “Explanatio in Episotlam I ad Corinthios”, în PG, 74, 889 C.
\item \textsuperscript{47} BERTRAND DE MARGIERIE, \textit{art. cit.}, p. 404.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Pr. Prof. Dr. IOAN G. COMAN, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 101.
\item \textsuperscript{49} JOHN J. O'KEEFE, \textit{art. cit.}, p. 139; Bertrand de Margerie, “L'exégèse christologique de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie”, in: \textit{Nouvelle revue théologique}, vol. 102(1980), nr. 3, p. 403.
\item \textsuperscript{50} ROBERT L. WILKEN, \textit{art. cit.}, p.144.
\item \textsuperscript{51} SUSAN WESSEL, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 190.
\item \textsuperscript{52} ROBERT L. WILKEN, \textit{art. cit.}, p.148.
\end{itemize}
follows: “For since the time of generosity (of God) sent his only begotten in the flesh on earth as Mediator, that man born after Scripture, the woman, God again gave the Holy Father and the Spirit of Christ has received the first fruits of nature renewed. Therefore John testified, saying: «I Jesus, when he was baptized, went up directly from the water: and behold, the heavens were opened to him. He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming on him» (Matthew 3:16)”.

So Cyril combat the Arian interpretation of Jesus' baptism, “saw the participation of the Holy Spirit received extrinsic accidental”.

“After Nestorian crisis, examining the words and deeds of Christ, Cyril carefully distinguishes three types of expressions:
- Those which relate to the divine attributes;
- Those describing human attributes;
- Those while talking about humanity and deity of Jesus.

It is easy to see that the scriptural and patristic form a single unit Cyrilian work. There is one basic reality as argumentative, sheep oι pate, rej kai h Grafh, thinking only two sources of supernatural revelation.

Between biblical themes that occur frequently in the work of St. Cyril include comparison between Christ and Adam and Pauline themes: man's redemption and restoration to the Christ and the Church (Col. 1:14, I Cor. 1:30, Eph. 1: 7.14; Heb. 9:12). So that” “redemption is recapitulation and recapitulation means restoration to original state” of man. “For Cyril, continuity contemplating the divine plan of salvation, the Incarnation of the Son is the great means chosen by God to restore humanity the gift of the Holy Spirit”.

Determination Cyrillian theological thinking has put his mark on exegetical language. Cyril's language is replete with words like “make”, “create”, “made alive”, “form” words that describe creation. When speaking about the work of the Saviour says, “restore”, “recreate”, “transform”.

Another aspect of exegesis Cyrillian is the ratio of Christianity
with Judaism. Therefore might think that using “Hebrew Christian dualism or Christianity - Mosaic Law”. However, we do not consider data exceeded the boundaries of a biblical historian facts predefined Semitic attitude. If the Jews are condemned for killing the prophets, crucified Lord and persecuting Christians, then repentance is stated as an alternative for the salvation of those who have sinned.

Kerygmatic sermons and letters of “St Paul incorporated many aspects of secular rhetoric when he presented his religious arguments to his nascent Christian communities”. 61

Although the writings of St. Cyril prove expertise in rhetoric, “he probably absorbed something of the methods of polemical argumentation simply by frequently reading the letters of Paul”. 62

St. Cyril is not the first nor the only one who makes interrelated exegesis and theology. “For Cyril lived and wrote in an age which saw theology exegetically and exegesis theologically. St. Cyril's merit is that imposed by his Christology approved Ecumenical Councils of Ephesus from the reading of Sacred Scripture in general and the New Testament in particular. 64

“We see how Cyril of Alexandria did evolve notions of literal and spiritual sense: from the objectification of these notions, he discovers and presents a summary Vivant Supreme topic and unique Christ in two dimensions theandric of His existence”. 65

Conclusions

St. Cyril of Alexandria was not only a great theologian, but also a great interpreter of Scripture books. In fact he made a profound theological exegesis exegetical and theological. Not intended to be original, as were heretics, but sought to summarize the experience of the Church. What was thought not to have written to him, or what they wrote some Church Fathers wrote Cyril confession to strengthen the true faith. This explains the inconsistency to the allegorical method so dear Cyril Alexandrians before. In the context of the assertion of so many heresies, how so, there was enough allegory but had said the word, with all countries, even in the Old Testament. Many Old Testament types, so ignored the letter and shadow guardians of the law reveals the Light of Christ even more than people living in the hope of the coming Messiah.

60 IBIDEM, p.152.
61 SUSAN WESSEL, op.cit., p. 193.
62 IBIDEM, p. 193.
63 ROBERT L. WILKEN, art. cit., p.155.
64 BERTRAND DE MARGERIE, art. cit., p. 400.
65 IBIDEM, p. 402.
More accurate are comments New Testament books. Christ is thus described in terms of a spiritual man, a man who lives the mystery of Christ in his own life, as he had done great Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: "it is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).