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HABILITATION THESIS ABSTRACT

This habilitation thesis systematically highlights the scientific contributions of the author, after obtaining doctorate in theology. In the section on **scientific, professional and academic achievements on disciplinary and interdisciplinary thematic directions**, I have identified and highlighted three areas of theological research undertaken and developed over the years. These directions developed in the area of theological research are: 1. Orthodox cosmology, anthropology and gnoseology based on the thinking of Eastern Fathers and contemporary theologians; 2). Confession of the Church dogma in the context of the culture and challenges of today's world; 3) History of Orthodox Dogmatic Theology in Romania. In the argued presentation by my own contributions to these directions, I did not omit the overall Romanian Orthodox theology research and the significant contributions of Romanian scholars, and theologians from outside our country. **Regarding the first research direction** I mention the fact that most of the times the themes of *cosmology, anthropology and theological gnoseology* were approached from a unified, interdependent, ecclesial and Christological perspective with soteriological implications. Gradually in my approaches the orthodox cosmology issue received a dogmatic and liturgical dimension too. I was concerned how the cosmos is present within the experimentally framing of the Orthodox Church cult and liturgical texts. Without always aiming it systematically the Eastern Fathers developed a coherent cosmology based on Revelation that lies in close relation to soteriology. Cosmos has a Christological and eschatological destiny and in this sense they also approached and deepened cosmology in relation to soteriology, Jesus Christ being the beginning, middle and end of creation. Cosmos acquires transparency and transfiguration through the holy and deified man standing in a loving relationship of asceticism and mysticism with Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all creation. The renewal of creation has as paradigm the raised and transfigured body of Jesus Christ. The realism of cosmos and human transfiguration has as paradigm the realism of humanity transfiguration in Jesus Christ. Thus Jesus Christ is the Logos Creator and Redeemer of creation, an idea that pervades the entire Eastern patristic theology. The Church Fathers spoke not only about the Logos Creator and Saviour, but also

about the special relationship between Trinity and cosmos and the fundamental God-man-cosmos relationship that has soteriological implications.

At the same time I approached anthropology themes in interdependence with the cosmological issues. I investigated the problem of man in terms gnoseology and theology-science dialogue, my anthropological approaches having not only a dogmatic character but also an apologetic one. I came to the conclusion that man is a paradoxical being, arguing this concept theologically and existentially. I also indicated the limits of modern anthropologies which reduce man just to a function like reason, emotion, will, biological or communication. The paradox of the person requires affirmation of harmonization, a balance to be kept and revealed between rational knowledge and knowledge of the mystery, between reason and mystic. This cancels one of these aspects that taken together give us the image of a paradox. Thus we risk falling into unilateralism and not have a genuine vision of the human being. During time these fundamental aspects of dogmatic theology received an interdisciplinary touch with a special opening to the dialogue between theology, culture and science. Based on the conclusions of my PhD thesis, in the same dogmatic-apologetic registry afterwards I analyzed the relationship between revelation and culture. Affirming the historical-eschatological sense of an authentic culture, the Orthodox theology advocates a balanced gnoseology. The relationship between apophatic and cataphatic should not be one of exclusion or cancellation, but complementary and mutual assumption. Actually through this synthesis of cataphatic and apophatic the old dilemma and separation between reason and experience and between reason and mystic is dissolved. The prospect of a vision in which cataphatic and apophatic are seen together lead to an antinomian reality where rationality and mystery coexist. Based on these considerations, between theology and science there is no real conflict, only an apparent one, which is based on historical and methodological reasons, ultimately related to subjective positions and the problem of exceeding the competences. Between reason and faith, reason and mysticism there is no opposition, but interdependency. Reason and faith coexist in the knowledge and are complementary.

Regarding the second research direction I completed several studies, as well as four works in which I critically and creatively analyzed the current situation of the world. I stated the Orthodox Church ethos in a secular and globalized world indicating possible solutions to overcome the spiritual crisis of contemporary man. I launched in the Romanian Orthodox theology two concepts: *homo adorans* and *homo economicus*. I considered these concepts in the light of the Church experience and theology and also studied their existential, social, ecclesiological and soteriological implications. I identified the ambivalent character of the current media and culture and I concluded my research by affirming the model of Christ and the Saints for assuming any historical era. I analyzed how the meaning of creation as creation - man and cosmos - restored in Christ was and is mystified under the influence of modernity and post-modernity ideologies. This happens within the liberalism and neo-liberalism, Marxism and communism, globalization and nihilism with its various accents that culminates in nihilism of destruction experienced by mankind in the twentieth century and in the new-age nihilism specific for today. Thus ignoring the spiritual dimension of the world and of man as a dweller in the world is common for many ideologies of modern and post-modern world. These ideologies led not only to matter dispossession of its spiritual purpose, but also to human depersonalization.

Regarding the third line of research I revealed the unique and original character of my contributions, both in structure and in the complexity and massiveness of the content. My contributions to the history of Orthodox dogmatic intended to be an accurate retrospective of the theological and dogmatic studies of the Romanian Orthodox theology in the second half of the twentieth century. They are a positive reflection of the various issues addressed and emphasized by the Romanian dogmatist scholars. I also highlighted some tasks that dogmatist theologians fulfilled in their current theological approach in full communion with what was done in Orthodox Dogmatic Theology until today. I stressed the overcoming of some less positive aspects that we can identify in various theological studies in the last two centuries. In the approach and interpretation of various aspects of Orthodox dogmatic, I tried to overcome both historicism and "theological archeology" and to compass the contributions of each Romanian dogmatist in their theological core. Thus I integrated them in the context of confessional theology and cultural movement of the era. Thus, I tried to introduce various implications of orthodox dogma in philosophical, social, national, missionary and apologetic thought. I emphasized various controversies related to it and the dogmatic argumentation of some theologians engaged in various apologetic arguments of the interwar period. I wanted to faithfully render the guidelines of Dogmatic Theology treaties that were translated and of Romanian dogmatists with their specific contributions; although we can speak of an Orthodox dogmatic renewal in the Romanian theology only starting with Nichifor Crainic and Father Dumitru Stăniloae's contributions. At the same time, I noticed how some Romanian dogmatist understood to criticize various aspects of medieval scholasticism, remaining prisoners the way of thinking and approaching of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century dogmatics.

In the section concerning **evolution and development plans of my professional, scientific and academic career (research / teaching directions)**, I highlighted the contributions and teaching methods I used and the development plans of my own professional, teaching and scientific career. In the scientific part I highlighted my presence in research projects and the possibility of accessing interdisciplinary projects for theology. Also, I expressed my desire to continue to participate at the scientific events organized by the Romanian Patriarchate, by the Orthodox Theology faculties in Romania, by other prestigious theological institutions from abroad, and by the International Association of Orthodox Dogmatists and at the national meetings of Dogmatic Theology. I stressed the desire to continue organizing national and international conferences on theological themes, editing volumes of studies.

This paper is based on a good bibliographic own argumentation that I systematically illustrated on the three research directions mentioned. In this work I inserted the reception and visibility of my own contributions in the magazines, authors and pages that contain references to my theological work and thinking. I also illustrated with some texts how the theological work developed by me in these years was received and welcomed by the Romanian scholars. The theological contributions that I edited in the years after obtaining the degree of doctor in theology represents a solid foundation to build a united and deep vision in future on the presence of the Trinity in the Church, the world and human life.