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**THREE PORTRAITS IN JESUS' DEATH „OUVERTURE” IN THE
LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW AND
APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE. TRUTH OR MYTH ?**

PhD Thesis

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KEY WORDS

Matthew, Passion, the myrr bearing woman from Bethany, Pilate, Procla, dream, hand washing, apocryphal writings

PRELIMINARY

This work is structured on three chapters, framed by Preliminary and Bibliography. To the chapters I and III is added one short Excursus, the first dealing with the role of the women at Jesus' burial, and the last one having the purpose of bringing some clarifications on the terminology to be used to indicate Pilate.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight three main ideas:

1. The woman who made the anointing at Bethany, is the only one that fully deserves the name "myrr bearing", for she alone brought perfumed oil and operate an anointing of Jesus. Regarding the women returned to the tomb the morning of the Resurrection, they too have the fullness of a name, but this name is that of "confessional" or "full Apostles of the Resurrection". This is the perspective of the Saint Matthew.

2. The expression "Pilate's wife" must be filled with personal content and passed on second place, cause Procla deserve to say something more about her, beside Pilate's wife, she was a Roman noble, a confessor and holy woman. Those coordinates should be enough to start building the biography of an extraordinary woman.

3. The episodes from Mt. 27.19 and 27.24 are episodes in dialogue. Pilate's gesture from Mt. 24:27 is the conclusion of Procla's request from 27.19.

What's the reason that justifies the choice of the three episodes mentioned above, to be presented in the same work? All three of them are special moments in Passion's narrative, bringing unexpected messages in what regards the content and the form. . All three are in the episode Passion counterpoint, unexpected appearance of message and form of communication of this message. They are preparing, predicting and proclaiming death Savior's.

As for their bibliographic past, all three are present in the Gospel of Matthew exegesis from the earlier interpretations, excepting for Procla that is rarely mentioned, if not absent at all.

I started my work thinking first of all at Procla, Pilate's wife. And my first question was: how we can remove this extraordinary woman from her husband's shadow?

She exists only in relation of subordination with the Roman prefect, or she could be valued from the perspective of his own role in the "note" episode where she had the main role?

Advancing whit the research on the subject was extremely difficult, because Procla is subject of a very few studies. In fact she is more subject of some fugitives mentions in the exegesis and articles that examines the bigger picture of Matthew's Passion account. Most of the approaches are limited at remembering the information provided by Origen¹ and the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus, the two main reference points in dealing whit this subject.

In Romanian theology, the most important article dealing among others on Procla's character, is signed by G.T.Marcu: „Trei portrete neotestamentare: Iuda Iscarioteanul, Pilat din Pont și Claudia Procla”², which incorporates the most widely accepted ideas in the exegesis of the fragment in Mt. 27,19, namely that the Procla's dream is an supernatural intervention not an ordinary dream, and Procla is a defense witness in Savior's trial. The author uses to designate Pilate's wife the name "Claudia Procla", which is a combination between the name given primary apocryphal and the medieval. Procla's intervention as being a positive and defensive one, is widely accepted in different traditions and eras, from St. John Chrysostom³ to Ulrich Luz.⁴

Among the most consistent efforts in terms of analyzing Procla's character and the "note" episode, we must mention one of the very rare articles dedicated to this subject, which have an interdisciplinary approach, analyzing the subject in terms of artistic representations of the episode in Mt. 27,19. The article is signed by Colum Hourihane⁵ and her approach consists in collecting information from the visual representations of the dream an of her intervention near Pilat, such those are presented in medieval art. In the paintings or miniatures dealing whit Procla's dream episode, we can read the exegesis of the episode accepted in that precisely time.

¹ Origen , *Omilia XXXV* Origen on Matthew's Gospel.

² G. T. **Marcu**, „Trei portrete neotestamentare: Iuda Iscarioteanul, Pilat din Pont și Claudia Procla”, în *Mitropolia Ardealului*, 3-4/ 1958, (p. 190-201).

³ **Sfântul Ioan Gură de Aur**, *Scrieri, Partea a III-a, Omilii la Matei, Omilia LXXX*, PSB 23, I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1994.

⁴ Ulrich **Luz** în *Matthew 21-28. A commentary on Matthew 21-28*, trad. eng. de James E. Crouch, Fortress Press Minneapolis, 2005.

⁵ Colum, **Hourihane**, „She who is not named: Pilates's wife in Medieval art”, in vol. *Between Judaism and Christianity. Art historical essays in honor of Elisheva (Elisabeth) Revel-Neher*, edited by Katrin Kogman-Apple and Mati Meyer, Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2009, (p. 215-243).

Until the discovery of new information about Procla, information that must be recorded somewhere in manuscripts still unexplored, or some new images that it must have been existing before the iconoclastic period, since Procla was from the first centuries recognized as a saint. I'm sure that she had an iconography dedicated to her. But until those discoveries, therefore, I believe that the safest way to complete this portrait of the Roman patrician, is to visualize her in the context of the rulers and costumes specific to the culture and civilization she belonged to.

Closely related to the note episode, I found another Matthew's specific episode, namely the washing of the hands by Pilate, presented in Mt. 27,24. My attempt is to provide arguments and make visible the similarities between Mt. 27, 19 and 27,24. Beyond the usually used attribute of being Matthew's particularities, those two episodes have a connection request-answer type, because from Pilate's point of view he does exactly what his wife asked, namely he has nothing to do with that Right man. The idea can be found, without being developed at J. Nolland, who says in Mt. 27,24 that Pilate responds to his wife's demand "in His own way".⁶ Pilate is aware of Jesus's innocence; the surprise element is the unexpected intervention on behalf of his wife which leads him to also an unexpected gesture: the attempt of purification by washing hands.

For Mt. 27,24 episode, we have a very large literature and the discourse is oscillating form offering the profile of a prefect eager to exonerate himself with any costs, to the image of the evangelist trying by introducing Pilate's washing hand episode, to move all the blame for Jesus' death from the Roman authority exclusively on the Jews.

⁶ John **Nolland** *The Gospel of Matthew. A commentary on the Greek text*, WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Michigan, 2005, p.128.

CHAPTER 1 NON VERBAL MESSAGES IN THE PASSION NARRATIVE IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW: THE ANOINTING OF BETHANY (MT. 26, 6-16)

The first chapter of this work deals with the episode of the anointing at Bethany, from the point of view of the anonymous woman operating the anointing, with high price oil as noted by the eyewitnesses, but mentioning the reverberations of her act among those present at that dinner in the first instance, and then, widening the perspective towards the missionary future of the Church. Who is she and like in Procla's case, what was her first intention?

To answer those questions, I viewed the anointing woman from Bethany, as follows:

1. in antithetical relationship with the Apostles who murmured, or in the case of Judas, who quit the light for the night of betrayal
2. in complementary relationship with the women coming to grave in Resurrection morning, cause the unnamed from Bethany had already done what Magdalene and the other Mary intended to do by returning Jesus' burial place.

Before making the exegesis of the episode Mt.26,6-16, I shortly insisted on the expression used by M. Didier⁷ to define the anointing episode from Bethany: "Passion Overture" (1.2.1 **The „Overture” of the Passion episode**). And since the scene of a woman anointing the Saviour is narrated by all the evangelists, it required a comparative view (1.2.2 The story of the anointing in Bethany: brief comparative view).

The complete picture of the woman from Bethany we have studying also the reactions that occurred in response to her gesture (1.3.2 **Protesters: identity and target their protest**). The fact that his gesture was considered in different ways, it is clear from the expressions used to describe it, namely disciples called the gesture "waste ", while the same gesture, is indicated the Savior as "a beautiful thing." This offensive or defensive positioning regarding women's gesture is detailed in 1.3.3 **„This waste” and "the beautiful deed"**.

The myrr bearing woman from Bethany, can be viewed also in an allegorical key, she seems to offer a personal and concrete interpretation of wise virgins image, having the oil prepared on them for the arrival of the bridegroom. The futures of the "wise

⁷ M. Didier, *L'Évangile selon Matthieu. Rédaction e théologie*, Éditions J. Duculot, S.A., Gembloux, Belgique, 1972.

virgin" character, evoked by the Savior shortly before arriving at Bethany (Mt 25.1 to 13), character waking found the bridegroom came at midnight, can be found also in the porter of this particular woman.

Regarding woman's identity that Matthew prefers to let as anonymous, this topic is subject of the chapter **1.4 The unnamed one: the memorial of an anonymous women**. Her identity is determined by the way that are classified the anointing episode related by the Evangelists (Mt. 26.6; Mk. 14.3 to 11; Jn. 12: 1-8; Lk. 7 , 36-50). The various opinions of the exegesis that I have consulted, are presented in **1.4.1 Identification of women at the Church Fathers** and **1.4.2 Identification of the woman in recent exegesis**.

My opinion is that obviously Matthew, Mark and John, presents the same episode. While the lack from Luke Savior's central reply from his brief speech in this context , namely explaining woman's gesture in the perspective of His forthcoming burial, is one that indicate that the anointing related by Luke is clearly a different episode from that offered by Matthew, Mark and John. The myrr bearing role of the woman is the one that allows us to see the episode recounted by Matthew, Mark and John, as being the same anointing.

Matthew offer exclusivity to the interpretation of the anointing given by Christ himself, leaving no clue to a possible personal motivation of women, such as it is done by Luke. Doing so, Matthew highlight two important facts:

1. the most important in the Bethany episode, is woman's gesture and not its identity. Or more precisely, it does not matter who she was until that moment, but what it has become: the myrr bearing woman from Bethany.

2. Christ's body is already anointed in Bethany, so Matthew "uses" the women at the tomb during Jesus' burial to register through their eyes, all the details of a future confession: the grave site, laying the body in it, the stone that seal the tomb. Their quality of credible witnesses of the Resurrection, will be based on the fact that they have witnessed also the death and burial of the Savior.

The anointing at Bethany episode can be approached from multiple perspectives: the funeral aspect of the anointing, the question on woman's identity, the strikes of the Apostles, Judas' decision to betray at the end of this episode. I chose to corroborate the first two perspectives; obtaining the premises to reconsider the name and role of the myrr bearing women from Bethany.

Excursus: Burial of the Saviour: characters and roles

Adding this excursus body work was made for a more detailed presentation of the issue of renaming the women witnesses at Jesus' burial, and Resurrection, and for indicating the necessity of reconsideration the name and importance of those women acting in the Passion drama.

The primary role of female characters such as presented in Matthew 27.61, 28.1 is to be witnesses of the Resurrection and then to be the first Apostles of the Resurrection. Their testimony will bear joy. Consequently, "The myrr bearing women must wear a different name" as already enunciate before by father Stelian Tofană.⁸

A second idea that I tried to point out in this Excursus, is that of introducing Procla among the Savior's noble friends who that have recover and burying His body. Through her testimony, Procla joined the group of Jesus' aristocratic friends, along with Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. They are the unsuspected friends that Savior had reserved for the time of his death.

⁸ Stelian **Tofană**, „Femeile mironosițe trebuie să poarte alt nume - o perspectivă a evanghelistilor” *Renașterea*, 4/2008, p. 5-6.

CHAPTER 2 MATTHEW'S „ADDITIONS”: THE EPISODE OF PILATE'S WIFE INTERVENTION (MT. 27,19)

The character Procla, although largely ignored, I found it to be extremely offering, not only in terms of the role she played during Jesus' process, but also for the fact that, she is an representative image of the first generation of Christians others than those from Jewish culture. Her brief Jewish preamble Jewish of her conversion to Christianity, the memories of that thrilling Easter lived in Jerusalem, the fact that certainly returned at home she confessed what she was witness at in Jerusalem, starting converting others while strengthening his own conversion, all off this could be elements of a portrait of Christ's confessor. This new identity, namely the Roman noble converted to Christianity, it is widely attributed to her by the first centuries Apocrypha.

Delivering Procla of her husband and building the biography of this secondary character in appearance, that Matthew has destined to go down in history as "Pilate's wife", isolated of her identity first, it is largely an approach which is based more on logical assumptions arising from conventions and customs of Procla's culture and civilization, as well as on other information provided by the apocryphas, than a series of verifiable data. For example, analysing the historical context, we can obtain datas on her situation: social position of her family, the education she received, we can approximate the age at which she married and the duties she had as the wife of a prefect.

Precious information about Procla's life after she married Pilate and moved to the province, can be offer by the excavations made on the territory of former Caesarea Maritima, and that gives us concrete images about Procla's homes, configuration of the city in its time, or matters related to everyday life. The portrait that we get passing her through the filter of culture and civilization must be largely correct. This approach was not materialized in any study that I have consulted so far, and I think that this approach is extremely offering.

The most difficult issues in treating the "note" episode are: we have only one account of the episode, using of the expression "this right man" by the wife of a Roman prefect and Pilate's wife's identity.

Regarding the uniqueness of the episode, the problem arising from this is the authorship and authenticity of the episode. This is the most discussed issue of the "note" episode. The opinions on this issue are presented in the section **2.2 The „note” episode -**

authenticity and authorship of the story from Mt. 27:19. I must remind here Ulrich Luz 's point of view, an author often quoted in this paper, which states that the episode 27.19, is the result of narrative fiction to which the Evangelist occasionally use. It is necessarily to highlight here which is the meaning that the author give to the "fiction", a term that should not be understood as a creation detached from Christ's history, is not a fable. The result of Matthew's fictionality is linked to the real history context, subordinated to the macrotext built around the person of Christ. I found this opinion to be the meeting point those of those considering the episode of Mt. 27:19 to be as pure invention, subsequently inserted in the Gospel and those who attributed it to Matthew without indicating precisely the nature of Matthew's paternity.

The opinion on which my approach is built is that the 27,19 episode belong to St. Matthew, and by that I do not understand that it was invented by Matthew, but it was picked up by him from an oral tradition to which he had access, or that only he considered relevant for his speech.

In supporting the idea of the authenticity of the episode, I found to be some historical arguments independent of the biblical narrative, which can be considered as solids to see the "note" episode as credible and very possible one:

1. Procla's presence in the province with Pilate is possible thanks to the annulment of Lex Oppia made by Tiberius in 21. Till then, Lex Oppia was prohibiting Roman governors wives to go along side theirs husband in provinces for which they were appointed.

2. Since she was in the province, Procla will have had many occasions to hear about Jesus. On the one hand He's extraordinary words and especially his deeds, were conquering territory after territory: Galileeia, Syria, Decapolis, Jerusalem (Mt. 3 23.25), on the other hand, it is likely to have received information about Jesus through the contacts she must have with his servants or local nobility. From here we come inevitably to:

3. The reason for Procla's presence in Jerusalem, in an extremely tense and stressful period for her husband, cannot be other than one of a personal nature. We identified him as being her interest to the religious life of the Jews, hypothesis developed in the section **4.4.2 Pilate's wife and the Judaism.**

4. His history as public functionary, position hold by Matthew, as former tax collector, I think it was helpful for him to come into possession of information that we find only in his work, like the story of Procla's dream, information only available to someone with connections inside prefect' entourage, for surely that for a while, just Procla, the servant and Pilate knew this episode, so the information was not accessible to all. Perhaps Pilate was even concerned about hiding this intervention for it was neither in his favor, nor in terms of his wife interference in the affairs official nor in that of her possible sympathies to the Crucified.

As for the possibility that the expression "this upright man" to be used by a Roman noble woman, for it have obvious echoes the Old Testament and comes to point out the wrongful death to which the Savior was convicted, this is subject of the section **2.3.2 „Pilate's wife” and „that upright man”**, but also indirectly presented in subsection **2.3.3 The content and origin of the dream**, where the question arises as of Procla being just a massager of the dream an express exactly somebody else words or this formulation belongs to her?

Regarding the identity of Pilate's wife, I start by indicating that, like in the case of unnamed women in Bethany, Matthew's choice for the anonymity, do not implies that he doesn't appreciate certain characters just because they are being women characters, but what the Evangelist is trying to do by his to indicate that those woman's interventions should remain in the memory of the reader, for this is far more important than their names. In other words, the Evangelist presents the history of a gesture and not of a person. Both the woman of Bethany and Procla, remain memorable by their gesture, and this unique gesture is one which gives them a permanent new identity, that of being Christ's confessors. The two anonymous women are inextricably linked through their fellowship at the same time of Jesus' life, namely His death, the first one by foretelling it and preparing it, and the second one by confessing it as an unjust death. This is the main link which I think exists between the two women and that make me conclude that "From the iconography perspective, maybe we should visualized both of them together, because the episodes whose protagonists they are, is surprising the attribute of Savior's unjust death." (P. 90)

As for Procla's possible biographical data, I mention them in **2.4 Claudia Procla: possible biographical data**, and it is more "Claudia's" biography than "Procla's", mening that the hypothesis of its origin noble, belongs to medieval Apocrypha

that adds the name "Claudia" to the name "Procla" already existing in early Apocrypha. We analyzed two of the hypotheses: **2.4.1.1 Julia's Augusta illegitimate daughter** and **2.4.1.2 A person from emperor's entourage**. Both of them offered me a common starting point on Procla's origin: she was a noble Roman, from a wealthy family, if not the imperial one, since it was married with a governor. If accurate data are missing, the circumstantial ones are quite generous and deserve to be collected in the future in a larger work.

The data from offered by the history books, by the culture and civilization gives us indirect evidence too obtain Procla's fragmentary portrait from what it was generally valid in her time. We do not know, therefore, exactly how *she was*, but we might know how *she must have been* for a woman of her condition.

The chapter dedicated to Procla ends by analyzing in antinomy the portrait of Procla's contemporary noble woman, namely Herodias **2.5.3 Procla the „new Herodias**. The analogy is built from the perspective of two major gestures: Herodias' strategy in the episode of John the Baptist death (Mt. 14.1 to 11) and Procla's acting as defender of Christ (Mt. 27:19). Neither of them are acting directly in the events, but through to an intermediary, as Carol Meyers⁹ point. Both Herodias and Procla make their appearance in the biblical narrative in moments of maximum tension in St. John the Baptist's life or in Jesus' life and both get an answer, Herodias by beheading of Saint John and Procla by Pilate's washing of the hands.

As for Procla's presence in the Apocrypha, these are writings that were always concentrated in the first place on Pilate, therefore they were presented with more detail in the chapter dedicated to him. Procla's destiny such it was indicated by the Apocrypha writings of the first centuries, is always that of a Christian and even martyr. That became confessor, I think we can accept as truth. Being a martyr was and remains for now a myth

⁹ Carol Meyers, *Women in the Scripture*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2001, p. 420

CHAPTER 2 PONTIUS PILATE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MATTHEW'S ACCOUNTS (MT. 27, 19,24)

What justifies a chapter dedicated to the Roman prefect, after that we have previously made reference to the episode of the anointing at Bethany and at the Procla's intervention? Here are just two possible answers:

1. The main argument would be that my perspective on the episode from Mt. 27.24 is to see it as a consequence of the imperative request from Mt. 27.19.
2. Those three episodes are connected with the Savior's death: the first episode announce it and one and preparing it, while second is declaring it as an unjust death and the in third episode the death sentence is give. A quite obviously link, we may say.

The idea of the dialogue between Mt. 27:19 and one in Mt. 27.24 has been mentioned, but never widely treated as a separate subject. From this perspective, v. 19 was named an introduction of v. 24 (David Hill)¹⁰, or one of the premises of the climax Saviour' process (Ulrich Luz)¹¹.

To understand to what extent is viable the interpretation of the washing of hands by Pilate in front of the crowd (Mt. 27.24), can be seen as a following of the imperative warning based on a dream, I found it appropriate to draw the portrait of Roman prefect. And there are two major lines that outline this portrait: the historical perspective based on data provided by Josephus and Philo (**3.1.1 Pontius Pilate in the records of historians**) perspective that can be resumed at three qualities: defiant, cruel and unjust. A second direction is indicated by the Evangelists Mark, Luke and John (**3.1.2 Pontius Pilate in the Gospels according to Mark, Luke and John**). Pilate such as he is presented in the Gospels, does not show the inflexibility, stubbornness, cruelty and venality, denounced by Philo. Perhaps only the injustice of the prefect who, by pleasing the Jews, choose to be judged unfair the innocent man in front of him.

Pilate's portrait from the perspective of the Gospel of Matthew is a **3.3 Portrait of a „clean hands” prefect**. The Evangelist individualized it by adding two specific episodes in the story process, namely Mt. 27:19 and Mt. 27.24, and 27.25 (**3.2 Pilate's portrait in the light of the Gospel according to Matthew**). If all Evangelists agree on a

¹⁰ David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Oliphants, London, 1972, p. 350.

¹¹ Ulrich Luz, *Studies...*, p. 58.

favorable attitude of the prefect toward Jesus during the trial, Matthew adds a new element that could influence this attitude, the involvement of his wife, which informs him in an unexpected way, that like him, she also considers Jesus to be an unrighteous man.

Procla, Pilate and the crowd as a common character, all three of them playing a role in the Passion drama, have a common point that Daniel J. Harrington¹² has indicated to be the one of the choice. Although I do not agree with Harrington's statement that Matthew introduced the theme of the choice by the two major additions made in 27.19 and 27.24, just to assign all the blame for Saviour's death exclusively on Jewish leaders and the crowd, I've used this theme to pass through this filter Pilate's and Procla's actions. Procla chose "Calpurnia's way", by choosing to consider the dream and to identify a solution to act accordingly, Pilate chooses to listen to his wife warning detaching himself from the fate of that upright man by washing his hands, after that previously he has made another choice between the two arrested and, finally, the crowd will make his three choices: the choice of Barabbas at the expense of Jesus, choosing the fate of Jesus and choosing to take over the responsibility for killing an innocent.

As it was the case in the "note" episode here too, the problem of the authenticity remains an intensely debated issue (**3.3.1 The reality of the episode from Mt. 27,24**), for it's difficult to accept the idea of a Roman prefect making a Jewish specific gesture. An original point of view about the purpose pursued by Matthew by introducing this episode, belongs to Ulrich Luz, which presents Pilate in the role of a communicating vessel by doing the hand washing gesture. From his point of view, Matthew rearranges things in their natural place: the guilt which the Jews throw on Judah when he was returning the silver coins to them, is passed on to Jewish witnesses to this gesture, which seem to take with enthusiasm what their leaders refused: namely blame for His blood.

The purpose of this last chapter was to prove that we can interpret the episode of Mt. 27, 24 as a result of the intervention of Mt. 27, 19. Although in the first instance we would be tempted to say that Procla's message has no impact on the prefect since it condemns Jesus to death, as concluded for example by L. Skinner¹³ I think that the washing of the hands by Pilate is an obvious effect of his wife's intervention, for he is using Procla's vocabulary in talking about Jesus. The new question arising here, therefore, is not whether the request of 27:19 had or not an answer, because I'm sure it had it in 27.24,

¹² Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The Order of St. Benedict Inc., Collegeville, Minnesota, 1991, p. 390-391.

¹³ L. Skinner, *The trial narratives. Conflict, power and identity in the New Testament*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 2000, p.62.

but if Procla's answer is the one she wanted? Possible answers are provided in subsection 2.5.2 Procla and her husband, where the title should be seen as a reverse of the so much used expression of "Pilate's wife."

Arguments supporting the hypothesis mentioned above, they have been provided by the biblical text, namely the dialogue currently in Mt. 27, 11 (**3.3.2.1 „Are you the King of the Jews?...You say so.”**), by Mt. 27, 18 (**3.3.2.2 „For he saw that for envy they had given him up”**) and Mt. 27, 19 (**3.3.2.3 „...his wife sent to him, saying...”**).

Pilate's gesture by washing his hands, must be viewed from two different perspectives: the Matthew's perspective and the Pilate's, both presented in section 3.4 The Purpose of the episode from Mt. 27.24.

As for Pilate's presence in apocrypha literature, he always leaves the impression of being a character dominated by Jewish leaders and later, after the trial, tortured by the memory of his guilty conscience. If the historical writings mention Pilate since in 36-37 en route to Rome, the Apocrypha literature have continued writing his biography, making him sometimes a martyr, sometime a demonized, always inevitably marked by the Savior's trial. Pilate's death, as martyr or not, is always presented as being a violent one.

The apocrypha that I'm referring to, are put into three categories: the Apocriphal Gospels (**3.5.1 The presence of Pilate in the Gospels apocryphal**) Pilate's correspondence (**3.5.2 Correspondence Pilate**) and writings on Pilate's death (**3.5.3 Writings on Pilate's death**). They are interesting to study in two ways: 1. attest the circulation in primary communities of episodes on which authenticity recent exegesis is questioning or contesting (for instance, the episode Pilate washing his hands, related in the Gospel of Peter, dating from 150 approx.); 2. Their content reflects how the characters are received in certain periods by certain communities. For example, Procla is presented in first centuries Apocrypha, from the perspective of her conversion to Christianity, often praying or having revealing meetings with the risen Saviour (The correspondence between Herod and Pilate, VI-VII)/ Later, the medieval Apocrypha emphasis moved from her identity as Christian, to that of Roman noble.

Conclusions

What has proposed this approach?

1. Outline the portrait of a real person, but ignored by the most of exegesis, namely Procla, Pilate's wife.
2. To highlight the unique role of the myrr bearing woman in Bethany and to point out that the reason for such strong characters as well the unnamed woman from Bethany or Pilate's wife, remain anonymous Matthew's gospel, is for he create a new identity, defined by their extraordinary gesture when meting Jesus.
3. To draw a red line between the note episode and that of Pilate washing his hands, the two episodes being seen as communicating episodes.

What are the results at the end of this process?

1. Continuing Father Tofană idea, namely that the "myrr-bearing women should wear a different name", I highlighted that, in terms of the Matthew's gospel, only the woman onointig Jesus' body in Bethany, memorable by meaning and beauty her gesture, must recive the "myrr bearing name". She remaine inextricably linked to the mission of the Church from that point on.
2. I try to built the Procla's character from clues left behind by Matthew, data from the apocryphal and indirect historical information. The image is thay of a devoted wife, since we find her alongside Pilate in a hostile province, concerned with the religious life of the people among whom she lived and permanently marked by the One whom, is revealing to be the up right man. From this starting point, namely the trial of Jesus, her destiny will be quickly consumed until her death, if not martyrdom, secure in Christ.
3. As for Pilate Pilate, given the oscillation in choosing the name to be appointed, I found to be necessary some remarks, in the light of archaeological evidence. The coclusion is that the official title to be use in Pilate case, is that of praefectus. Regarding the episode of Pilate's washing hands, my attempt was to identify and highlight asclear as possible to me, the connectionrequest-response type between this episode and Procla's intervention. I will not say the only causal link, because Procla, although a major factor in deciding the washing of the hands, was not the only one.

4. In which direction is to be continued? The subject to be most interesting in my opinion, is that of Procla, Pilate's wife. Beyond the fascinating aspects of how their lives go one after the trial, Procla remains a very offering subject in terms of its profile and the way she developed from Roman patrician, to witness in Jesus' trial and in the end becoming a saint, as the Orthodox Church honors her. Proving the authenticity of the "note" episode, I tried to create the basis for shaping Procla's profile. For this process it was essential a transdisciplinary approach, the information being provided by history writings and the archeology. Of, course, the main importance stay in the theological dimension of her confession. Procla's as individual character is an open subject, was partially documented in this work and must be subject to a subsequent development in more detailed.