

**"BABEȘ-BOLYAI" UNIVERSITY CLUJ-NAPOCA  
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**THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY – A THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY OF  
THE RITUAL, HYMNOGRAPHY AND ANALYSIS OF THE ROMANIAN  
MUSICAL CHURCH VARIANTS OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES**

**PhD THESIS**

**Abstract**

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Cluj-Napoca

2019

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	4
<b>CHAPTER I.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>THE ORIGIN AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY</b> .....	<b>16</b>
1.1 REFERENCES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT FOR THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY.....	16
1.2 THE APPEARANCE OF THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY AND ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN EAST AND WEST .....	26
1.2.1 The names of the feast and their meanings: lexical-semantic approach.....	26
1.2.2 The evolution of the feast of Theophany in the Christian tradition.....	32
<b>CHAPTER II.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>SACRAMENTAL MYSTIQUE AND LITURGICAL MYSTAGOGY WITHIN THE</b> <b>STRUCTURE OF THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY .....</b>	<b>39</b>
2.1. ANALISYS OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE BYZANTINE RITUAL OF THEOPHANY .....	39
2.2. SATURDAY AND SUNDAY BEFORE THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY OR THE MOBILE FOREFEAST...44	
2.3. THE FIXED FOREFEAST OF THEOPHANY: THE 2 <sup>ND</sup> , 3 <sup>RD</sup> , 4 <sup>TH</sup> AND 5 <sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY .....	51
2.3.1 Structure and theology of the ritual .....	51
2.3.2 The canons of the Compline.....	66
2.4. THE EVE OF THEOPHANY .....	77
2.4.1 The royal hours.....	81
2.4.2 The Liturgy of the Eve and the Vigil of Theophany .....	104
2.4.3 The great blessing of the waters .....	108
2.5. THE DAY OF THE FEAST .....	118
2.6 THE AFTERFEAST AND THE ENDING OF THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY .....	132
<b>CHAPTER III.....</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>DOXOLOGICAL THEOLOGY AND DOCTRINARIAN PROCLAMATION IN THE HYMNOGRAPHY OF</b> <b>THEOPHANY .....</b>	<b>145</b>
3.1 MAJOR THEMES OF THE HYMNOGRAPHY OF THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY .....	145
3.2 TRINITARIAN REVELATION, THEOLOGY AND TRINITARIAN ECONOMY IN THE HYMNS OF THEOPHANY.....	155
3.3 CHRISTOLOGY AND SOTERIOLOGY IN THE LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS OF THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY.....	167

3.4 THE SERVICE OF THE FORERUNNER AND THE IRRADIATIONS OF THE COSMICAL CONSECRATION OF THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY .....	183
<b>CHAPTER IV .....</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY IN THE ROMANIAN CHURCH MUSIC OF BYZANTINE TRADITION ....</b>	<b>197</b>
4.1 FORMS OF HYMNOGRAPHY AND DIFFERENTIATION OF THE HYMNOGRAPHERS AND OF THE COMPOSERS OF ROMANIAN CHURCH MUSIC FOR THE FEAST OG THEOPHANY .....	197
4.2 MUSICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE HYMNOGRAPHY OF THE FOREFEAST OF THEOPHANY .....	206
4.3 MELODICS OF THE THEOPHANY IN THE CREATION OF THE ROMANIAN COMPOSERS FROM THE 19 <sup>TH</sup> AND 20 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY: MUSICAL ANALYSIS.....	209
4.3.1 Troparion of the Theophany .....	209
4.3.2 Kontakion of the feast .....	215
4.3.3 Katavasia of the Theophany .....	220
4.3.4 The irmos of the 9 <sup>th</sup> Chant or the Axion of Theophany .....	233
<b>CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>241</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The life of the Church consists of a perpetual effort to open the paths for the coming of the Holy Spirit into the creation and into man, so that the world in its eschatological becoming to convert gradually into a temple of God, so that God “may be all in all” (*1 Corinthians* 15:28). Between God and the world, between man and God, there is on the one hand an existential abyss, an ontological distance – man will never be able to come to the knowledge of God in His essence, as Saint John the Theologian says: “No one has ever seen God” (*John* 1:18), or as Saint Gregory of Nazianzus says: “neither these of whom I am speaking [prophets], nor any of their fellows ever stood before the Council and Essence of God, as it is written, or saw, or proclaimed the Nature of God”<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, God reveals Himself to man and creation in order to attract man and creation into the communion of eternal love that exists from eternity between the Persons of the Holy Trinity. This discovery that is gradual, culminates into Jesus Christ, the Son and Word of the Incarnated God for “the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known” (*John* 1:18).

Apart from Christ, the One who showed Himself incarnated, no other philosophical or mystical experience offers the man the possibility to know God in what He is, that is in Trinity of Persons, in a unique eternal Being. This revelation given to us through the Son, is achieved through a complete series of acts and events<sup>2</sup>, which constitute the divine economy of salvation. The great events of the economy are commemorated and celebrated within the Church every year for the great Christian feasts. One of these is the Tephany, the Baptism of Christ, celebrated on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January, which reveals precisely the mystery of the Trinity in its economical, soteriological and cosmic dimensions.

These aspects are emphasized, firstly by the liturgical celebration of the Feast of Theophany. This is the reason why it deserves a special attention, all the more regarding the content of hymnography and ritual because the involvement of the Church in this celebration will always have a catechetical, pastoral and missionary importance. Here we also take into account the fact that during the celebration of the Theophany, the Church comes out of the space “circumscribed to the sacred”, into the space of the world, in order to take the saving message and the consecrating grace in its cosmic dimensions, to the whole world, especially through the celebration of the impressive ritual of the great blessing of the waters or through

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<sup>1</sup> Sf. GRIGORIE DE NAZIANZ, *Cuvântări teologice* (XXVIII), PG 36, col. 48-9.

<sup>2</sup> Pr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, „Revelația prin acte, cuvinte și imagini”, *Ortodoxia*, XX, (1968), 3, pp. 347-377.

the annunciation of the feast, when the priests of the New Covenant visit in a sacramental manner the houses of the Christians.

For the contemporary theological research, the analysis of the hymnography and of the ritual has a special importance, precisely when it comes to the improvement of the missionary and pastoral practice of the Church. The liturgical hymnography of the Orthodox Church represents the doxological expression of the dogma. The faithful come into contact with the teaching of the Church especially in the context of the holy services, through ritual, hymnography, biblical and patristic lectures and through icons, within the cult. In fact, hymnography is a real patristic commentary of the great events of salvation, and the structure of the ritual hides in the form of the liturgical gestures and rules, the mysteries of our salvation in Christ, sharing in the same time, through the sacramental work of the Church, the divine redeeming grace.

Saint Maximus the Confessor shows to this respect that the entire cult of the New Covenant “Comprises in itself, in the holy order of the divine symbols of those that it celebrates, so many mysteries of our salvation, through which it determines each of us to have, in agreement with Christ and proportional to himself, a beautiful character, leading to manifestation, created perfectly, according to Christ, the gift of adoption given through the Holy Baptism, in the name of the Holy Spirit”<sup>3</sup>. Hence, the Christian cult has a catechetical, laudatory and in the same time redeeming and consecrating character, because it recapitulates the one who practices it in the great mysteries of the economy of salvation.

In time, the forms of the cult developed more and more in content and structure, the Christian hymnographers exposing their poetical talent by connecting to the gentle inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The structures of the ritual, as well as the composition of the hymns, though a poetical composition, have never been a random creation, but they were the result of logical schemes, containing a profound message, so that the celebration of the cult became a “speaking service”. For ages, the Christian communities have been initiated into the mysteries of the faith by the liturgical celebrations of the Church, fathoming, especially during the great feasts, the doctrinary teaching and being consecrated by the effluvia of grace that the privileged time of the feasts offered. However, today we observe that the structures and content of the cult have become almost inaccessible to the recent man, preoccupied with the great discoveries of the technique, swallowed by the consuming society, a man that is more and

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<sup>3</sup> Sf. MAXIM MĂRTURISITORUL, „Despre mistagogia bisericească”, în Diac. Ioan I. ICĂ jr., *De la Dionisie Areopagitul la Simeon al Tesalonicului – integral comentariilor bizantine. Studii și texte*, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2011, p. 235.

more secularized. Unfortunately, many Christians live today a primitive level of Christian life, without relating to the saving message and content of the cult. The forms of expression of the Christian liturgy are perceived as beautiful customs, inherited and preserved from ancient times, but they have no existential role within the daily life. It is shocking to see that some Christian feasts are observed by atheistic environments, of course, in this case the redeeming content of the feasts being completely lost. In this situation, one of the fundamental preoccupations of the Church should be the liturgical catechesis, having as purpose precisely the explanation of the forms and content of the Christian cult, in order to initiate the people of God into the celebrated mysteries. Such a concern has been the object of the Byzantine mystagogers of the Middle Ages, who left us in their writings precious herminies, revealing the profound spiritual meaning of the prayer in the Spirit and in the Truth (cf. John 4:23-24). Today, more than ever, we feel the need of such instruments that translate the liturgical message so that it can be understood by the contemporary man.

*The necessity of the approach* of this theme in a PhD thesis, which aims to explain a segment of the Christian cult referring to one of the fundamental feasts of Christianity – Theophany, the Baptism of Christ, consists in fact of this lack of instrument needed to fathom this theme.

*The importance of the theme.* Through the theme it approaches, the importance of the thesis consists firstly of the fact that it presents a liturgical hermeneutics proper to the structure of the ritual and hymnography of the feast of Theophany, offering help to the contemporary reader in order to understand the language of the Byzantine rite. Secondly, the thesis offers a theological commentary related permanently to the liturgical springs. For a long period of time, there was this abstract type of theology within Orthodoxy which resembled a philosophical discourse, most often detached from the concrete reality of the Christian life. But the dogma, or the teaching of faith of the Church is lived by each Christian in the act of prayer. Most of the Christians never read academic treatises of theology and yet, by participating to the celebration of the cult, they come into contact with the mysteries of faith. That is why, it is important that they are given the proper instruments for the understanding and fathoming of message celebrated within the cult. The thesis does not aim to approach the theme by relating to the tradition of the manuscripts, because these are catalogued and researched in the West, it is rather a theological commentary of the liturgical patrimony comprised within the liturgical books used by the Church. Of course, when the methodological endeavor requires a clarification of certain rites that are no longer used, but whose amprens are still present in the liturgical books, we turn to various manuscripts,

codices of the Byzantine Typikons or of the Menaion. The importance of the thesis also resides in the methodological approach used that is the permanent relation to the liturgical texts. This method can also be applied to other liturgical periods or to other constitutive elements of the liturgical rite.

*The present state of research.* This research is focused on one of the most important feasts of the Orthodox East, Theophany or the Baptism of Christ, approached from the point of view of the ritual, hymnography and also from the point of view of the church music of Byzantine tradition, with reference to the Romanian environment and especially to Transylvania. Through the theme that it proposes, the thesis affiliates to an area of research opened at the initiative of father Profesor Dr. Vasile Stanciu, who aims to focus in collaboration with the doctoral students the ritual, hymnography and melodic of the great Orthodox feasts. To this respect, there have already been doctoral thesis within the department of Religious music and ritual from the Faculty of Orthodox Theology from Cluj-Napoca focused on the following feasts: the Pentecost and Christmas, and two other theses dedicated to Easter and the Dormition of Virgin Mary have already proposed to research. Hence, there is a new line regarding the theological research of the Orthodox liturgical thesaurus, approached from this perspective only sporadically until now. The novelty of the research of the feast of Theophany consists also in the fact that especially in the Romanian theological research, but in the foreign one as well, the theme is rather poorly explored, and it is still in a stage of pioneerdom. There are very few works that approach hymnography and ritual from a theological point of view, and from a musical point of view we have no critical edition of the chants dedicated to this feast in the creation of the Romanian composers. The preoccupation of the editors focused more on studies of the history of the cult or on cataloguing and commenting from a historical-critic point of view the manuscripts of the liturgical books. But today we see a growing interest towards the extraction of the liturgical message from the Christian cult with direct reference to the liturgical sources: the liturgical books and the religious chants. This thesis is a holistic approach of the liturgical celebration of the Theophany within the Orthodox Church, thus becoming an instrument of liturgical catechesis and also a presentation of the theological ideas that emerge from the celebration and which may come to support the systematic theology, another area in which one may observe a renewal regarding the relation to the liturgical sources. We consider that such an approach is necessary since until now there have only been a few studies or chapters from various volumes focused on the feast of the Theophany. We would like to mention firstly the chapter

from the textbook of *General Liturgics*<sup>4</sup> (*Liturgica generală*) by father Ene Braniște. The Romanian liturgist, ased also on the text from the *Liturgics* by Mitrofanovici<sup>5</sup>, offers a general presentation of the feast of the Baptism of Christ, giving brief information on the name of the feast, on the evolution of the feast in the East and in the West and on the characteristics of the celebration, so this chapter may represent a starting point for a more exhaustive research. Also, the volume *Special Liturgics*<sup>6</sup> (*Liturgica specială*) by father Ene Braniște offers us a brief study on the history of the theological office of the most important ritual from the feast of Theophany – Great Holy Water. What is important in these two chapters of the textbook is the fact that they indicate a rich liturgical bibliography both Romanian and foreign, which at a closer look reveals the fact that in most cases this bibliography refers to the feast of the Nativity of Christ, the researchers relating these two feasts to one another. This means that the number of those studies that research thoroughly the feast of the Theophany is rather small. Anyway, the bibliography researched and presented by father Ene Braniște is helpful for the writing of more ample works on the feast of the Theophany.

For the history and lexical-semantic part of the feast of Theophany there are exceptional articles in various lexicons and dictionaries of theology, such as: G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*<sup>7</sup>; Joseph Lemarié, *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique, Doctrine et Histoire*<sup>8</sup>; *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*<sup>9</sup>; *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*<sup>10</sup>; *Dictionnaire Grec-Français des noms liturgiques en usage dans l'église grecque*<sup>11</sup>; *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*<sup>12</sup>; *Dictionnaire de la Bible*<sup>13</sup>; *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique, Doctrine et Histoire*<sup>14</sup>; *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*<sup>15</sup>; Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire*

<sup>4</sup> Pr. Ene BRANIȘTE, *Liturgica generală cu noțiuni de artă bisericească, arhitectură și pictură creștină*, vol. I, ediția a 3-a revizuită și completată de Pr. Nicolae D. Necula, Editura Basilica, București, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Vasili MITROFANOVICI, Teodor TARNAVSCI, † Nectarie Nicolae COTLARCIUC, *Liturgica Bisericeii Ortodoxe*, Editura Consiliului Eparhial Ort.-Rom. din Bucovina, Cernăuți, 1929.

<sup>6</sup> Pr. Ene BRANIȘTE, *Liturgica specială*, ediția a V-a, Editura Lumea Credinței, București, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> G. W. H. LAMPE, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1961.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph LEMARIÉ, *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique, Doctrine et Histoire*, Beauchesne, Paris, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, editors Gerhard KITTEL and Gerhard FRIEDRICH, translator Geoffrey W. BROMILEY, series TDNT, publisher Eerdmans, 1969.

<sup>10</sup> *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*, J.R. WATSON and Emma HORNBY, editors, on-line edition: <https://hymnology.hymnsam.co.uk/>.

<sup>11</sup> *Dictionnaire Grec-Français des noms liturgiques en usage dans l'église grecque*, Léon CLUGNET, Paris, Alphonse Picard et fils, 1895.

<sup>12</sup> *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, publié par Fernand CABROL et Henri LECLERCQ, Paris, (1907).

<sup>13</sup> *Dictionnaire de la Bible* (Fulcran-Grégoire VIGOUROUX), Tome I-V, Paris, 1895-1912; Supplément (L. PIROT-A., Robert-HENRI, Cazelles-André FEUILLET), vol. I-VIII, 1928-1972.

<sup>14</sup> *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique, Doctrine et Histoire*, fondé par M. VILLER, F. CAVALLERA, J. de GUIBERT et A. RAYEZ, continué par A. DERVILLE, P. LAMARCHE et A.



*étymologique de la langue greque. Histoire des mots*<sup>16</sup>; *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots*<sup>17</sup>; *Dictionnaire des antiquités chrétiennes*<sup>18</sup>.

These articles offer us information about the development or evolution of the feast in the East and in the West as well as references to the meaning and use of the terms Epiphany, Theophany in the books of the Holy Scripture, in the writings of the Holy Fathers, as well as in the Greek classical literature. This semantic area helps us understand why the Church perceived the event of the Baptism of Christ with the name of Epiphany or Theophany.

A theological study of the hymnography, this time, we have referring to the feast of the Baptism of Christ in the precious work by father archimandrite Benedict Ghiuș, named *Taina Răscumpărării în imnografia ortodoxă*<sup>19</sup> (*The Mystery of Salvation in the Orthodox Hymnography*), which in the chapter on the Baptism of Christ indicates certain theological aspects related to this feast, focusing more on its redeeming value, as it results from hymnography, which is also indicated by the title of the book underlining several principles of understanding the feast of Theophany, father Benedict Ghiuș extracts from hymnography ideas referring to the Christian Baptism, related with the Baptism of Christ, or ideas referring to the consecration of the universe in the Epiphany. The study is important for the area of research of the hymnography of the Epiphany, but it remains focused only on certain theological aspects, without offering us a holistic approach of the theology of the feast of Theophany. Starting from this study, we intend to develop in the present thesis other major theological themes as well, which are contemplated by the Byzantine ethnographers.

There are, also, several exquisite studies in the foreign literature, which focus in their endeavor or at least mention the feast of Theophany. To this respect, in the work of Thomas Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*<sup>20</sup>, Theophany is put into connection with the Nativity of Christ, but it still offers a few data referring to the evolution and characteristics of this feast in the East and in the West. What is interesting in this study is the fact that Talley connects Theophany with the beginning of the liturgical year, which in the Orient, before the

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SOLIGNAC, de la Compagnie de Jésus, avec le concours d'un grand nombre de collaborateurs, Beauchesne, Paris, 1932-1995.

<sup>15</sup> *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Edited by Nicholas LOSSKY, José Miguez BONINO, John POBEE, Tom F. STRANSKY, Geoffrey WAINWRIGHT, Pauline WEBB, WCC Publication, Geneva, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> Pierre CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue greque. Histoire des mots*, Tome I, Éditions Klincksieck, Paris, 1968.

<sup>17</sup> *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots*, par A. ERNOUT et A. MEILLET, Librairie Klincksieck, Paris, 1951.

<sup>18</sup> *Dictionnaire des antiquités chrétiennes*, par M. L'Abbé MARTIGNY, Librairie Hachette, Paris, 1877, p. 315.

<sup>19</sup> Benedict GHIUȘ, *Taina Răscumpărării în Imnografia Ortodoxă*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1998, pp. 86-104.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas TALLEY, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1991.

Julian calendar was introduced, was at the beginning of January. The author refers also to reciprocal borrowings between East and West of the two major feasts, the Nativity of Christ and His Baptism. The study is important because it presents data regarding the evolution of the feast, quoting authors of Christian history or patristic authors.

If Talley's study refers especially to the origins and the development of the feast of Theophany, Constantin Andronikof in his course of Liturgic Theology, named *Le sens des Fetes*<sup>21</sup>, approaches Theophany especially from the point of view of theology, indicating the major theological themes which result from hymnography, but in the same time it also presents certain theological aspects which result from the service of the day, that is those related to faith, which are comprised by this feast. This work, together with the chapter on Theophany from the work of Andrei Scrima, *Biserica liturgică*<sup>22</sup> (*The liturgical Church*), where we have a short analysis of the structure of the feast constitute the basis of the second chapter of this thesis, where we analyse the complete structure of the feast, extracting the theological message of the Byzantine ritual, and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter the major theological themes which result from the hymns of this feast.

A very important work for the research of the theme related to the feast of Theophany is that by Nicholas E. Denysenko, *The Blessing of Waters and Epiphany*<sup>23</sup>. This is a study on the most important liturgical celebration within the feast of the Baptism of Christ, that is the blessing of the Holy Water. He analyses from the point of view of the evolution of the ritual of the blessing in the Christian East, the most important sources or documents that contain this ceremony, offering us several pastoral considerations regarding this celebration.

These are the most representative studies referring to the Christian feast of the Baptism of the Lord to which we may add a few more sources that guided the endeavour of our research: Susan K. Roll, *Toward the Origins of Christmas*<sup>24</sup>; Paul F. Bradshaw, *Early Christian Worship*<sup>25</sup>; Justin Mossay, *Les fêtes de Noël et d'Épiphanie. D'après les sources littéraires cappadociennes du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle*<sup>26</sup>. Each of these works refers to one aspect or another of the feast, but the novelty of the present research consists especially in the theological

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<sup>21</sup> Constantin ANDRONIKOF, *Le sens des Fetes – Cours de Théologie Liturgique*, Institut de Theologie Orthodoxe Saint-Serge, Paris, 1991.

<sup>22</sup> André SCRIMA, *Biserica liturgică*, trad. Anca Manolescu, Editura Humanitas, București, 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Nicholas E. DENYSENKO, *The Blessing of Waters and Epiphany. The Eastern Liturgical Tradition*, Routledge, New York, 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Susan K. ROLL, *Toward the Origins of Christmas*, Kok Pharos Publishing House, Kampen, 1995.

<sup>25</sup> Paul F. BRADSHAW, *Early Christian Worship*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1996.

<sup>26</sup> Justin MOSSAY, *Les fêtes de Noël et d'Épiphanie. D'après les sources littéraires cappadociennes du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Abbaye du Mont César. Louvain, 1965.

commentary of the Orthodox ritual and in the analysis of the musical pieces signed by Romanian composers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

***The objectives of the thesis.*** The main objective of the thesis is the theological and musical analysis of the celebration of the feast of Theophany or the Baptism of Christ in the tradition of the Orthodox East, with special references to the Romanian contemporary liturgical and musical tradition. To this respect, the main purpose of the thesis is to show that not only the hymnography of the feast, but also the ritual of the Baptism of Christ has a well defined theological message, proposed to the ecclesial community that celebrates, with the help of the religious music characteristic to its ethos. Thus, the thesis has a practical finality, with pastoral applications, targeting the improvement of the liturgical experience and of the musical expression within the Church. In order to achieve this finality it was necessary to obtain the following objectives:

- To emphasize the place and the privileged status that the feast of the Baptism of Christ has among the great Orthodox feasts;
- To sketch a historical image to indicate the genesis and evolution of this feast within the Christian tradition;
- To demonstrate that within the ritual of the Orthodox tradition the liturgical structure of the feast of Theophany is not random, but it was composed according to a deliberate plan, related to the feast par excellence of Christianity – Holy Pascha;
- To identify the theological and mystagogical dimension of the ritual of Theophany;
- To extract the major theological themes proposed to contemplation by the hymnography of the feast;
- To analyse from a musical point of view the main hymns of Theophany from the musical creation of the Romanian composers from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

By achieving these objectives we wish for this thesis to contribute to the development and enrichment of the theological research in the Romanian environment.

***The structure and content of the thesis.*** The thesis is structured on four extended chapter, each of them corresponding to the objectives proposed initially, so that the research covers the theme as exhaustive as possible.

*The first chapter* opens with the biblical perspective, of the New Testament, with an exegetical-theological analysis of the event of the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River described by the Holy Gospels. This aspect will be necessary because, as we will prove within the thesis, the theological ideas extracted from the testimony of the New Testament will be used within the ritual of the feast of Theophany through the inspiration and the poetical genius

of the hymnographers. Following these references we have indicated the sources that speak about the origin and apparition of the feast of Theophany in the Christian cult. Due to the fact that the oldest Christian feasts are Pascha and the Pentecost, to which one may add the Christian weekly feast of Sunday, celebrations which exist from the beginning of Christianity, Theophany occurs a little bit later, but still during the time of the primary Church. In the beginning this feast commemorated more than one event from the history of salvation such as the Nativity of Christ, The Worship of the Three Kings, the Baptism from Jordan River and the Marriage from Cana Galilee. Starting with the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the Nativity of Christ is separated from His Baptism. This separation comes as a consequence of the borrowing of the feast of Christmas from the West into the East, as it is indicated for example in a Homily of Saint John Chrisostom to the Nativity of Christ, to which we refer within the thesis. What is important to observe is the fact that the two great Christian feasts – the Nativity and the Baptism of Christ – have a common origin in the old feast of Theophany. That is why, when we attempt to analyze the liturgical prescriptions of the feast of Baptism, we have to refer without a doubt to the entire liturgical period, starting with the 15<sup>th</sup> of November, when the fasting for the Nativity of Christ begins, a period which is a sort of prelude of the feast which culminates in the Trinitarian Theophany from Jordan. We considered appropriate for this chapter to present several lexical clarifications, referring to the name of this feast: Epiphany, Theophany, day of Lights, Baptism of Jesus Christ or “Boboteaza” (Rom.), especially since the last one reflects the bimillennial existence of the Romanian Christianity, being a Dacian-Roman word, composed of the Slavonic and Latin root.

If the first chapter represents a general introduction to the theme of the thesis on the feast of theophany, *the second chapter* fathoms into the research of the ritual of the feast in the liturgical tradition of the Orthodox East. In this chapter we analyze the structure of the Byzantine service of the Baptism of Christ, trying to prove that the very liturgical structure has a theological message, being composed according to a logical plan, so that it may express together with the hymnography it contains, the message of the feast. In fact, the celebration itself is a spiritual method, a sacramental mystique, in the perspective of the great theologian Vladimir Lossky, a way of consecration and deification with the help of the ritual, a liturgical mystagogy, having the purpose the initiation and recapitulation of the praying community into the mysteries of the faith celebrated within the cult. In the case of Epiphany, this endeavor is achieved during 13 days of the liturgical year, starting with the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January and ending on the 13<sup>th</sup>, the culminating point being on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January. Hence, in this chapter we will analyze the period of forefeast, the Eve the Saturday and Sunday before and after the Baptism

of Christ, the day of the feast and the afterfeast of the Theophany. But we will emphasize especially the celebrations related to the Eve of the feast, respectively the Royal Hours, the tradition of the Eve itself, on the Vigil of the feast or on the impressive celebration of the blessing of the waters, showing the history, theology and the pastoral importance of this ritual. The analysis of the structure will have as a guiding mark the demonstration of the paschal dimension of the feast, which results from its baptismal character. We know that in ancient times this was the feast when the baptisms of the catechumens were organized, as well as for the Pascha, a baptismal feast par excellence. Taking into account the paschal theology of the Baptism, we believe that it also influenced the feast of Epiphany, imprinting a paschal echo. In fact, the feast of Pascha, being a Christian celebration par excellence, also influences the other important feasts which become paschal reflexes during the course of a liturgical year. In the case of Epiphany, this aspect also results from the compositions of the hymnography from the period of forefeast, where the mimetic character transpires from the structure and content of the hymns which imitate those from the Great Week of Passions or from the Eve of the feast, which in its structure imitates the celebrations from the Great and Holy Saturday.

*The third chapter*, constitutes a systematization of the major theological themes comprised and developed within the Orthodox hymnography of the feast. It is well known that from ancient times, the chants played an important role in the spread of the doctrine. The hymns that contained a theological message were mostly learned easily by the simple people, and thus the mysteries of the faith were easily learned. The conclusive example to this respect is the Kontakion – a rhythmical homily, through which the catechetical, pedagogical and dogmatic message of a feast was proposed to the community in poetical forms, sung. If we refer to the feast of Epiphany the saint hymnographers of the liturgical tradition of the Christian East, starting with Roman the Melodist, continuing with Saint Andrew of Jerusalem, with Saint John the Damascene, Joseph the Hymnographer and Theofanos, they all expressed the truths related to the mystery of the Epiphany in their works, in a doxological form. The Church proclaims those truths during the time of this feast, so that the community which celebrates can learn and fathom through contemplation. There are however, a few major themes that hymnography develops for the feast of the Epiphany: the relation between the Nativity of Christ and His Baptism, the revelation of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity in the Jordan River, the revelation of the intimate relation between Christ and the Holy Spirit, the regeneration of the human being through the redeeming act of the Baptism of Christ and also of the Christian Baptism, as well as the universal regeneration with the help of a fundamental element of the creation – water. All these themes are presented in the third

chapter of the thesis with examples from hymnography, three of them being thoroughly analyzed and fathomed.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to several marks referring to the hymnographical forms that characterize the feast of Epiphany, as well as the hymnographers who composed them. We also sketched several ideas on the life, work and activity of the composers and psalms, who contributed with their works to the beauty of the liturgical and musical celebration of the Theophany. After a brief reference regarding the translation and adaption of the Byzantine melody to the Romanian liturgical texts to the sensitivity of the Romanian spirit through the so-called process of *Romanianization* of the chants, we move to the musical analysis of the main hymns from the Romanian tradition that are sung during the feast of the Epiphany. We refer especially to the troparion and Kontakion of the feast, the Katavasia and the Irmos of the 9<sup>th</sup> chant of the canon, which replaces the Axion of the Divine Liturgy. In general, the chants analyzed belong to the musical creation of Makarios the Hieromonk, Dimitrie Suceveanu, Iona Zmeu as well as the Transylvanian version from the creation of Dimitrie Cunțanu. The musical analysis is on the one hand an effort which involves the expression and the elements of the liturgical text, the agreement between melody and text, and on the other hand, it presents elements of the musical text, which refer to the melodics and the cadences, as well as to the modal-functional structure.

Hence, this feast is a moment in the beginning of the year, that makes us part of the plan of salvation of the world and of man by God. This research shows clearly that through the ritual and hymnography of this feast, the Church fulfills a liturgical and sacramental mystique, the liturgical development of the feast being a spiritual method to know better and live to a higher degree the mysteries of faith and the consecration or the participation of creation to the life of God or, according to the expression of Saint Apostle Peter, “participate in the divine nature” (2 *Peter* 1:4). To this respect, the thesis wishes to be an exercise of hermeneutical liturgic, which is able to emphasize the entire theological and mystical richness of the feast of Theophany. Although there have been studies on this theme, by using their content, the present thesis comes to offer a complete perspective on the theme, opening new horizons of research, of course, while remaining in the thematical area of the department of *Church music and ritual*.

One of the ideas that I wanted to underline was that related to the logical structure of the ritual, to the capacity of the Byzantine genius to convey a fundamental theological message through the means of the structure, forms and liturgical symbols. And this message is precisely what I presented in the previous paragraph, that through ritual we are recapitulated

in the mysteries of the divine economy. The key for understanding the structure of the Epiphany from this perspective is the paschal feast – the feast par excellence of the Church, “feast of feasts, queen and lady” of the feasts. The entire development of the feast of the Baptism of Christ has a pronounced paschal character, emphasized by the baptismal dimension, taking into account that in ancient times this was the feast when catechumens were baptized. That is why it is also called feast of Lights, that is of meaning, the Baptism enlightening man with the true knowledge of God as a single Being in Three Persons or Holy Trinity, who is the basis of the salvation and deification of creation, hence of the fulfillment of the created existence with an eternal meaning. In Epiphany or Theophany, we celebrate the Revelation of God as a Trinity of Persons.

The thesis is also an exercise of decanting the theological themes that the rich hymnography of Theophany develops, composed by the most representative hymnographers of the Orthodox East. The Orthodox hymnographers were Orthodox par excellence. Very spiritual, with a holy life, speaking with God through prayer, musical organs of the Spirit, they transmitted with the help of the Christian poetry, the fruit of their contemplation, the great mysteries of the Christian faith and doctrine in a doxological form. The synthetization of these themes is beneficial for it offers a basis for the dogmatic theology and also for those who wish to study more thoroughly and to understand better the Orthodox faith with the help of the Christian hymns. This liturgical thesaurus is accessible to all the Christians through celebration and ecclesiastic music. All the Christians who participate to the feast of Theophany receive in their homes the priests who come to bless them with the Holy Water from Theophany, are familiar at least with the Troparion of this feast, which is sung numerous times. The brief musical analysis that the thesis proposes has the purpose to prove the fact that the doxological theology of the hymnography is expressed through music. We may even speak here of a *theology of music*.

As a final conclusion, we may state that it is necessary to cultivate or to propose through scientific theses such themes, as the one presented here, especially is this endeavor will support the improvement of the pastoral, sacramental and mystagogical-liturgical mission of the Church.

**Key words:** Epiphany, blessing of the water, Jordan River, Ritual, Hymnography, composers, melodics, Troparion of the Theophany, Kontakion of the Theophany.