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PHILOSOPHY IN PAUL’S EPISTOLARY

Doctoral Thesis Abstract



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We would like to inform you that Mr. Costel GHICA from the Faculty of Philosophy and Social and Political Sciences will present the thesis entitled **Philosophy in Paul’s Epistolary** on the **28th of September 2012, at 10:00 a.m., Room II 8 (Building A)** in order to receive the PhD in **Philosophy**.

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We offer you the doctoral thesis abstract and invite you to participate at the presentation.

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INTRODUCTION

Socrates came to know „the writings of Heraclitus” through Euripides. When Euripides asked him what he thought about his works, the thinker might have answered “The part which I understood is wonderful and I dare thinking that so it is the one I did not understand [...]”. We do not know what did the famous philosopher understand from Heraclitus’ writings and we will not ever find out either which was that incomprehensible part set aside for “Delos divers”. It is clear that Socrates’ answer is valid for any work. No matter how shrewd the “diver” is, there still remains a minimum “incomprehensible part” which is due to the complexity of each “logos apofanticos”. In other words, as long as “thinking is a lightsome act of *nous* which uses this light to contemplate the way ideas connect and gives an expression to these connections at the abstract level of passive *nous* through thinking”, the reader is obviously limited in his understanding. Saul of Tarsus wrote assuming the destiny any work has. His effort to bring as much light as possible over his epistles makes him to obviously be in contrast to Heraclitus.

There are so many studies written about Saint Paul’s epistles that a new attempt would be audacious. Therefore, these few specifications represent the first argument for our research. The text which was decisive in our enterprise in to be found in *The Epistle to Colossians*: “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.”

In Paul’s other writings the theme of philosophy has, according to our knowledge, two major characteristics. The first one shows clearly that this theme is rarely mentioned. Paul speaks about it in a few paragraphs and usually appears together with a range of other topics. The second characteristic is related to the specificity of the doctoral school to which we owe this research. Paul’s position towards philosophy has various theological interpretations. In the same time, we believe that those respected researchers assumed the congruity. Another aspect worthy to be mentioned is that Saint Paul’s scriptures are not studied at large or are analyzed in order to provide the authors’ opinion on the matter. Thus, our research theme seems to be original and this justifies one more the intended scientific investigation.

The research process will reach the intended goal according to a plan that we are about to present. First, we wanted to state three hypotheses:

1. Saul of Tarsus, being educated according to the principles of “the narrowest Jewish party”, did not study philosophy and, therefore, ignored it in his writings.
2. As one of the most educated Jews of his generation, Saul studied philosophy, but considered it to be in disagreement with the new Christian teaching.
3. Saint Paul, being a missionary in a cultural space dominated by the Greek philosophy, he paid it the necessary attention as he understood its challenges. Therefore, Paul considered that in the gnosiological process philosophy was congruent with Christian teaching, but proved to be inopportune in the soteriological act that he promoted.

In the first chapter our goal was to shape as many aspects as possible in order to understand the cultural context of the 1st century A.D. Beside the specific literature on the subject, our research makes room especially for the life, activity and writings of Paul. In this manner we intent to see to what extent did Saint Paul understand the cultural challenges of his time and which are his eventual solutions for facing them. In the next chapter we analyze *The Epistles to Colossians*. It is at this point that we want to discover as many connections as possible between this epistle and philosophy.

Our next goal is to extend the research to Paul's epistolary as a whole. Thus, we analyze those passages which, in our opinion, have references to the Geek philosophy or contain ideas and expressions found in Greek writings. Then, we use the results to study comparatively Paul's epistles and philosophical texts. We begin with Homer and Hesiod, and then we pass to Seneca's writings, selecting their main works. The findings are to be found in the third chapter of the thesis.

The penultimate chapter is dedicated to debating ideas referring to Paul's possible philosophical perspective. Here we focus on some major topics of Greek philosophy mentioned by Paul in the light of his "gospel". Before adding the concluding remarks, we intent to shape a fifth chapter meant to discuss the actuality of Paul's message, which we consider to be firmly validated in the course of time.

CHAPTER I. Saul of Tarsus: Jew-Rabbi-Apostle

This chapter is dedicated to the personality of Saint Paul. We focus on his religious transformations, on the way his mentality changed according to the patterns of ancient thinking. Our findings show that what we define as knowledge in this specific historical period follows a path from mystic to rationality and the other way round.

In ancient times, the act of knowledge was obviously distinct from nowadays. Things were understood differently. Socrates knew only what he ought to do. In order to understand what he ought not to do, he had to receive the opposition of his daimon. We noted that Socrates lost too much time with this daimon, it seems. He had at least two reasons for this. Either Socrates had difficulties in understanding or the daimon was not so efficient in his explanations. We accept both depending on the situation in which Socrates found himself.

Also, the abstract manner of thinking which is specific to the modern man would have been an absurd one for ancient thinkers. In other words, if today we have no difficulty operating with numbers as we accept the result determined by the ratio they are in, it was not the same for Pythagoreans. For them, numbers had deep meanings. In their opinion, a number should not be confounded with the notion of number, for it exists *in re* not *in mente*. This conception is to be found in various forms. Thus, a coin is more than a means of exchange. If one loses it, one searches it not for her value first, but for her significance. One will not forget the investment behind it. An animal raised and possibly sold afterwards is to be found in every penny. Therefore, the man of ancient times shares the joy of finding his coin with his neighbours. His joy is justified by two reasons. He found both the significance and the significant.

In such a world Saint Paul suffered the deepest transformation in the spirit of the ancient act of knowledge. In order to understand them, we intended to draw up the cultural context of the 1st century A.D. We analyzed elements specific to Hellenism, Judaism and Roman culture. In our opinion, these three were dominant in Saint Paul's time and constituted the background of his formation as a thinker. If we bear in mind Paul's religious itinerary, we cannot avoid considering them. We were interested to what extent was he interested in or influenced by those challenges. In other words, how much of the apostle's thinking could be framed by the principles of Judaism? How did Gamaliel leave room to someone else?

Also, how could a Jew admit that the Roman Empire was permitted by God? How could he make such a change in his religious perception? Which were the outcomes of his act? What was authentic at Paul? Was his apostleship a phenomenon specific to Ancient Age? If so, what did he have in common with the Socratic apostleship? We structured our research in this chapter trying to give an answer to such questions. First, we searched information about the cultural context of the 1st century A.D. in search of its dominant characteristics, then we wanted to find out how were they reflected in the apostle's life, activity and writings.

We found that there were three elements fighting for supremacy during the 1st century A.D.: Hellenism, Judaism and the Roman perspective over life. This cultural mix formed the environment in which Paul lived his life and developed his mission.

The unifying element we were searching for was that programme of salvation. From this point of view, we observed that Hellenism and Judaism disputed the first place with respect to their preoccupation for the salvation of man. Roman culture seemed to be preoccupied by the perspective of saving the "City".

These cultural confluences existed in the time of Apostle Paul. His thinking was inevitably marked by the resulting challenges. While belonging to the Jewish world, Paul was contemporary to the above mentioned cultural confrontations. The available data show that they covered a long historical period and a wide territory. He could not therefore avoid confronting with the philosophical perspective. He had to have a position toward this reality sooner or later.

Then we were interested in the intercultural dialogue specific to the mission Paul which had. We began by demonstrating that in order to implement the transcultural project Paul had to overcome two decisive impediments. The first one was related to reaching an intercultural congruity and to Jesus. This congruity had to be rational and sustained with solid arguments. The second obstacle had to do with the implementation method. It depended primarily on making the intercultural dialogue possible. In other words, Paul had to adjust his message to each context in which he was. In the same time, this cultural adaptation had the role of making the message as comprehensible as possible without altering it. The implementation of Paul's project was so difficult that it imposed being skilful and understanding it profoundly. Therefore, we analyzed three of the Apostle's speeches which he gave in the three important cultural contexts of the 1st century A.D. We intended to find out how Paul overcame the already mentioned impediments.

CHAPTER II. Philosophy in *The Epistle to Colossians*

The main goal of this chapter is to select those paragraphs from Paul's writings which suggest even a slight reference to ancient philosophy. Thus, we analyzed both the speeches of Paul and the epistolary as a whole. In order to prepare for this complicated process we crossed several stages. We began by analyzing the Romanian translations of the verse *Colossians 2:8*. Then, we enlarged our perspective by consulting other translations which had a certain historical impact.

Next step was to overview some of the commentaries written about the text in discussion. We wanted to see how other authors having different cultural and historical backgrounds approached the challenges it contained. Then we proceeded to exegesis.

We must keep in mind the fact that our intention was to clarify which was the meaning philosophy had for Apostle Paul. We had two reasons for this. The first one was related to a text which we called *crux interpretum*. The second one was a complicated situation which had to do with the theme of the present research. On one hand, our mission was to make an extensive research about philosophy in Paul's thinking and on the other we had only one single text in his writings in which we literally meet the word "philosophy". The situation gets even more complicated because in the other thirteen letters which he wrote, Paul never used this term again. Further more, the epistle to Colossians is a reaction to the challenges raised by a philosophical current which was gaining influence in Colosae, but Paul described it generally.

As a result, we went through three stages and in the end we could draw some important conclusions. The first stage was to see the text in the light of several translations. While selecting those translations we discovered that they were done over a long period of time and their authors belonged to different Christian cults. We came to the conclusion that all the translators opted for a general interpretation of the word "philosophy". The term φιλοσοφίας which comes from Old Greek language, is currently translated as "philosophy". Although there is a general agreement on this, we found different interpretations given to the meaning of the term in Paul's writings. We cannot say the same thing about the word στοιχειά. It was translated in various ways, without creating polemics among translators.

The second stage meant analyzing the verse in the context of the whole epistle. For this we proceeded to a more rigorous exegesis. We found that, on this segment of text, both tradition and "the basic principles of this world" (in Saint Paul's conception) were part of the philosophical current which was influent in the city at that time. We had already expressed our opinion on the expression τὰ στοιχειά του κόσμου. Besides, we noticed that the text in discussion is formulated ambiguously enough. Following several leads, we came to the conclusion that it was not philosophy the problem in the church of Colosae, but the spiritual immaturity was the true source of Saint Paul's worrying.

He did not say it directly, but one could read it between the lines. Right from the beginning of his epistle Paul urged the Christians from Colosae to "let themselves be filled" and "increasingly came to the knowledge of God". In other words, in this community, "temper and moderation were the qualities of a good

Christian, cherished a lot more than speculative boldness or analytical curiosity”. The Apostle’s manner of handling the situation shows that he considered it as a complex one and revealed a refined rhetorical style.

We dedicated the last subchapter to an avoidable question, and that was the meaning philosophy had for Paul. In order to answer it, we studied several major themes of the ancient philosophy first, to be able to shape up the “presentation card of the Greek philosophy”. After gathering such information, we analyzed *The Epistle to Colossians* once more in order to identify what could it possibly have in common with Greek philosophy. As a result, we discovered that Saint Paul approached matters of theology, cosmology, anthropology, theodicy and eschatology. We even pointed out some similarities. All the more, we were surprised at finding that the Apostle made use of philosophy and did not leave the impression that it was an anathematized discipline. It was such a surprise for us that we were tempted to express more than Paul intended.

If we turn back to our hypotheses, we think that the pieces of information we found support the last two. It seems that the Apostle knew well the Greek philosophy. He refers to some of its major themes and even uses some of its values. Although we raised some important questions related to this subject, we could not answer them completely at this stage of research. What is obvious is that Saint Paul does not see philosophy itself as a danger.

Both Paul and Greek philosophers searched a solution for man’s need of eternity. Therefore our debate focuses on such solutions. The old man of Tarsus understood both the searches and the philosophical solution. His specific manner of expressing an opinion on the subject captivated our attention. It was not in the Apostle’s intention to disconsider the efforts of the Greek thinkers. In the same time, he did not sustain a reductionist approach.

In other words, Paul did not focus on the philosophical influence in Colossae. His narration is predominantly ambiguous. But, when analysing his references to the works of the classic Greek thinkers, we noticed that the Apostle sent to the most respectable philosophical perspectives. His conception about philosophy included both tradition and religious elements of that time. The author of *The Epistle to Colossians* did not separate them, but put them together.

If we turned to the philosophical solutions, they too had the above mentioned characteristics. Let us consider a few ideas extracted from *Phaidon*. In Socrates’ opinion the soul, that “something unseen”, went into another world after the death of the body. Then he treated it from the side of the “land of the Unseen”. Its place was near the good and wise god. But, the philosopher said, this soul would reach that god if it had lived a life guided by philosophy. In the end, added Socrates, in fact “this is what philosophy is – a constant preparation for death”.

As we said before, this was Paul’s manner of understanding philosophy. He raised the question regarding the essence of philosophical searches. Paul seemed to validate those searches, but did not agree with the way in which philosophy offered an answer regarding the essence. In our words, who was to pay for the difference when comparing to the absolute god? Paul not only showed who the payer was, but spoke about consequences too.

CHAPTER III. Philosophical references in Paul's epistolary – a comparative study

Before unveiling the research we did at this stage, we started with a few statements. The first one was related to the hypotheses we had lauded at the beginning of the thesis. Based on the results obtained so far, one thing is clear. The first two hypotheses are not valid anymore. The arguments to sustain this statement will be presented in the section allocated to the final remarks. From now on we would focus our attention on the third hypothesis.

We obtained some important information in this respect. We began by demonstrating that the mission which Paul received had a transcultural nature. In order to implement the project he was given by Jesus Paul had to accomplish a necessary multicultural congruity. This congruity had to be as rational as possible. At the same time, the flexibility of his message was an important factor too, meaning that it had to have the possibility to be spread into all kinds of cultural environments with the same efficiency. In other words, all should have the chance to understand it. From our point of view it is clear that Paul succeeded to do it by passing through a complex process.

We went further and, based on some observations, we came to the conclusion that Jesus's love can be called the gospel. Then, we formulated the concept of "the new philosophy", or the Judaism-Jesus-philosophy congruity. Also, we saw that Roman authorities gave a historical validation to this gospel. In short, these basic ideas determined us to analyse the third hypothesis in depth.

There were two more aspects left to discover. The first one referred to the algorithm which this congruity respected. It did not seem very convincing at that point. The second aspect had to do with establishing the philosophical limits with respect to soteriology. Therefore, the final solution is to be found after analyzing the entire epistolary. We approached it following a few steps. The first step was to draw up a database. It had to contain all the texts which had references to philosophy.

Then we wondered how were we going to identify them. This question was constantly in our mind, especially because we had to face rather complicated impediments. The epistles had an occasional character. They responded to various challenges with which the Christian community of that time was confronting. Thus, Paul did not intend to write some treaties of comparative philosophy or anything similar to them. He just gave his best answers to those matters.

Another thing we had to do was to understand the concept of philosophy the way the ancient thinkers did. Our findings in this respect were included in previous chapters. To put it simply, philosophy was presenting a way of understanding and living life so that the man would arrive in the presence of the supreme God of the afterworld. In order to be able to do that, man had to go through a difficult itinerary of knowledge. Man could understand the solutions which philosophy had by making use of reason.

These solutions had their own ontological itinerary. This meant that they were not to be always valid. One thing seems to change, the questions. They remained and challenged humans. Some of them performed with their answers and had a

corresponding influence. Those answers gained stability because they had the same characteristic, they were just historical. In the same time, this characteristic is related to assuming the risk of not noticing the surrounding reality when wanting to see what happened in the heavens above. But men cannot assume this risk the same way.

Therefore, the process of searching the answers proved to be extremely complex. This was the reason why there were so many philosophical currents. In the times of Paul there were various schools of philosophy which had their own answers. Each of them offered answers to fundamental questions of life. This aspect was decisive for our research. Thus, we noticed that the apostle discussed the same problems in his epistles. This fact determined us to look for Paul's solutions and drew up some criteria for selecting his texts.

Practically we read Paul's epistles carefully and gathered all the paragraphs referring to philosophy. Then we proceeded to some classifications according to some criteria which would be mentioned extensively later on. After such work we intended to pay the necessary attention to the writings of many ancient Greek thinkers. We started from the works of Hesiod, Homer, and presocratics, Plato, Aristotle and Seneca in search of paragraphs which treated the same matters as Paul. This was the first connection between philosophical texts and Paul's epistles.

Next step was to clarify some statistical data. We even interpreted some of them. We referred to some interpretations because there was a large amount of data available. Therefore we opted for examples, and in fact tried to suggest a scientific method of understanding and demonstrating the matters in discussion.

Another step in our research in this chapter was to make a comparative study. We selected paragraphs belonging to those two areas of thought (ancient Greek philosophers and Paul) and connected in various ways. Then we tried to analyze to what extent Paul considered the ancient philosophical writings.

We formulated several questions as a result. How did the apostle use the ideas of others in his own debates? Did he do the same with the Old Testament? Were there any accidental connections? Which were the philosophical ideas that Paul frequently referred to? How could we identify them? In other words, as long as the connections were obvious, which was the logic that they followed? How was it possible that a paragraph written by Paul have references to many ancient philosophical texts? This last question was the most difficult for us. The conclusions to which we came are to be presented gradually in the next chapters.

CHAPTER IV. The religion of philosophy and the philosophy of religion

This chapter represents the end of our research. Before closing we emphasized several aspects. The first one was related to the title of this chapter. Then, we indicated the line and the steps followed in our last interrogatory. The title of the chapter is more than a simple suggestion. Our intention was to mark an essential matter, so we issued some opinions regarding the gospel.

We came with the idea that there were two gospels or even many more. This is a major topic further on. We already mentioned that one of the gospels belonged to Paul. Then we demonstrated that this so-called gospel represented the congruity among

Judaism, Jesus and philosophy. In the end we called it “the new philosophy”. This is the reason why we consider that the title chosen for this chapter suited those matters.

As we had already seen, the philosophy in ancient thinkers’ conception was that way of life which was determined by the act of philosophical knowledge. The term of “religion” was rarely used. The same aspect is to be found in the *New Testament*. For example Jacob, one of the pillars of the church, stated clearly that “pure religion is [...] to take care of orphans”. Paul rarely uses this term as well.

Some of the matters raised by philosophy are of religious nature. Our title therefore did not sent to a certain interrogation meant to lead to a definition of the terms is discussion. In our opinion, what we called religion of philosophy and philosophy of religion were perceptions of certain cultural entities. In other words, our title referred more to ontological aspects than to ethimological ones.

The connection between religion and philosophy was obviously indissoluble. But for ancient thinkers the dividing line between those two concepts raised some hard questions related to each one’s identity. The two expressions “religion of philosophy” and “philosophy of religion” are, in our opinion, the result of this existential line’s fluctuation. This reality practicy determines the habitus which becomes way of life. It is about that choice “determined by reason”, between dianoetic virtues and those “ethical and moral” ones, which have a clear connection to divinity.

This phenomenon is common to both Hellenism and Judaism. The Greek thinking is obviously dominated by philosophy. The reaction to the religious anthropomorphism inevitably led to it. Therefore, Paul emphasizes a diminished contemplation of “glorifying” divinity. Paradoxically, things went to self contemplation, a phenomenon which we already commented.

With regard to Judaism, it suffered from lack of philosophical excess. The reaction towards the Greek thinking generally led to overbidding religious forms and to their transformation in an act of salvation exclusively through human effort. In other words, Judaism in its “optimal form” had all the elements of philosophical schools. The synagogue gathered veritable schools of interpretation and understanding of the Old Testament texts.

In this context, Paul accomplished the Judaism-Jesus-philosophy congruity. Therefore, his new philosophy had obviously acquired this argument. The fundamental argument was to be found in the image of Jesus in the Apostle’s thinking. According to the divine plan Mesiah was “the inmost and kept hidden wisdom of God”. Yahweh ordained it “to glorify us before eternity”. Or, the love for Jesus could not be anything else than the love for this wisdom, which practically was a new philosophy, with Paul’s note this time.

The conquences of the new philosophy work in what we called the habitus of the relationship between philosophy and religion. In the Jewish space it would determine a philosophical surplus and in the Greek space would imply a religious surplus. Paul himself, as the first exponent of the new philosophy, stated about himself two significant things. Firstly, the direction of the Apostle’s life was given by the knowledge of Jesus, of “the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing his suffering”. Paul’s creed went on with statements evidently related to the phenomenon of the anagogic knowledge: “becoming like him in his death and so,

somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead". This paragraph illustrated that the apostle himself was engaged in a ceaseless process of knowledge. In Paul's words, "I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me". He made these statements shortly before his death as martyr.

The second aspect related to Paul's model of new philosophy was supported by the appeal to Christians "to follow his example". His argument came from the certainty which Paul had that he himself was following the example of Jesus. What we have here is the first model of imitating Christ and we think this is what Thomas a Khempis talked about in his *Imitatio Cristi*. At this level, the apostle is in obvious accordance with Aristotle's thinking.

For the Stagira "imitators depict people in action, people who cannot be but meritorious or mediocre". Besides, "for the Greek aesthetics the fundamental object of imitation is human action". Therefore, we have all the arguments to believe that Jesus was the kernel of Paul's philosophy. The apostle demonstrated it to himself and insistently proposed it to all mankind.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Many times during our present research we mentioned that our theme made us face serious difficulties. We confronted with two important impediments. The first one came from the specific way in which Paul wrote his epistles, because it was not in his intention to systematically discuss ancient philosophy. The second one had to do with the use of the term "philosophy". As our arguments showed Saint Paul seemed to avoid it on purpose, although he made consistent references to ancient thought. He did the same with authors of ancient literature, as Paul did obviously not consider their writings.

Our conclusion in this respect is that it was not the apostle's wish to influence the position of the church through statements related to them or to cultural acts in general. The direction he pressed on to was that of determining Christian communities to understand the deepness of the new philosophy which they were called to live. In the same time, he is preoccupied to make clear the limits of philosophy and Judaism towards the perspective offered by the person of Jesus. All these difficulties made us choose to approach the theme of research from four distinct angles. We will present them further on, insisting on the conclusions to which we came at each stage of our research.

We dedicated the first chapter to the religious route of Saint Paul. He had been through one of the most spectacular religious transformations: from Jew he became a rabbi and from a rabbi he became an apostle. Despite his complex evolution and no matter which were the various conflicts generated by it, Paul never threw discredit on his religious origin. As to his Hellenistic formation or his study and understanding of Greek philosophical thinking, as we called it, we gathered some important information. First of all, we noticed that even if he had been born in a cosmopolitan environment, with an influential philosophical school, Saul of Tarsus studied philosophy after the experience he had had on the road to Damascus.

Paul was determined to study philosophy because of the mission which he received from Jesus in the city of Damascus. The transcultural nature of this project imposed a solid knowledge of Greek thinking. We demonstrated that Saint Paul during those thirteen years spent in Tarsus had all the conditions to study philosophy. He was provided four important resources: time, intellectual capacity, environment and determination. As a result of this long process Paul accomplished three intercultural congruities related to the person of Jesus: the Judaism-Jesus congruity, the Judaism-Jesus-philosophy congruity and what we called the “promulgation of the new philosophy”.

The second chapter was focused on analyzing *The Epistle to Colossians* in the light of the paragraph which determined our research. We were convinced that the apostle referred to philosophy in a large sense, in accordance with its understanding in the 1st century A.D. The act of knowledge was closely related both to religion and the traditions of the time. Moreover, we noticed that the entire discourse of the epistle was built upon major themes of ancient philosophy. We found clear references to the teogony, cosmogony and anthropogenesis of the new philosophy which the apostle promoted. We considered therefore that Paul’s discourse was not radically against the philosophical current in Colossae, but in fact focused only on what Christians gained in Christ. Hence, philosophy was not deceiving in itself and Paul revealed its limits in the process of human soul’s salvation. In the end of this chapter we demonstrated that *The Epistle to Colossians* contained a genuine philosophical language which the apostle used to support his new philosophy.

Despite all these, from our point of view, the debates on this epistle were not sufficiently held or argued. Consequently, we found it necessary to expand our research to Paul’s entire epistolary. We were interested in the novelty the person of Jesus offered, so to make the new philosophy a unique way of salvation. Chapter three was a contribution in this sense. In its pages we studied comparatively Paul’s epistolary and ancient Greek philosophy. We added to it all the discourses which Paul held in *The Acts*. This way we discovered an overwhelming number of paragraphs extracted from Paul’s letters which contained references to the Greek philosophy. These references represent an alternative position of the new philosophy to the major themes discussed by the Greek philosophy. Another aspect revealed by the data obtained in this chapter is related to the manner in which the apostle deals with ancient literature.

The most important outcome of the research in this chapter was Paul’s definition of faith. In his opinion, the act of faith did not represent a congruity lacking a minimal algorithm related to philosophy. Hence, for Saint Paul the act of faith is a genuine process of metaphysical knowledge. This explained the difficulty of the project which the apostle received from Jesus. It was, as we illustrated, an impossible mission. It necessitated time therefore to fathom the problems related to the Judaism-Jesus congruity and Judaism-Jesus-philosophy congruity. Paul’s searches gave way to a new philosophy, which as we argued, it was not just a form of love for wisdom, but a form of loving a person, a person who represented the embodiment of wisdom itself.

The data which we gathered helped us to reach to the largest perspective known to us until then regarding the relationship between Paul’s way of thinking and

Greek philosophy. The debates in which we engaged made us identify more clearly the themes shared by Judaism, philosophy and the new philosophy. This was the reason why we thought that we can expand our research to a comparative overview of the programmes of salvation proposed by those three manners of thinking and of their common themes. The fourth chapter is dedicated to them. We found that philosophy and religion are organically related. Therefore, their delimitation and separation made the ancient man's thinking unintelligible. In the same time, we noticed that the Greek thinking exceeds in philosophy, and the Jewish one exceeds in religion. In Paul's epistolary we found a surprising balance of the two. The metaphysical knowledge of Christ was, in Paul's opinion, the source of such balance. Paul's logic made room for some sort of Aristotelian habitus in the philosophy-religion dynamics.

We structured the concluding remarks in three important sections. The first one was allocated to both the teogony and the cosmogony of the new philosophy reflected in Judaism and the Greek philosophy. This way we created the premises for taking the next step in demonstrating the congruity between the two other manners of thinking. Then we approached the problem of knowing good and evil, both in divine and human spheres. If one understands Paul's perspective holds the key of the new philosophy.

The thesis as a whole has three defining characteristics. First of all, we think that we reached the intended goal and that was to demonstrate Saint Paul's position towards philosophy. He gave it the necessary attention because his missionary activity took place in a cultural environment which was dominated by Greek philosophy. He saw philosophy to be in accordance with Christian thinking in the gnosiological process, but inappropriate in the soteriological act promoted by the apostle.

The second characteristic is related to the conviction that we should deepen the research of the last two topics of the fourth chapter. We are referring especially to that phenomenon of transferring sin from man to Jesus Christ, the sin which is specific both to *primus fetus in fetu* and to *fetus in fetu* generation that appeared from the individual knowledge of good and evil. These were the reasons why during our entire research we built our arguments up to the limit of generating other goals of research. Thus we intended to avoid discussing these problems from a theological perspective.

The last aspect is related to expressing our gratitude to a series of persons who are very special to us. Our thanks go first to the entire team which coordinates the master's degree and doctoral studies programmes at "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University from Iași, team led by mister pro-rector and PhD professor Iancu Ovidiu-Gabriel. We also want to express a profound sentiment of appreciation for the PhD professors belonging to the Department of Philosophy, led by dean and PhD professor Nicu Gavriluță. The challenges we received from them deeply marked our manner of thinking in the field.

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