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**The contribution of the *Psalms* to the process of
structuring the elegiac poetry
in the Romanian literature**

– SUMMARY OF THE PhD THESIS –

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Vasile Voiculescu, Magda Isanos, Marin Sorescu, Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, Nichita Stănescu, Ana Blandiana, the Romanian lyric creation.

Abstract:

In Romanian literature, the *Psalms* represent the "connection" between the *Bible* and the first edition in lyrics of Dosoftei's version. We support this point of view, on the one hand, starting with the artistic translation of the *Psalms*, when "the dusk of the Romanian literature appear"¹, the poetic language becomes better and better, announcing the aesthetic performances of modern Romanian poetry²; on the other hand, the purpose of our present research is that of proving that the elegiac poetry has been made alive by the "psalmic soul".

Always alive and present, human suffering finds its escape and support in the invocation of the divine help. The same state of gratification or rebellion, faith or resignation can be found in the Romanian lyrics since ancient times – not necessarily only in the religious lyric creation. These states have been expressively underlined by Biblical psalmists and they have been the source of "soul therapy" for all people in

¹Alexandru Andriescu, *Psalzii în literatura română*, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, 2004, p. 9.

²*Ibidem*, p. 14.

sorrow, in doubt or despair, or, on the contrary, they have been a means of expressing their praise and gratitude towards the Creator and Benefactor. Consequently, the importance and timeliness of the *Psalms* for theology and literature, the presence of the "psalmic soul" while individually invoking God (in the elegiac poetry) and in the collective prayer (the divine cult) have motivated us to choose the present topic.

Taking into account the complexity of the topic proposed for analysis, the study is not an exhaustive one, but it is limited to a few authors selected based on their value, containing also the themes and motifs that they took from the *Bible*.

We also underline the fact that this study can be divided in two sequences, an *exegetic* and a *comparative* one. The first part contains two chapters and its role is that of understanding the message and the Biblical motifs identified in the Romanian lyric poetry. In the second part, composed of the next two chapters, we have focused exclusively on our initial purpose, that is the argumentation of the way in which the *Biblical* psalms have influenced the elegiac poetry in the Romanian literature. The correspondences, the similarities and the differences, the analogies and the contrasts that have caught our attention and that we have considered relevant for our

endeavour, lead towards perceiving the elegiac poetry through the Biblical *Psalms*.

For the beginning, we have considered necessary the selection of some Biblical *Psalms* from Hermann Gunkel's classification, and also their analysis from the point of view of the Fathers' exegesis, the only ones who have full authority when we refer to the interpretation of the *Holy Bible*. Many of the *Psalms* approached in the first chapter have been "the source" of inspiration of many poets, as the third and the fourth chapter have proven it. Moreover, again in the first pages of the research paper, we have explained the ways of interpreting the Biblical text from the point of view of critics. A relevant example in this case is Dosoftei, the Moldavian metropolitan that has been one of the landmarks of this work. In this case, we have discussed aesthetic aspects and the specificities of Dosoftei's language in the *Psalms*.

In the third chapter, called "*The Psalms from a theological and literary perspective. A comparative study*", we have underlined the influence of the Biblical *Psalms* over the *Psalms* of Alexandru Macedonski, Tudor Arghezi and Ștefan Augustin Doinaș. The third subchapter comparatively treats the hypostases of divinity seen by Tudor Arghezi and Ștefan Augustin Doinaș and also a semiotic model of their *Psalms*.

The fourth chapter underlines the echoes of the Psalms in the works of Vasile Cârlova, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Nichifor Crainic, Lucian Blaga, Vasile Voiculescu, Magda Isanos, Marin Sorescu, Nichita Stănescu and Ana Blandiana. We have dedicated a chapter to each of these artists of the word, the title of each chapter clearly indicates the relationship with God. We have comparatively analyzed the Biblical *Psalms and the ones created by the mentioned authors, thus demonstrating* either the similarities or the differences, depending on the context.

The results of this research underline that the lamentations in the Bible were taken over by authors as they are, some of them were partially taken received others partly by processing the personal style and putting into verse. We found, therefore, that the authors that we analyzed in this study expressed their emotions, feelings, beliefs, having as support the Biblical Psalms.

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On the whole, the elegiac poetry in Romanian literature that I had in view in the present study, we found on the one hand the existence of the same motifs as in the Biblical Psalms: the creation, the providence, the revelation of the divine nature, the impermanence of life, the futility all things, despair, misery, faith, the purity of heart, compassion, peace, death, why the tree of the house, the city, the light, the sea, the enemy, reason, judgment, divine justice etc., on the other hand, some specific Psalter reasons in verse: the aurochs, the whirlpool of

death, the kind of Christ Mountains - Prince, the country, etc., or have identified a number of literary themes and motifs that contradict the Biblical Psalms: the specific modern human being lost in the speed of everyday life, the concern about the country (Cârlova, Heliade), the absurd life (Sorescu), the others' unrewarded toil (Macedonski), the clock (Arghezi), the pit, the swinging between doubt and ecstasy, the invasion of the senses and the impossibility of salvation (Doinaș), hence the need for asceticism, the fear of abandonment, the heavenly hunger for God and others.

We also found that among themselves and each poet, there are similarities and differences in terms of both themes and reasons, and their relationship with God.

In relation to the Genesis, the Bible teaches that the world was created by the power of God's word, while in Stănescu's vision, the world was created without any utterance; Blaga's divine Word of creation is like human speech, which becomes silent. According to Magda Isanos, the world is created through God's *oruncădumnezeiască* but to make a *lui Dumnezeu prinațiunea* as a *fostreat înacceptiabicădoar omul*. Spredeosebire de ei, Sorescutratează with ironie imaginea biblical creation. Creator God bear witness order and harmony in the universe (Psalmul 18, 1), which can

not be the product of chance, but the work of a powerful being, wise and Atotperfecte. Nature appears to approach the authors or the same meaning as in the Bible, or as a refuge from Dosofoitei invoking this purpose moun, LEAP, hillock and dense forest. For Nikita Stanescu, nature is a place of eternal rest, devoting himself to root poplar as desperately believes that all ends here on earth. So no access to the rest of the house God that David and Dosofoitei nor the "great glory" as Vasile Voiculescu, or joining in the "unnamed country" of Lucian Blaga or "land of Leru them Ler" by Crainic. As Nikita Stanescu Isanos Magda wants to be in communion with nature after death, but not in the sense of despair, but the joy of passing a "land of light" among the trees and grasses.

The Christian acceptation separation of soul and body is the source of joy, while for Crainic, thought detachment from the vain and fleeting lead to bitter tear, and for N. Stanescu the feeling of despair. Death is the same for all people (Macedonski) since the glory of this world passes like a shadow, and the smoke (David and Dosofoitei). The duality of the human condition of belonging so ephemeral life and eternal life is symbolized by ground tree (Arghezi).

Underlying themes and biblical grounds stands relation authors addressed in this study, with God. Analyzing the

corpus of texts proposed for research, we found various inner experiences that each author expresses his faith in God. Thus, some psalmists merges with God the Creator (Stanescu), others I substitute (Doinaş) and assuming the characteristics Its: contemporary with God (Voiculescu, Blaga, Stanescu) while Arghezi the contrary, it is considered only a watch eternity of God, emphasizing thus the impermanence of life talking about David, Dosoftei Macedonski Isanos, Stanescu, Sorescu. Moreover, some attribute to God human weaknesses: forgetting that made the world (Sorescu), contempt of the rich and the poor only love (Isanos). Or, to accept the Bible, God loves all people, regardless of social position and moral condition, enjoying even the return of sinners.

The spiritual ascent of the Psalms of David and Dosoftei is one of faith, of humility, of hope in God, but the way Arghezi Psalms is full of renunciation, suffering and anguish of soul. Arghezi becomes on any path, it's static. His Macedonski, although it is specific ego, though sometimes entrusted to God's will and begs moral rehabilitation.

Regarding Doinaş, the relationship with God is inverted compared to the one in the case of Arghezi: Doinaş enjoys the communion with God, while Arghezi searches for the touchable proof of His existence, he hopes, he has doubts, he

feels he is defeated; unlike the man of Blaga or Arghezi who is abandoned by God, in the *Psalms* of Doinaș, the human being has turned one's face away from God and has moved away from Him. Or, in the case of Blaga, both estrangements are visible: of the human being from God and of God from the human being. The logics of these two perspectives in the Biblical *Psalms* is that, because of the sin, God allows misery, this is what makes the human being believe that God is no longer on his side. Or, even in hard times, God is there, making the sinner return on the path of virtue. If one does not understand the divine pedagogy, one does not believe or one doubts God's help, this is what we have noticed at some authors. Thus, for Arghezi, God is absent from the universe, for Ana Blandiana, there is faith in God's help, the man of Blaga is *torn apart in the desert*, because God no longer takes care of him like before, while for Nichita Stănescu, God is invoked and denied. This is why, instead of worshipping the God from the Biblical *Psalms*, there are the reproaches of Arghezi and Stănescu. There are also opposed situations, similar to the text from the Bible, when God is recognised and praised as the Protector and Creator of the world (Dosoftei, Cârlova, Heliade, Crainic, Isanos). Or, the human being feels that one is forgotten by God because one lost the communion with Him, suggested

by the tree which is *stiff and spiky* from Arghezi's *Psalm*. Unlike Arghezi, in the case of Crainic's work, there is no concordanță between the spiritual state and the hospitality of the tree who is host for the birds in the sky. In order to improve the moral state, Vasile Voiculescu purifies his heart of passions in order to make room for God, while Ana Blandiana considers that the heart is a "trap", consequently, the author believes that it is a sin to receive God indoors.

Moreover, in the Biblical psalms, mercy, justice, peace appear either as God's attributes, or as moral virtues through which the human being has the possibility of living in the house of God forever. Mercy and divine justice interfere when judging human injustice, through troubles, disasters, calamities whose purpose is that of making peace with oneself, with people and with God; they also appear at the Final Judgement in order to establish the right verdict by choosing between happiness or eternal punishment. The ephemeral aspect of justice appears in the works of David, Dosoftei, Cârlova, Heliade, Isanos, Macedonski, while the eternal one only at David and Dosoftei.

These similarities, on the one hand, or differences, on the other hand, of the Romanian lyric creation with the Biblical

Psalms, confirm their contribution to the structuring process of the elegiac Romanian poetry.

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