

“LUCIAN BLAGA” UNIVERSITY OF SIBIU
“ANDREI ŞAGUNA” FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

**THE TRANSFIGURATION OF SAVIOR IN THE
INTERPRETATION OF THE EASTERN CHURCH
FATHERS.**

A SPIRITUAL HERMENEUTICS

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR

FR. PROF. PHD. VASILE MIHOC

CANDIDATE

REVD. GHEORGHE RADU GÂRBACEA

2013

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THE TRANSFIGURATION OF SAVIOR IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE EASTERN CHURCH FATHERS. A SPIRITUAL HERMENEUTICS

Keywords:

Mt. 17, 1-9, Mk. 9, 2-9, Lk. 9, 28-36, Transfiguration, Patristic Exegesis, Patristic Homilies, Spiritual Hermeneutics, Origen, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Proclus of Constantinople, Basil of Seleucia, Anastasius I of Antioch, Anastasius of Sinai, Andrew of Crete, John of Damascus

Summary

I. Introduction

The introductory chapter leads the reader to the topic chosen for research, the methodology, the stage of the researched theme at international level, a report regarding the stage of the researched theme in the Romanian theology, the purpose and limits of the work. It is necessary to note that the study of the narratives regarding the Transfiguration from the perspective of the patristic exegesis was not yet the subject of a doctoral thesis in Romania¹.

I.1 General Introduction

The Synoptic Evangelists tell a mysterious event in the public life of Christ the Saviour, His Transfiguration on a high mountain, in the presence of three of His disciples, Peter, James and John. The three evangelical narratives (*Mt. 17, 1-9; Mk. 9, 2-9; Lk. 9, 28-36*) are consistent in telling the main elements of the event, but still putting each of them a specific accent on the event, trying to make us understand what they mean by recounting this theophany. Evangelists take care to fit this episode of the Transfiguration in a broader narrative context: Christ's sufferings of the Cross, His resurrection, and the promise of the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God. The story of the Transfiguration is preceded in all three Gospel narratives of Christ's promise: "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (*Mt. 16, 28*) ("the kingdom of God come with power" [*Mk. 9, 1*]; "the kingdom of God." [*Lk. 9, 27*]).

¹ Cf. "Doctoral Theses Presented at "Andrei Saguna" Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Sibiu in 1992-2010", in *RT XXI* (93) (2011), no. 4, p. 371-389.

The synoptic stories of the Transfiguration of Christ have never ceased to inspire in different ways, their readers. Even after being included in the canon of Scripture, the story of the Transfiguration episode has continued to suffer other modifications, but which would not be included in the canonical Gospels, but which have been preserved in the apocryphal literature.

I.2 Methods: Historical-critical Method and Patristic Reception of Scripture

As with any Orthodox theologian, one of the most difficult challenges of the biblical research is the scientific reporting to the texts of the Scripture and, respectively, the working method used. The main ways of relating to the text of the Scripture are historical-critical method and patristic reception of the Scripture. Without regarding with suspicion the historical-critical method or embrace only patristic exegesis, we presented in the first part of the paper an analysis of the narratives about the Transfiguration using the methodology of work necessary to the historical-critical exegesis, and then I directed my attention to the patristic reception of these narratives.

I.3 A Stage of the Research

On the international level the study of the synoptic narratives about the Transfiguration, in the light of patristic exegesis is as follows: a first foray into the patristic exegesis of the Transfiguration was given by Peter A. Chamberas in a study from 1970, in which he provides a picture of how the Fathers interpreted the narratives on the Transfiguration and then formulates some principles regarding their interpretations². In 1973, Georges Habra published a volume entitled *La Transfiguration selon les Pères Grecs (The Transfiguration according the Greek Fathers)*, in which he analysed the main theological themes related to the episode of the Transfiguration³.

The research regarding the patristic exegesis reception on the Transfiguration was to take shape together with the publication by John Anthony McGuckin of a research which had as foreground not only the Gospel narratives, but also how they have been

² PETER A. CHAMBERAS, "The Transfiguration of Christ: A Study in the Patristic Exegesis of Scripture", in *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, 14 (1970), p. 48-65.

³ GEORGES HABRA, *La Transfiguration selon les Pères Grecs*, Paris, 1973, 189 p.

interpreted over the centuries in East and West⁴. Father John A. McGuckin submitted in 1983, a first report, regarding the patristic exegesis on the Transfiguration, at the International Conference in Oxford, in which he briefly presented some reception elements of the Gospel narratives by the Eastern and Western Fathers⁵.

In the *Commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew*, Ulrich Luz devoted several pages to the history of the influence (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of the narratives about the Transfiguration, stating, in a footnote, the main patristic texts that offer interpretations of this episode and then making an appeal to some of these texts to illustrate a picture of its reception in the life of the Church throughout the centuries⁶.

In a doctoral thesis presented at Oxford, Christopher Veniamin is the first that offered a comprehensive analysis of patristic exegesis, starting with Irenaeus of Lyon and ending with Gregory Palamas, without exhaustively approach the homilies or patristic texts⁷. Ch. Veniamin structured his research on periods, covering the patristic literature until St. Gregory Palamas. The thesis remained unpublished until today, being announced a revised and enlarged edition for the end of 2012, but it has not appeared so far. What Ch. Veniamin published are articles on the Transfiguration in the exegesis of St. Maxim⁸ and St. Gregory Palamas⁹.

Very important is the article on the Transfiguration of H.-J. Sieben from *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, where he points out the abundance of texts and patristic homilies, Eastern and Western, on the Transfiguration¹⁰.

A broad overview of patristic exegesis on Transfiguration offered Édouard Divry, in *La Transfiguration selon l'Orient et l'Occident. Grégoire Palamas – Thomas d'Aquin vers un dénouement œcuménique*, published in 2009, a revised and enlarged form of the

⁴ JOHN ANTHONY MCGUCKIN, *The Transfiguration of Christ in Scripture and Tradition*, (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 9), Lewiston/Queenston, 1986, 333p.

⁵ J. A. MCGUCKIN, "The Patristic Exegesis of the Transfiguration", in *SP XVIII/1* (1985), p. 335-341.

⁶ ULRICH LUZ, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus (Mt. 8-17)*, 2. Teilband, (Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament), Benziger/ Neukirchhener, 1990, p. 513-518.

⁷ CHRISTOPHER VENIAMIN, *The Transfiguration of Christ in the Greek Patristic Literature: from Irenaeus of Lyon to Gregory of Palamas*, doctoral thesis, Oxford, 1991, 327 p. (unpublished).

⁸ CH. VENIAMIN, "The Transfiguration of Christ and the Deification of Man in Saint Maximus the Confessor", in *Kl̅eronomia* 27 (1995), p. 309-329;

⁹ CH. VENIAMIN, "«Divinae consortes naturae»: Notes on the Centrality of the Taborian Theophany in Saint Gregory Palamas", in *Kl̅eronomia* 28 (1997), p. 85-103.

¹⁰ H.-J. SIEBEN, "Transfiguration. II Les commentaires spirituels", in *DSp XV*, col. 1151-1160.

doctoral thesis presented in Fribourg in 2000 (*La lumière du Christ transfiguré chez les saints: nouvelles approches dogmatiques sur la lumière thaborique*)¹¹.

Some incursions in the patristic literature on the Transfiguration offers Andreas Andreaopoulos, but without providing a systematic approach to patristic interpretations¹².

The latest research is that of Calogero Cerami¹³.

I.3.1 A Stage of the Research in the Romanian Theology

To frame the present research, I presented further the contribution from the Romanian Theology regarding the narrative approaches on the Transfiguration from the perspective of patristic exegesis.

The first contribution to the reception of patristic exegesis on the Transfiguration was brought by Fr. Ioan Mircea. In 1974, Fr. Ioan Mircea published a study entitled “«The Transfiguration» of Savior Christ Reflected in the Patristic and Orthodox Worship Tradition”, offering but a very pale image of patristic exegesis.

In 2005, Fr. Prof. Ioan I. Ică Jr. published in the Yearbook of “Andrei Saguna” Faculty of Theology in Sibiu a study entitled “Exegesis, Dogmatics and Hesychast Mystique in the Tabor Theology of St. John of Damascus and Gregory of Sinai”¹⁴. This study, although it does not exclusively aim to explore the elements of patristic exegesis, provides a picture of how Saints John of Damascus and Gregory of Sinai interpreted the narratives on the Transfiguration.

The only translations of patristic homilies until that date were the ones of the *Homily 56* of the *Commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew* of St. John Chrysostom and the *Homily on the Transfiguration* of the Patriarch Proclus of Constantinople, published by Fr Dumitru Fecioru¹⁵. Although he made these texts

¹¹ ÉDOUARD DIVRY, *La Transfiguration selon l'Orient et l'Occident. Grégoire Palamas – Thomas d'Aquin vers un dénouement œcuménique*, (Croire et Savoir 54), Paris, 2009, 565p.

¹² ANDREAS ANDREAPOULOS, *Metamorphosis: The Transfiguration in Byzantine Theology and Iconography*, Scarsdale, New York, 2005, 286 p.

¹³ CALOGERO CERAMI, *La Transfigurazione del Signore nei Padri della Chiesa*, Città Nuova, Roma, 2010, 283 p.

¹⁴ ARCHID. IOAN I. ICĂ JR., “Exegesis, Dogmatics and Hesychast Mystique in the Tabor Theology of St. John of Damascus and Gregory of Sinai”, in Yearbook of “Andrei Saguna” Faculty of Theology”, New Series V (XXX) 2004-2005, p. 73-129.

¹⁵ *Homily 56 on Matthew*, in SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOMOS, WRITINGS. PART III. *Homilies on Matthew*, (PSB 23), translation, introduction, notes and indices by fr. D. Fecioru, IBMBOR Publishing, Bucharest, 1994, p. 645-658 (published initially under the title “Homily at the Feast of the Transfiguration”, in *MO* 19[1967], no. 7-8, p. 643-652) and PROCLUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE, “Word at the Transfiguration of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ”, in *MO* 17 (1965), no. 7-8, p. 690-693.

available in Romanian, still Fr. Dumitru Fecioru did not provide any introduction or any comment on their content. Moreover, a comparison of the translation with the original text reveals that the translator has added elements that are not in the Greek text.

I.4 Scope and Limitations of the Paper

This research aims to explore the patristic exegesis on the narratives about the Transfiguration. For a familiarization with the Gospel narratives on the Transfiguration we provided in the first part an exegetical presentation of the Synoptic narratives to highlight the similarities and differences of the three narratives.

In the second part I tried to provide primarily a systematic presentation of the patristic texts about the Transfiguration, using the main catalogs that compile inventories of patristic and hagiographical works, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* and *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*. Also in the second part, the largest section of the paper, we presented, in a systematic form, to the extent that it is allowed by the patristic exegesis, the main interpretations, trying to highlight the personal contribution of each exegete. For a familiarization with the patristic authors, I preceded each author's contribution by a brief biographical presentation, in order to frame the patristic author to a certain period. For the elaboration of the second part I tried to translate into Romanian the patristic texts, especially the untranslated homilies and to read the translated ones alongside the original text, in order to be able to capture not only the ideas of the Fathers, but also the terminology used. Where there were modern translations, we read them for a more accurate translation. The desire to translate into Romanian the texts that include the patristic exegesis on the Transfiguration, especially the patristic homilies on the Transfiguration, is motivated by the importance of these texts not only for the present research, but also for the spiritual life.

Because the exploration of the patristic exegesis is not an easy task, I focused only on some patristic texts, which I set at the right time, and where the difficulty of the texts did not permit a full exploration of them, I stopped on what was available.

In the third part of the paper I tried to give some exegetical principles stemming from how the Church Fathers interpreted throughout the centuries the narratives on the Transfiguration.

Part I

II. Synoptic Narratives on the Transfiguration

(Mt. 17, 1-9; Mk. 9, 2-9; Lk. 9, 28-36) – exegesis

Because the interest is particularly represented by these texts, we stopped only on them, without an overview of the context in which they are placed, providing clarifications where necessary for better understanding of the narratives.

From the exegetical analysis of the synoptic narratives we could see that the main message of the Transfiguration is the discovery of the true identity of Jesus. He is not just a prophet, but the Son of God Himself. The mountain is the venue of heavenly existences with the earthly ones. The brightness of our Saviour vestments further accentuates the heavenly identity of Jesus, and the testimony of the Father about His true identity is the highest discovery.

The Transfiguration narratives begin with the climbing on the mountain of Jesus along with “some” of the disciples and ends with their descent from the mountain. Jesus “changes His face/ form” and then appear Moses and Elijah talking with Him. There is a strong contrast between the three heavenly characters (Jesus, Moses and Elijah) and the three disciples (Peter, James and John). The scene of the Transfiguration presents, in a visual way, the divine identity of Jesus. This visual divine manifestation, causing fear to the disciples, is followed by the human response of Peter and of the other two disciples. About the Apostle Peter’s desire to build three tents, the evangelists clearly state that Peter did not really understand what happened. Through the voice that came out of the cloud, God answered not only to the improper proposal made by Peter, but Father discovered what the Transfiguration of Jesus means, from His perspective, discovery or revelation of the divine filiation of Jesus. He Who changed His face/form is “My beloved Son”. Along with the revelation of the divine filiation, the Father emphasizes the importance of His Son earthly mission, news which was brought to the apostles, adding this time the divine order: “Listen to Him!”. Jesus is seen then alone, in a human body, with the disciples. Jesus now hides His divine identity once again in order to fulfill His mission on earth. He is both the humble Messiah, who is to receive death, and the Son of the glorified God.

Part II

III. Patristic Exegesis on the Transfiguration

III.1 An Attempt of Classification

Taking into account the fact that the purpose of this research is to follow the patristic exegesis of the narratives on the Transfiguration, with a special focus on the patristic homilies on this episode, I tried to present further the situation before the occurrence of the first homilies and then the patristic authors from whom we received homilies or interpretations of the Transfiguration. I focused on identifying patristic texts and homilies in specialized catalogs, their critical editions, where they exist, and for any possible translations, particularly in Romanian.

Although I did not cover all the patristic homilies preserved, I tried to present a more comprehensive picture of the situation of these texts, stating equally the intention to provide in the future one or more volumes that contain these texts, translated and commented¹⁶.

In the essay presented at the fifteenth International Congress of Orthodox Spirituality from Bose, which took place from 16 to 19 September 2007, Michel van Parys proposed a division of the patristic homilies on the Transfiguration into three categories: “ferial homilies” (“homélies fériales”), in this category are included the homilies prior to the seventh century; “festive homilies” (“homélies festales”) among which are included the Byzantine homilies between the seventh and the eighth centuries and “monachal/ monastic catechesis” (“les catéchèses monastiques”), among them being included catecheses presented before a monastic audience. The attempt to include these homilies in a particular category was undertaken by Michel van Parys referring to the inventories provided by François Halkin in *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, M. Geerard in *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* and Maurice Sachot in *Les homélies grecques sur la Transfiguration. Tradition manuscrite*. Like any other intention to classify the patristic homilies, the classification of the Greek and Byzantine homilies on the Transfiguration can only be an attempt to systematize a very rich material, both in terms of the number of compositions and from the

¹⁶ The first step was already done through the publishing of a translation of the homily on the Transfiguration of bishop Basil of Seleucia. The translation is preceded by a presentation of the personality of the bishop of Seleucia and the editions of his works, as we intend to do in the case of the other homilies. PR. DRD. RADU GÂRBACEA, “The Homily on the Transfiguration of bishop Basil of Seleucia”, in *RT XXII* (94)(2012), no. 3, p. 311-323, introductory study p. 311-319, translation p. 319-323.

point of view of the multitude of ways of interpretation. The extent to which such an attempt is justified remains to be further evaluated.

We were transmitted almost 50 Greek patristic and Byzantine homilies on the Transfiguration of Christ the Savior, reflecting the profound unity and at the same time the different ways of interpretation and presentation of the theophany reported by the synoptic evangelists. These homilies are evidence of the concern Christians have always showed in understanding this theophany, that generation after generation they sought to deepen the knowledge and understanding of the ineffable and inexhaustible mystery of this revelation. The permanent concern to explain the Gospel narratives and the deepening in living of the mystery of this theophany can be seen in how the interpretations of the Church Fathers is reflected in the hymns and texts on the feast of the Transfiguration. It is widely recognized that, when it comes to an exegetical approach to the whole tradition of this episode, it is emphasized the complexity of the approaches and the difficulty in which is found the reader or researcher.

These three categories in which Michel van Parys tries to arrange the patristic homilies are preceded by a series of reflections or interpretations previous to the II Ecumenical Synod (381).

After the narratives from *Mt.* 17,1-9, *Mk.* 9, 2-9 and *Lk.* 9, 28-36, the apocryphal literature of the first three centuries is the one that gives us the earliest evidence of the interpretation and understanding of the Transfiguration episode. Relatively few in number, the interpretations on the Transfiguration of the Lord from the apocryphal literature address only certain aspects of the enigmatic episode. The main apocryphal writings that provide narratives and interpretations of the Transfiguration are: *Apocalypse of Peter*, written around 135 in Egypt, where, in chapters 15-17, we find an account of the Transfiguration of the Lord, which aims to show which is the state of the righteous in the Kingdom of God; *Acts of John*, containing also a narrative on the Transfiguration of Christ in paragraphs 90-92 and *Acts of Peter*, apocryphon composed around the year 180, in Syria, containing in the chapters 20 to 21 an interpretation of the Transfiguration episode.

St. Irenaeus of Lyon (around 130-202) is known as the first of the Church Fathers who does not refer to the Transfiguration only sporadically, but offers an interpretation of it.

In his *Stromata*, Clement of Alexandria (150-† before de 215) develops an interesting interpretation, in an attempt to discover a very deep meaning of this theophany in relation to the created world and the mystery of salvation. The Transfiguration of the

Lord reveals His deity. In *Excerpta Theodoti* 4-5, Clement of Alexandria presents a systematic reflection.

Starting with Origen the literary exegesis and spiritual takes a decisive step. In the *Commentary on Gospel according to Matthew*, written sometime between 246-248, Origen broadly interprets Matthew's narrative text about the Transfiguration, constantly calling the writings of Mark and Luke.

In the category of "ferial homilies" Michel van Parys includes approximately ten homilies previous to the eighth century, presented in the context of sermons or interpretations offered on the certain evangelical pericopes. The first of these sermons or interpretations of the Gospel narratives about Christ's Transfiguration is *Homily 56 to the Gospel according to Matthew* of St. John Chrysostom. Homilies on biblical pericopes that present the Transfiguration have survived and were transmitted from St. Cyril of Alexandria, Saint Proclus of Constantinople, Bishop Basil of Seleucia, Panteleon of Constantinople, priest Leontius of Constantinople, Timothy of Antioch, Anastasius I of Antioch, from an anonymous author and also a Greek homily attributed to St. Ephrem the Syrian. Michel van Parys includes also in this category a homily of St. Jerome.

In this category should be also mentioned the homilies or truncated texts. These are those homilies or interpretations that have been cut or detached by copyists, being then processed and assigned to one or other of the patristic authors. The most famous case is that of *Homily 56 to the Gospel according to Matthew* of St. John Chrysostom, which has served as a model for the "less inspired preachers".

Also in this category must be classified the exegesis of St. Maximus the Confessor. Although we do not have a homily from St. Maximus, yet in his writings we find interpretations of the Transfiguration, which are very important for the patristic exegetical tradition.

The end of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth century would bring the first sermons presented on the feast day or liturgical celebration, on August 6, of the Transfiguration of the Lord ("festive homilies"). We are talking about the homilies of Saints Anastasius of Sinai, Andrew of Crete and St. John of Damascus, who were born or have lived in Palestine or Sinai. They are the first to bear witness to the establishment of the feast of the Transfiguration in this region. Between the "festive homilies" Michel van Parys lists only the homily of Theophanes Kerameus or Philagathos of Cerami, a Sicilian who lived in the twelfth century, who preached in Palermo and Rossano, and the two

Byzantine commenters, Theophylact of Ochrida (around 1050-1126) and Euthymius Zigaben (around 1100). Must also be mentioned the three homilies of the Byzantine Emperor Leo VI the Wise (886-911/ 2) (homilies 10, 11 and 39), that of St. Gregory of Sinai (1255-1346), the two homilies of St. Gregory Palamas (1296-1357/ 1359), the one of the first Ecumenical Patriarch after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks (1453), Gennady Scholarios (1405-1472), and that of the Byzantine humanist Nicephorus Chumnos.

Among the monastic catecheses are those of St. Theodore the Studite (759-826), Neophytos the Recluse and Teolipt of Philadelphia (1250-1322).

So that we can fit during the three years that we had available for writing the doctoral thesis we chose to deal with the narratives and interpretations of apocryphal literature: *Apocalypse of Peter*, *Acts of John* and *Acts of Peter*; the interpretations of Irenaeus of Lyon, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, the patristic homilies of John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Proclus of Constantinople, Basil of Seleucia, Anastasius I of Antioch, Anastasius of Sinai, Andrew of Crete, John of Damascus and Gregory Palamas and the Maximian exegesis. Except for the two homilies on the Transfiguration of St. Gregory Palamas, all texts and homilies are dated in the first eight centuries.

III.2 Apocryphal Literature

In the section devoted to apocryphal literature I presented in the first place allusions to the Transfiguration found in the apocryphal literature, narrative of the Transfiguration from *Apocalypse of Peter*, *Acts of John* and *Acts of Peter*.

Analyzing *Apocalypse of Peter* we saw that it describes the bright form of the bodies of Moses and Elijah, much more detailed than do the synoptics evangelists and places them in the Garden of Paradise, which does not appear in the synoptic narratives. For the author of the *Apocalypse of Peter* the description of the two Old Testament characters serves as an encouragement for the believers whom it is addressed to, that they will enjoy the same glory and honor enjoyed by the righteous in heaven. We could see that the story of the Transfiguration offered by *Apocalypse of Peter* is closer in terms of content to Matthew's, than those of Mark and Luke. We can identify five points which support this observation.

Analyzing *Acts of John* we could see that there are fundamental differences between the story of the Transfiguration and the interpretation that its author inserts and

other writings of the first three centuries. We do not find in this apocryphal any interest in the episode of the Transfiguration, as important event in Jesus' life and also lacks the interest in the soteriological or eschatological implications of this event. Neither the Christological and Trinitarian implications can be captured in the narration given by the author of the *Acts of John*. In the center of the narrative transmitted in this apocryphal does not lie the revelation of the true identity of Christ, as Son of God Incarnated, but the discovery of an omnipotent and immutable God.

Analyzing *Acts of Peter* we have seen that, according to Peter's speech about the Transfiguration transmitted in chapter 20, the majesty of Jesus has been revealed on a "holy mountain" as a bright light. It is remarkable that the community from the *APt* Transfiguration is not simply a past event, but it can be permanently updated in the lives of believers. In the whole context of the *Acts of Peter*, the narrative about the Transfiguration of Jesus strengthens His divine condition, as well as the idea of incessant worry for the believers. God's care towards the faithful is accompanied directly by His miraculous interventions in human history and His work done through Apostle Peter. Moreover, the story of the Transfiguration is a response to the accusations of Simon Magus on the divinity of Jesus and His willingly shown mercy (cf. chapter 14 and 23).

III.3 St. Irenaeus of Lyon (around 130- 202)

St. Irenaeus of Lyon is known as the first of the Church Fathers who does not refer to the Transfiguration only sporadically, but also provides an interpretation of it. The interpretation of the Gospel story is developed in his main work, *Adversus Haereses (Against Heresies)*, written between 180-198. He is the first interpreter who talked about God's revelation during the Transfiguration. Although God is unseen, however, through divine *oikonomia*, He makes Himself seen to man through the Incarnation of his Son. Also, St. Irenaeus is the first to say that the mountain of the Transfiguration is a fulfillment of Sinai. If the desire of Moses on Sinai to see God "face to face" has remained unfulfilled, during the Transfiguration this desire was fulfilled when Moses saw Christ transfigured in face/ form. The view from Sinai finds its perfection on the Mount of the Transfiguration. The presence of the two great prophets of the Old Testament shows that all the prophecies refer to Christ, to "His coming in body". One aspect with particular emphasis on the interpretation of St. Irenaeus is sight as participation to God. Seeing God means for Irenaeus of Lyon "being with God", and "being in God" means to participate or partake to God's life. Partaking through sight to God's glory, man reaches himself to shine like Him Who spreads light. This theme will be taken up

and developed by the Fathers of the next centuries with direct reference to the Transfiguration.

III.4 Clement of Alexandria (150-† before 215)

Of the surviving writings of Clement, the most important for the interpretation of the Transfiguration episode are: *Stromata* and *Excerpta Theodot* (extracts from Theodotus). In *Stromata* VI, 140, 3, Clement of Alexandria uses the Transfiguration episode to describe how Christianity understands the symbolic significance of the figures 6, 7 and 8. In *Excerpta Theodot* 4-5, attributed to Clement by both F. Sagnard, the first editor of *Extracts from Theodotus*, and Antonio Orbe, one of the most prominent scholars who have dealt with the research of Gnosticism, the concern is to provide the answer to some difficulties raised by the evangelical narratives. The direction of Clement of Alexandria's interpretation is concerned with the question of the nature of the light that shone at the Transfiguration and the way in which man can participate in it.

III.5 Origen (185-254/255)

With Origen starts a new period in the interpretation and understanding of the Transfiguration episode. Unlike his previous interpreters, Origen's view on the Transfiguration is presented much more systematic, thus enabling the reader to understand much better what is the place of this discovery in the theological system of the Alexandrine scholar. In *Commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew*, written sometime between 246-248, he interprets widely Matthew's text of the narration about the Transfiguration, constantly recalling the works of Mark and Luke.

For Origen, the Transfiguration episode is undoubtedly one of profound significance. In the center of Origen's interpretation is found the revelation of the true identity of Christ, Son of God. The ascent on Mount of the Transfiguration symbolizes the spiritual ascent of Christians. The Glory of Christ becomes accessible to those who contemplate it following the measure of their purification of passions, of their advancement in virtue, thereby indicating the ethical requirements posed by the contemplation of such a view. The brightness of Christ and of the words of Scripture occurs at an intensity proportional to the the spiritual progress of the disciples. Moses and Elijah represent the Law and, respectively, the Prophets. The intervention of Peter is explained only by his fervent desire to stay in the state of contemplation, because otherwise, his words could not be suggested but by an evil spirit, because, before the

glorification of Christ on the cross, the Holy Spirit was not sent to the disciples. The cloud and the voice of the Father could relate to the revelation of the Trinity. Origen gives three reasons for the silence that Christ requires from His disciples. The exegesis that Origen offers for this narrations is very rich, influencing a large proportion of the subsequent interpretations, many of the interpretations proposed by Origen being found in other patristic exegetes after him.

III.6 St. John Chrysostom (347-407)

From St. John Chrysostom we have the first proper homily on the Transfiguration, *Homily 56* from *Commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew* (CPG 4424; BHG 1984, 1984b, BHGⁿ 1984bd). Michel van Parys believes that in the Eastern exegetical tradition of the Transfiguration, *Homily 56* of St. John Chrysostom had the greatest influence, which is the oldest witness to this homiletic tradition. The classic text used for this homily is the one edited by J.-P. Migne in *Patrologia Graeca* 58, 549-558. References and interpretations of the Transfiguration we also meet in other works of St. John Chrysostom, which offer the possibility to accurately understand Chrysostom's exegesis on the Transfiguration.

The manuscript tradition assigns to St. John Chrysostom several homilies on the Transfiguration. We talk about the homilies or the truncated texts attributed to St. John Chrysostom. These are those homilies or interpretations that have been cut or detached by copyists, being processed afterwards and assigned to one or other of the patristic authors.

For St. John Chrysostom the Transfiguration episode has primarily eschatological implications. Its most important significance is the discovery of the divine glory that the righteous will rejoice of in God's Kingdom. The glory which Christ discovered during the Transfiguration is not lower than that of the Kingdom of heaven, although it has now been discovered solely under the power of contemplation and understanding of the disciples. Another important remark is that the human body can participate, despite its inability before the Resurrection, to seeing or contemplating the divine glory, to which will take part fully in Eschaton. The divine glory discovered as light can not be compared with any light known to man. St. John Chrysostom emphasizes that the descriptions of the Scriptural authors have ultimately only an apophatic character. The light that shone at the Transfiguration is not a physical or material light and can not be contemplated and fully received through bodily eyes. However, in Chrysostom's exegesis is said about this light that it is uncreated (ἄκτιστος), although it is always characterized as one that does not obey

the laws of creation. Very important is the emphasis on the concept of “condescension” of God. God does not reveal Himself to man by His very nature, which is totally inaccessible to creatures, but by His descent to people. St. John Chrysostom includes the episode of the Transfiguration of Christ in the divine *oikonomia*.

III.7 St. Cyril of Alexandria (370-444)

We have also a homily on the Transfiguration from St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Homily IX. In transfigurationem*) (BHG 1994; CPG 5253; CPG 5207/2). The Greek text that we used and which we referred to is that of *PG* 77, 1009-1016, resumed by J.-P. Migne in *PG* 98, 1248-1254, as the first of the two homilies on the Transfiguration of deacon Panteleon of Constantinople.

The Transfiguration of the Lord has primarily an eschatological dimension, being an early showing of the glory of the righteous at the Resurrection. During the Transfiguration was revealed the way of this change, thus we are dealing with an anticipated Resurrection. The reality of the righteous’ reward is described in terms of participation in the life and eternal glory and the vision of the glory, depicting the way of existence in the kingdom of God. St. Cyril gives special attention to the revelation of Moses and Elijah, who are symbols of the Law and the Prophets. The law and the prophets are presented on the Transfiguration in perfect harmony, both proclaiming “the mystery of Christ”, ie the mystery of the Incarnation and the redemptive work of the Son of God. Christ reveals His identity. He is not a prophet, but One to Whom the law and the prophets serve, Lord of all, of the living and of the dead. The voice of the Father comes to strengthen the revelation of the identity of Christ. An interesting aspect in the Cyrillian exegesis is that the voice from the cloud did not come to combat Peter, but the Jews, who refused to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God and that the Law and the Prophets must be seen and understood in the light of Christ.

III.8 Saint Proclus of Constantinople (around 390-446)

Even though the manuscript tradition assigns to Patriarch Proclus of Constantinople multiple homilies, in fact we have only one Transfiguration homily of the Patriarch of Constantinople (BHG 1980; CPG 5807; *PG* 65, 764-772). The exegetical direction is a Christological. The central image that Patriarch Proclus postulates on the Transfiguration is one of revealing Christ as the Son of God.

Patriarch Proclus brings two new elements in the history of reception and interpretation of the Transfiguration episode: insistence on the fact that all the disciples except Judas, were worthy of looking at the wonderful view of the Transfiguration of Christ, but the other eight disciples were left at the foot of the mountain for Judas' sake, and three disciples were taken by Jesus with Him to fulfill a prescription of the law, exegetic direction which appears for the first time at the Greek fathers. Then the connection made by Proclus between the words of the Father, which were heard at Baptism and at the Transfiguration, and the words of *Ps* 88, 13, is a personal contribution of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Patriarch Proclus is the first commentator who identifies the mountain of the Transfiguration with the Tabor, using this connection.

III.9 Bishop Basil of Seleucia († around 468)

From the Bishop Basil of Seleucia has been preserved a homily on the Transfiguration of Christ (BHG 1989; CPG 6656/40). For the homily on the Transfiguration of Bishop Basil of Seleucia, the text reprinted by J.-P. Migne in *PG* 85,451-462, reproduced from the text of the first edition that was edited by Cl. Dausque in 1604, remains to this day the reference text, the critical edition announced by J.M. Tevel, in his doctoral thesis is still being expected.

The Bishop of Seleucia anticipates in his homily the key interpretations that would be developed in the following centuries by Saints John of Damascus and Gregory Palamas. The Bishop of Seleucia is concerned to explain the nature of the light that shone on the Transfiguration, showing that the light of Christ is incomparably superior to sunlight. Perhaps the most important contribution of Bishop of Seleucia on the patristic exegesis of the Transfiguration is the claim that from the body of Christ “flowed light rays sent from divine works”. Profound theologian, Bishop Basil of Seleucia predicts a very important element, ie that, through the hypostatic union of the two natures in the hypostasis of the Son of God, the brightness and glory of the Son of God becomes the glory of the human body. Also, the bishop of Seleucia is the first interpreter that talks about the fact that the rays that shone at the Transfiguration were manifestations of “divine works”.

III.10 Anastasius I of Antioch (520-599)

Among the three homilies edited by J.-P. Migne in *PG* 89, 1361-1398, there is also a speech on the Transfiguration (BHG 1993; CPG 6947) (*PG* 89, 1361-1376). This homily is the primary source for the interpretation done by Anastasius I on the Transfiguration

episode (520-599), became patriarch of Antioch between 559-570, and for a second time between 593-599.

Although much of Patriarch Anastasius' interpretations can be found at other scholars, however, there are in his interpretation a number of interesting and original elements. The most important are those concerning the transfiguration of the human body, the significance of the cloud and the words of the Father. Starting from the eschatological aspect of the Transfiguration, Patriarch Anastasius speaks about the Transfiguration as "an enigmatic paradigm of the future world", making a connection between the promise of Jesus to those who will see the kingdom of God before they die and those discovered on the mountain. Patriarch Anastasius speaks of two changes or transfigurations of Christ. The first is at the Incarnation, when the Son of God is shown changed as servant, and the second one is at the Transfiguration, when He shows the human nature in its restored state, that is accomplished through the participation of human nature in the divine nature. For the interpretation of the significance of the cloud, Patriarch Anastasius addresses an interesting perspective, affirming the need for an incursion in the Scriptures to identify other moments when there were clouds, and finally to assert the superiority of the cloud appeared at the Transfiguration.

III.11 St. Maximus the Confessor (580-662)

St. Maximus handles the interpretation of the Transfiguration on three occasions. The first time he deals with the interpretation of the Transfiguration in *Questiones et dubia* (*Questions and Concerns*) 190-192. The second time he returns on the Transfiguration episode in *Ambigua* X, 17; 31a-h, and the third time, St. Maximus addresses the Transfiguration in *Capita theologica et oeconomica* I, 97 and II, 13-16. Another brief reference to the Transfiguration we find in *Scholia in de divinis nominibus* I, 4.

For St. Maximus the Confessor the central element in the narrative of the Transfiguration is the Person of Christ the Savior – the Divine Logos Incarnated, who reveals Himself on Tabor, as the cause and end/purpose of all creation.

What should be noted about the Maximian exegesis is the intellectual exercise in the theological speculation which he postulates and which can be easily grasped in his approach to answer the question on how the Christian can reach, in this life, the experience of Christ transfigured.

Probably the most important element of Maximus exegesis regards the nature of light that shone on the Tabor. St. Maximus explicitly identifies the light on the Tabor with the deity of Christ, which means that it must be uncreated and beyond human power of understanding. The paradox from the Tabor discovery lies in the fact that while this light is uncreated and exceeds human capacity of understanding, however it can be contemplated by he who has cleansed his mind's eye and adorned himself with virtues. To this is added the fact that the discovery of the Tabor regards not only the deity of Christ, but equally of all three Persons of the Trinity, possessing the same divine nature.

III.12 Anastasius of Sinai (around †700)

From Anastasius of Sinai we have several writings. These writings include a *Homily on the Transfiguration* (BHG 1999; CPG 7753). The *first edition* of this homily was given by André Guillou in 1955.

More than any other interpreter of the Transfiguration, Anastasius of Sinai insists in his Homily on the superiority of the theophany of the Transfiguration. He also emphasizes the contrast between the theophany on Sinai and the one on the Tabor and, equally, the continuity of the latter with that of Sinai. The completely supernatural character of the glory in which Christ appeared is confirmed by the reaction of the three disciples to the awesome splendor that Christ has shown on the mountain. The argument Anastasius of Sinai brings when he talks about the experience of the three disciples at the Transfiguration is the fact that the human nature is not able to look at such a sight. The terms in which he describes the state of the three disciples are ecstasy and sleep/deep stupor, terms that suggests the mortality and corruptibility of the human nature.

III.13 St. Andrew of Crete (660-740)

Between the homilies preserved from Andrew of Crete we include a *Homily on the Transfiguration* (BHG 1996; CPG 8176). The text used is that reedited by J.-P. Migne in *PG* 97, 932-957. According to M. Sachot this homily was presented by St. Andrew of Crete either in Constantinople or in Gortina, sometime between 685-692, respectively, 692-740.

The most significant contribution that St. Andrew of Crete brought to the interpretation of the Transfiguration episode is the central role that he attributes to the Holy Spirit in the work of revealing the Mystery of the Trinity. With reference to the similarities between the Baptism of the Lord and His Transfiguration, the archbishop of Crete sees the

descent and indwelling of the Holy Spirit on Christ the Saviour as a revelation of the perichoresis mystery and unspeakable unity of the divine nature of the three divine Hypostases. Moreover, this mystery was contemplated by the three disciples who ascended the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ through the light that shone from Jesus' face, making the natural power of the apostles' eyes nonworking. In such an ecstasy, they were led by the Spirit into a reality that goes beyond sight and knowledge, in the mystery of the eighth day and the ultimate contemplation of the Trinity.

III.14 St. John of Damascus (675-749)

The end of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth century would bring the first uttered homilies at the feasts or liturgical celebration of the Transfiguration. Between these homilies we also include *Word on the Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by Blessed John, presbyter of Damascus* (BHG 1979; CPG 8057). The critic text was edited by Bonifatius Kotter, in Volume 5 of the Works of St. John of Damascus edited in the Berliner Collection *Patristische Texte und Studien*.

In the homily on the Transfiguration of St. John of Damascus, we come across a summary of what the Church Fathers already said about this episode from the life of the Savior. Thus Tabor is an achievement and fulfillment of Sinai and the evidence of the Incarnation. St. John points out the importance of Tabor, as a testimony to the reality of the hypostatic union of the two natures in the Person of the Word of God and its importance to the deification of human nature. Very precise and succinct, St. John of Damascus develops a very important theme, that the body of Christ becomes the means through which God's glory is revealed. Like St. Andrew of Crete, the presbyter of Damascus emphasizes the Trinitarian character of the Tabor theophany. Tabor Light is described as intelligible and beyond human ability to describe in human words. It is the brightness of the divine nature, which is one and the same as the work of God manifested *ad extra*. The high mountain is the symbol of the highest of virtues, love, which gives the believer the opportunity to see Christ in glory. Thus, St. John of Damascus underlines the role of prayer and silence/hesychia.

III.15 St. Gregory Palamas (around 1296-1357/1359)

From St. Gregory Palamas, Metropolitan of Thessalonica (1347-1359), considered to be par excellence the theologian of Tabor light, have been kept two sermons on the

Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ: *Homily 34* (BHG 1983) and *Homily 35* (BHG 1990), said between 1350 and 1359.

Reading the two homilies on the Transfiguration shows that he was well aware of the previous interpretations of the Fathers. First, the focus is on the nature of light that shone on the Transfiguration. Tabor Light is not the material light, created but the divine glory Itself manifested in advance on the Transfiguration. Although he is not the first who expressed the fact the light that shone on the Transfiguration is uncreated, however, the manner in which St. Gregory Palamas does it is a unique one in the patristic literature. St. Gregory insists that this light can be seen with bodily eyes, to the extent that the Christian manages to climb through asceticism, good deeds and unceasing prayer for pureness of heart, that enables the contemplation of Christ in the light of the Transfiguration.

Part III

IV. Hermeneutical Principles in the Patristic Exegesis of the Transfiguration

The third part of the paper attempts to outline some hermeneutical principles stemming from how the Eastern Fathers have interpreted throughout the centuries the narratives on the Transfiguration. After trying to present a stage of research regarding the formulation of overall Orthodox hermeneutical principles and especially in the Romanian Theology (IV.1 and IV.2), we tried to make some hermeneutical principles to be drawn from the reading of the analyzed texts.

If it were to judge the patristic exegesis of the Transfiguration by the standards and principles of modern critical exegesis, we might say that much of what the Fathers said is not a scriptural exegesis of the text, but the exposure of certain theological and spiritual concerns. We must recognize that the Church Fathers have shown little interest in the literary matters. Although some Fathers are concerned about certain aspects of the literary problems of Scripture, yet we do not find in them some elaborated theory in the form of the biblical criticism or some kind of information on the formation of oral tradition which led to the writing of Scripturist texts or at the historical context and the background against which they were written, as we meet at the modern biblical scholars.

However, the patristic exegesis has something more important to say about the text of the Scripture, something that is currently ignored, namely, that it is authentic, authoritative and inspired. Also, despite their respect to the text, the Church Fathers have not fallen into a fundamentalism towards the letter of the text, but moved freely and they

let themselves be guided by the spirit of the text to identify and explain the central meaning and the message conveyed not by the letter, but by the event.

The whole patristic exegesis and, in particular, the hesychastic tradition seek to defend the historical and spiritual realities involved in the event of the Transfiguration, as well as other extraordinary events narrated in the Scriptures. Moreover, the Church Fathers see the light, the cloud, the voice etc. as literary symbols imposed by the human communication.

The Church Fathers were not eyewitnesses of the Transfiguration, But they approached the Scriptures through faith and their personal experience of life in Christ and in the Church and in this sense they are eyewitnesses of the glory of Christ. The role of the disciples as witnesses of the Transfiguration is fundamental to the patristic exegesis. Their concern for the content of Scripture is one existential rather than an academic one.

It is important to note that although the patristic exegesis has some allegorical deviations, it is typical rather than allegorical. Or, the Transfiguration confirms that. The Church Fathers are generally concerned with the historical events of the past, present and future, relating to the Transfiguration, more than with the allegorical meanings.

The patristic exegesis maintains a balance between the natural and supernatural elements. The patristic exegesis of the Transfiguration seeks to demonstrate that within the historic event, the eternal and uncreated glory of God is revealed to the created and limited man, and this foretaste of the eschatological salvation in Christ is offered in a particular place and time to the three disciples of Christ and the two prophets. The eschatological aspect of the Transfiguration is particularly emphasized by the patristic exegesis of the divine light that is not of this world, but is the eternal and uncreated light of God the Trinity. Seeing the divine light or the glory of God and see the Kingdom of God are synonymous terms for the patristic exegesis.

Historical, typological and eschatological, the patristic exegesis is predominantly Christological, ie ultimately deals with the Person of Christ. The Church Fathers are always careful to give full value and balance to both the two natures which subsists in the unique Hypostasis of the Son of God and to the expression of Scripture regarding the two natures. They are always watching to see the historical Jesus united with the glorified and risen Christ, a fact that is demonstrated throughout the Scriptures and the Transfiguration provides an excellent example.

Another important principle of the patristic exegesis is the orientation and its soteriological concern, a principle that is more comprehensive and includes the historic, typologic, eschatological or the Christological exegesis. This principle is concerned with human salvation in and through Christ, embellishing and enriching all theological thought of the Fathers, and does not permit to reduce the events narrated in the Scriptures and life of the Church in the Holy Spirit to simple symbols or allegories.

Finally, it should be noted that the patristic exegesis turns specifically to human experience transfigured through Christ, which is a reality not only at the Transfiguration of Christ Himself on the mountain, but in the life of the Church, that Fathers know very well. For them, the light that shone at the Transfiguration, the light of the saints and the reality of future happiness are one and the same. How they understand the Transfiguration is proportional to their own spiritual experience, which constantly inspired and guided their exegesis.

Conclusions and Perspectives

The last part of the paper is devoted to conclusions and perspectives that present research proposes.

In the apocryphal literature of the first centuries is placed a special emphasis on the supernatural character of the light shown at the Transfiguration, a light that exceeds the capacity of expression of human language.

St. Irenaeus is the first exegete who spoke about the theophany of God at the Transfiguration and about the Transfiguration as a fulfillment of Sinai. One aspect with emphasis in the interpretation of St. Irenaeus is the sight as participation to God. Partaking through sight to God's glory, man comes himself to shine like Him Who spreads light. For Clement of Alexandria, the light that was found on the mountain is the light of Christ. He is also considering the participation of the body at the sight of Christ's light. Even if it is not spiritual, the body takes part in this sight due to the psychosomatic unity of man. For Origen the Transfiguration episode is undoubtedly one with profound significance. At the heart of Origen's interpretation is found the revelation of the true identity of Christ, Son of God. The exegesis that Origen offers is very rich, it influences in a large proportion subsequent interpretations, many of the interpretations proposed by Origen being found in other patristic exegetes after him. We can see that the Transfiguration played a rather small

role in the theology of the first three centuries. Thus we can say that we have to do, in the first three centuries, with an early form of patristic exegesis on the Transfiguration.

From St. John Chrysostom we have the first proper homily on the Transfiguration. For St. John Chrysostom the Transfiguration episode has, primarily, eschatological implications. The light that shone during the Transfiguration is not the material light, and can not be contemplated and fully received through bodily eyes.

For St. Cyril of Alexandria The Transfiguration of the Lord is early showing of the glory of the righteous at the Resurrection. St. Cyril gives special attention to the presence of Moses and Elijah, who are symbols of the Law and the Prophets, presented in perfect harmony, both proclaiming “the mystery of Christ”, ie the mystery of the Incarnation and of the redemptive work of the Son of God.

Patriarch Proclus brings two new elements in the history of interpretation of the Transfiguration episode: the insistence on the fact that all the disciples except Judas, were worthy of looking at the wonderful view of the Transfiguration of Christ and the identification of the mountain with the Tabor through the prophecy found in *Ps.* 88, 13.

Profound theologian, Bishop Basil of Seleucia anticipated key interpretations that were to be developed in the following centuries. He predicts a very important element, namely, that the hypostatic union of the two natures in the hypostasis of the Son of God, the brightness or the glory of the Son of God becomes the glory of the human bod. Also the bishop of Seleucia is the first exegete that speaks that the rays that shone during the Transfiguration were manifestations of “divine works”.

Although a large part of the interpretations of Patriarch Anastasius I of Antioch can also be found in other patristic exegetes of the Transfiguration, however, there are in his interpretation a number of interesting and original elements. The most important are those concerning the transfiguration of the human body, the significance of the cloud and the words of the Father.

For St. Maximus the Confessor the central element in the narrative of the Transfiguration is the Person of Christ the Savior. The contribution of Maximus’ exegesis regards the nature of the light that shone on Tabor. St. Maximus explicitly identifies the light on the Tabor with the deity of Christ, which means that it must be uncreated and beyond human power of understanding.

More than any other exegete, Anastasius of Sinai insists in his Homily on the superiority of the Theophany of the Transfiguration. He also emphasizes the contrast

between the theophany on Sinai and that on Tabor and equally the continuity of the latter in the one from Sinai.

The most significant contribution that St. Andrew of Crete has brought to the interpretation of the Transfiguration is the central role he gives to the Holy Spirit in the work of revealing the mystery of the Trinity. Referring to the similarities between the Baptism of the Lord and His Transfiguration, the archbishop of Crete regards the descent and indwelling of the Holy Spirit on Christ as a revelation of the perichoresis mystery and of the unspeakable unity of the divine nature of the three divine Hypostases.

In the homily on the Transfiguration of St. John Damascene we find a summary of what the Church Fathers have already said about this episode in the life of the Savior. Thus Tabor is a fulfillment of Sinai and the evidence of Incarnation. St. John of Damascus underlines the importance of Tabor, as a testimony to the reality of the hypostatic union of the two natures in the person of the Word of God and its importance to the deification of human nature. Tabor Light is described as intelligible and beyond human ability to describe in human words. It is the brightness of the divine nature, which is one and the same as the work of God manifested *ad extra*.

Reading the two homilies on the Transfiguration of Saint Gregory Palamas shows that he was well aware of the previous interpretations the Fathers. The focus is on the nature of light that shone on the Transfiguratio. Tabor Light is not the material, created light, but the divine glory Itself manifested in advance at the Transfiguration. St. Gregory insists that this light can be seen with bodily eyes, to the extent that the Christian manages to ascend through asceticism, good deeds and unceasing prayer for pureness of heart, that enables the contemplation of Christ in the light of the Transfiguration.

Once (odatã) covered these few texts, highly relevant to the patristic exegesis at the Transfiguration, we can see their richness. A first perspective that this paper proposes is recovering the entire patristic heritage related to the Transfiguration episode. Until a detailed and systematic analysis it is required to recover these texts, important not only in the realm of research, but especially on the spiritual level.

Although it is mainly a legacy of the Church and the Orthodox Church prides itself on that, their research and recovery has been a concern that belongs to others, most of them non-Orthodox. Therefore, this paper aims to be a start towards recovering the patristic heritage, in both the recovery of the texts through their translation into Romanian, as well

as towards realizing some serious research of the biblical narratives in terms of their reception in the life of the Church throughout the centuries.