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LUCIAN BLAGA BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND DOGMATICS

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Abstract: Review of Ioan Biriș, *Lucian Blaga - Concepte dogmatice* [*Lucian Blaga - Dogmatic concepts*], Cluj-Napoca: Editura Școala Ardeleană, 2020.

Key words: Lucian Blaga; dogmatics; Lancrăm; philosophy; Romanian culture; analysis.

As the author of this writing often confesses, through the depth and height of his thought, the poet-thinker Lucian Blaga marked his destiny from the early years, prompting him to abandon the study of the exact sciences (mathematics and physics) in order to carefully research philosophy, to penetrate, expose and update, later the thinking of the great philosophers.

Coming from the county of Zarandului (the mountain part of Arad County), Ioan Biriș is currently a professor at the University of Timisoara and (at the same time) a PhD coordinator in the field of philosophy. His life and teaching career have been influenced mainly by two representatives of contemporary Romanian philosophy, namely: the thinking of the poet-philosopher of Lancram (Lucian Blaga) and by the thinker retired in the twilight of his earthly peregrination at Păltiniș (Constantin Noica). Confessing that Blaga influenced and determined his life and his work deeply and fully, Ioan Biriș showed that he was under the strong but mysterious influence of Blaga, he studied the philosophy “just in Cluj” - in fact, faithfully following the steps of his spiritual model. We might add here the fact that Ioan Biriș - as a graduate of the Faculty of Philosophy in Cluj (1976), later master's and doctoral studies in philosophy and sociology (1980; 1989-2000 respectively) did not follow the Blagian model only in terms of his training, teaching and scientific affirmation, but also through intensive research of complex, paradoxical and complementary relationships between philosophy and theology (religion).

Even a cursory perspective on the work of Professor Ioan Biriș shows us that he has addressed a wide spectrum of philosophical themes, reflecting them in his research, well in-depth in libraries and prestigious university centres, such as those in Padua, Dijon, München and Budapest. The author, who insisted on Kant's thinking, and Hegel, Wittgenstein, Max Weber and even Marx's conceptions at European level, highlighted at the national level, especially the thinking of Lucian Blaga and Noica, without underestimating the writings of other Romanian philosophers, such as D. D. Rosca, Eugen Ionescu, Nae Ionescu. Its deep and complex, well-documented approach is reflected in numerous studies and communications with an authentic scientific character. His writing devoted to an interdisciplinary theme such as Blaga's dogmatic conceptions constitutes the natural crowning of his research and pre-'89 work, as well as his in-depth studies carried out in the West over the past three decades. The book is the result of a long work, embodied in studies such as: “Ontical and logical valences of the collective-distributive relationship to Lucian Blaga and D.D. Rosca” (Biriș 2002; Biriș 2007).

We must add to these articles the communications held in the framework of Symposiums, published later (mainly) in the *Journal of Philosophy*, such as: “The idea of a cultural field in the philosophy of Lucian

Blaga" (Biriș 1993), "Knowledge and transcendence at Lucian Blaga" (Biriș 1994; Cf. Petrescu 2007; Frunză 2001).

Through his research on Blaga's philosophy, Ioan Biriș contributed not only to the deepening of the Belgian concepts among Romanian thinkers, but also to *the knowledge and perception of these concepts in the circles of the occidental philosophers*. In this respect, we are looking in particular at the monograph of Professor Michael Jones, who insists in particular on the theological aspects and nuances of Lucian Blaga's thinking and work. (see: *The Methaphysics of Religion Lucian Blaga and contemporary Philosophy* – a book where the articles written by Prof. I. Biriș are frequently quoted (Jones 2006).

Even a frugal look at the bibliography of his work dedicated to The Belgian dogmatic concepts shows us that for a long time Lucian Blaga - marginalized and unjust by the atheist-communist regime is perceived not only a leading philosopher of Ardeal and Romania, but as a genuine European thinker, a spirit open to other cultures and concepts, but faithful to national and church traditions, identity and spirituality (orthodox). The fact that Lucian Blaga enrolled (in 1914) in Theology in Sibiu is not only a biographical detail, but an essential element of his life, thoughtfulness and experience. God designated by Blaga by the phrase "*Great Anonymous*", his references and reflections related to Creation, *proneie*, (related) to the mysterious but noticeable intervention of the Godhead in our lives (personal destinies) and historically, *the frequent reports to the Alexandrin Philon* show us that Blaga, *despite his polemic with Stăniloae*, had a Christian philosophical thought, which is less conventional, or not entirely following the canons and forms of exposure frequently used by theologians.

Structured on eight uneven chapters as an extension, but equally important and philosophically significant, the writing of Ioan Biriș, *Lucian Blaga- Dogmatic concepts* represent the crowning achievement of all his research related to the thinking of the one he considered the most important Romanian philosopher of the 20th century.

Naturally, in Chapter I, *Lucian Blaga and the philosophy of the abyssal*, Ioan Biriș insists on the sources of Blagian philosophical thought. At first, he goes from the problem of man to the problem of the abyssal, then placing Blaga among the European philosophers and relating his concepts to Kantian philosophy, as well as to the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud, respectively to the archetypes of C. G. Jung.

Chapter II deals with the link between the crisis of intellect and the crisis of concepts, specifying the particular vision of Lucian Blaga, as well as the remedies or ways of rationalization. Theologians -- and not only them -- consider chapter III more significant, which presents the dogmatic method from a Philonian perspective and outlines a genuine mathematical model of dogma.

Prof. I. Biriș emphasizes the idea that Philon Alexandrin had a special way of thinking and philosophizing, highlighting that the human soul can reach the performance of knowing that „*God exists...* but, can't tell *how* it exists. Philon brings to the fore the idea of light, to facilitate our understanding to a certain extent.” (Biriș 2020:66-67).

Philon's intuition in Alexandria highlights an authentic mathematical model of dogma, insisting on cylindrical geometry and projective geometry. In this chapter, which naturally attracts the attention of theologians, philosophers and even experts in the exact sciences appear (Biriș 2020:66-67) *transfinite crowds* - as mathematical equivalents of dogma. These well-perceived crowds of the young Ioan Biriș led him to move from the exact sciences to the research of philosophy. Paradoxically, philosophy was not an abandonment of mathematics and physics, but a deepening of these sciences which also lead to wisdom and its appreciation (*fileo-sofia*). Perceived, by Ioan Biriș now, that is, at full maturity, the *passage* of the youth years represents a crucial moment in which through Blaga's lyric he felt and fulfilled his philosophical vocation. Blaga points out that the transition from the exact sciences to philosophical research is not a rupture, a split, but a paradoxical addition. Seemingly foreign, if not opposed to philosophy, mathematics, geometric - the exact sciences can intuitively outline dogmas.

Chapter IV presents the methodological role of analogy in the formation and formulation of concepts. Lucian Blaga emphasizes the idea that *analog language* has a metaphysic foundation and articulates the principle of minimal fit in the integration of divine differentials. Chapter V insists on the principle of identity and the need for the bifurcation of the logical conjunction, ending with a broad comparison of the vision of Lucian Blaga and D. D. Rosca on this subject.

In Chapter VI, Ioan Biriș makes a brief foray into the evolution of scientific concepts, focusing on the qualitative concepts of Aristotle's thinking, on the relational concepts outlined by Galileo Galilei, on the concepts - images from the creation of J. W. Goethe. Numerical concepts appear in the foreground in Chapter VII (logical identity and mathematical equality; as well as the paradox of logical foundation). The final chapter (VIII) *On the logic of dogmatic notions* emphasizes the peculiarities of L. Blaga's vision on this subject. The Blagian gnoseological approach is original, systematic, well-conjoined, far from the *Romanian* style of philosophy - it is a systematized approach like the one initiated and realized by Noica, in a rigorous, comprehensive way. Dogma expresses a fundamental truth, it's a metaphysical formula. The philosophy that has been for many centuries *ancilla theologiae* aimed at the liberation of dogma by ignoring or condemning/combating it. Philosophy, however, has hesitated to approach the question of dogmatic properly. If it had not been limited to criticism of dogma and perceived it in a positive sense, it would have been seen that dogma has *another meaning*, different from the

meanings that current and past philosophical thinking is willing to give it” “Lucian Blaga tried to extend the boundaries of logic to make way for the methodology of dogmatic concepts, without which we could not find any rational way to understand the transcendent.” (Biriș 2020).

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