Cristian Sibișan, *Theanthropologie – Grundzüge der Anthropologie und Christologie* André Scrimas, Hamburg, Verlag Dr. Kovač 2017, 474 p., ISBN: 978-3-8300-9480-7

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As his work becomes better known and commented on, it becomes more obvious that André Scrima (1925-2000) is the most important Romanian Orthodox theologian of the twentieth century after Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993). The relationship between the two can be framed in the master-disciple typology, although neither of them explicitly assumed these roles. Indeed, A. Scrima's concept of apophatic anthropology, and the whole Christological speculation it implies, were obviously influenced by Stăniloae's preoccupations with the apophatic theology of the holy fathers. The fact that the fundamental text of Scrima *Antropologia Apofatică (Apophatic Anthropology)* is based on the bachelor's thesis in theology (1956) written under Stăniloae's guidance, is sufficient evidence to support the existence of this intellectual filiation.

Cristian Sibișan's work places great emphasis on the way in which A. Scrima understood the apophatic dimension of human existence as a reflection in the created world of Trinitarian apophatism. In this review, I will present the argumentative articulations of Sibișan's work and implicitly of the thematic constellation of Anthropology-Apophatism-Christology from Scrima's work. The first section of the book presents the life of Scrima: from the period of spiritual and intellectual effervescence within the group Rugul Aprins (the Burning Bush) from Bucharest Antim Monastery in the late 40s and in the early 50s to the periods spent in India, Lebanon, France and until his return to Romania in the early 1990s (p. 9-34). The second section of the book enters into the substance of the problem and discusses chapter by chapter the work *Apophatic Anthropology*: from Scrima's conception of history as a form of God's revelation to the analysis of the dual structure of human existence and its centrality in the world's order.

Sibișan shows that for Scrima the incarnation is the event that discovers the true identity of man. This means that Christ is the one who reveals in and through himself the eternal image in which man was created and the likeness that he one must reach (p. 47ff).

The author emphasizes that for Scrima apophatism is the most appropriate method of an intellectual and existential approach to both the divine and the human mystery. Indeed, Scrima sees in apophatism—in the tradition of St. Dionysius the Areopagite—both a method of thinking about God and

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of knowing him through an act of existential involvement. This existential experience cannot be codified in the usual conceptual categories with which theological discourse operates (p. 59ff). Sibişan points out that for Scrima man is an apophatic being by the fact that he is the image and likeness of God which, by analogy, means that he is an existence that exceeds his rational capacities of self-knowledge (p. 110). On the other hand, the apophatism of the human being has a dynamic character, being reconfigured, grounded again in the divine economy through the incarnation of the Son of God and the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world (p. 142ff). Anthropology is thus a part of theo-logy and implicitly of Christo-logy and pneumatology. For Scrima, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the human being is the one that transforms it into a Christlike being, a being that reproduces at an anthropological level the antinomic structure of the divine and the human union in the hypostasis of Christ. Thus anthropology, christology and pneumatology structure for Scrima an apophatic–existential framework (200).

In the third section of the book Sibişan argues that in Scrima's theology christology occupies the intermediate position between triadology and anthropology, namely through the revelatory role plaid by the incarnation of the Logos: through incarnation, death and resurrection Christ reveals himself as Son of God and God the Father as his origin and, as we have already indicated, he discovers man in his original and authentic identity. At the same time, the economy of the Son is the premise of the Holy Spirit's economy, more precisely, it acts as the condition of possibility for the action of the Holy Spirit in the world (p. 257f). Sibişan emphasizes that the theology of the cross, of Christ's death, has for Scrima the meaning of a crisis with cosmic implications. In this case, Scrima develops his discourse starting from the Greek etymology of the word crisis, namely that of judgment. Christ's death is „the crisis of all reality,” emphasizes Scrima, his judgment that inaugurates the eschatological period of the historical existence. If the event of the cross is the beginning of the eschatological period, its culminating point will be at the end of history when the confrontation of the creature with its creator will take place within the universal judgment (p. 296ff).

Through Christ's death on the Cross the economy of the Father is completed and the conditions for the beginning of the Holy Spirit's economy are created (p. 320). Interesting in this context is the way Scrima interprets the moment of Christ's death on the Cross: God the Father reveals himself in Christ who gave up his spirit (John 19:30), which means that in that very moment the Holy Spirit enters the world (p. 325ff). The death and resurrection of Christ form a unity and only in this way can their effect on the whole existence be understood. Indeed, the author remarks that for Scrima

the essence of the theology regarding the event of resurrection consists in understanding the relationship of the risen Christ with the world (p. 372). Although it ontologically changes the human being and the existential conditions of man for Scrima the resurrection should not be seen as an earthly, immanent phenomenon, because it has its foundation in transcendence (p. 382-3). This paradoxical character of the resurrection, as a phenomenon with transcendent origins but with concrete effects on the historical existence as well, is manifested in the liturgy, namely within the Easter liturgy. Sibişan emphasizes that in Scrima's conception the reading of the prologue of John's Gospel (about the pre-existence of the Logos) only in the liturgy of Easter night, so „at the time of the resurrection”, has the role of transmitting the idea that the resurrection has roots in God's eternity (p. 393).

By presenting the liturgical as an environment in which Christ's death and resurrection are experienced and at the same time the kingdom of God, that enters the world through them, is lived as a real presence, Sibişan concludes the presentation of the main argumentative lines of Scrima's anthropology and Christology. The quality of theological argumentation and the ability to synthesize a complex and difficult theological discourse makes Cristian Sibişan's work a useful contribution to the process of interpreting Scrima's work. In addition, the book has the role of an invitation addressed to the German-language theological community to discover a little-known but very original orthodox thinker.