

The Idea of the Feminine in the Holy Foolishness based on the life of St. Andrew the Fool and the Iconography of Pokrov

Tihana MARAVIĆ

University of Bologna, Italy

ABSTRACT. The object of the study is the phenomenon of holy foolishness in Orthodox Christianity from the point of view of theatre and performing studies. The aim of this paper is to deepen the meaning of Mother Earth in the ascetic choice of *stultitia crucis*, and to understand how the feminine principle follows the fool in Christ in his travels (from the deserts of Egypt and Syria, to Byzantium and to Russia), remaining the common thread in the manifestation of the phenomenon in different geographical and historical phases. The basis of this analysis is the *Life of Andrew Salos*, composed by Nikephorus, most likely in the 10th century, and in particular the episode of the vision of the Virgin of Blacherne from which derives the Russian Feast of Pokrov. The analysis is accompanied by the iconography of Pokrov with emphasis on the central themes of the vision: the veil and the gesture of covering, typical motifs in the phenomenology of the Great Mother archetype.

KEYWORDS:

Orthodox Christianity,
stultitia crucis,
Nikephorus, *Life of
Andrew Salos*, Pokrov.

“When a night-long doxology was held in the Holy Casket at Blachernae blessed Andrew attended, behaving in his usual way. Epiphanius was also present, and with him one of his servants. Blessed Andrew was wont to stand there as long as his zeal gave him strength, sometimes until midnight, sometimes until morning. When it was already the fourth hour of the night he saw the most Holy Mother of God appearing in full sight, very tall, from the Royal doors, escorted by an awe-inspiring retinue in which there were, among others, the venerable Forerunner and the Son of the Thunder, holding her by the hand on both sides, and many other holy men in white robes accompanied her, some going before her, other following her, singing hymns and spiritual songs. As he approached the ambo the blessed man went up to Epiphanius and said: “Do you see the Lady and the Mistress of the world?” He answered, “Yes, my spiritual Father”. And before their eyes she knelt and prayed for a long while, besprinkling with tears her god-like and wholly immaculate face. Having finished her prayer she went into the sanctuary,

praying there for the people standing around. When she had prayed, with her beautiful dignity she removed her veil, which appeared like a flash of lightning, from the wholly immaculate hands and spread it over all the people standing there. For a long while the admirable men saw it stretched out over the people, radiating the glory of the Lord like amber. As long as the most Holy Mother of God was there the veil was also visible, but when she had withdrawn they could no longer see it. No doubt she had taken it away with her, but her favour she left to those who were there. Epiphanius saw this through the mediation of the God-bearing father, for he enjoyed freedom of approach and communicated his vision to Epiphanius, acting as mediator for him. Being his supervisor everywhere he installed in him splendid glory” (Rydén 1995: 225).

St. Andrew The Fool

The Life of St. Andrew The Fool is composed by Nikephoros, priest at St. Sophia, most likely in the 10th century. The author pretends to write in the middle of the 6th century and dates Andrew to the reign of Leo I (457–474). This *Life* is actually an eulogy of the holy fool¹, an individual who practices a particular kind of asceticism, feigns madness, and after his death, thanks to a “secret witness”², is recognized by the world, i.e. by the church, as a saint. In Orthodox Christianity he is also called *the fool for Christ* or *the fool for Christ’s sake* (δια Χριστόν σαλός, dia Christós salós), a term that reveals the profound meaning of *imitatio Christi* in its practice. In the case of the holy fool, the *imitatio Christi* is not to be understood as a mimetic action in accordance with Aristotle (*mimesis praxeos*), but as the work of the actor on oneself in accordance with Stanislavski. From the moment in which, by gift or by choice, a man becomes a fool in Christ, this man dedicates all his life to the reviviscence (*pereživanie*) of his master’s life. A fool in Christ, in fact, doesn’t want to imitate but to become Christ³.

- 1 The phenomenon of holy foolishness is present in different cultures and different historical phases: as a historical figure with Islamic *malamatiya*; as a ritual figure with a ritual clown from the American Indian culture; as a mythological figure with a *trickster*; in Western Christianity with, for example, Francis of Assisi. But, its major expressive richness the holy fool finds in Eastern Orthodoxy, through Byzantine *salós* (σαλός) and Russian *jurodivijj* (ЮРОДИВЫЙ). The Byzantine phenomenon lasts from the 4th to the 14th century, while the Russian one from the 11th century on. *Salós* stands for “mad”, while *jurodivijj* derives from the ancient Russian form *ourod* (ουροα), or simply *urod* (υροα), which, in its primal sense means “who’s born with an error”, physical or psychic.
- 2 In the life of the holy fool there is a *topos* of the secret witness, that is the person whom the holy fool tells all the truth about his enterprise and the one who, after the saint’s death, tells this true story to the public.
- 3 Though there’s no space here to go into detail about the relationship between the holy fool and performing arts, I shall say just briefly that my thesis is that the foolishness in Christ is an experience,

The fools for Christ appear – along with other extravagant hermits as *stylites*, *boskoi* and *dendrites* – in the 4th century in the deserts of Egypt and Syria. The first important passage of the holy fool's experience is the abandonment of the desert. The holy fool abandons the solitary and ascetic life of the desert and leaves for the city, in order to live among other people, to practice the *sacra stultitia* in direct contact with others. The holy fool sets himself against the world by giving himself up to it. He lives in the city but keeps the desert inside himself. Symeon the Holy Fool said “No, I won't stay, I will go in the power of Christ, I will mock the world” (Krueger 1992: 148), and this phrase can be considered as a kind of motto of the holy fool. Mocking the world by the holy fool is double and bi-directional. On the one hand, while wandering about the streets, squares and markets of the city (Constantinople, Emesa, Amida in Byzantium, and later Ustjug, Novgorod, Pskov, Moscow, Saint Petersburg in Russia)⁴ he mocks those who are false and hypocritical. By doing what exactly? Disturbing the liturgy by throwing nuts at people, urinating and defecating in public, walking around naked, visiting the ladies' baths, eating meat on Friday, playing with prostitutes, behaving in a strange way, feigning foolishness. On the other hand, he voluntarily looks for all possible ways to be humiliated and derided by others. The fool in Christ practices, in fact, a radical humiliation, he gives up all material goods, lives like a vagrant and denigrates himself physically and mentally. The work of a holy fool is still much more complicated. Since he's often a contradictory and paradoxical figure, he is actually a joker, a prophet, a healer, a converter, and a visionary. He can present himself as an idiot, as a moralist or as a shaman able to fly.

St. Andrew's secret witness is the young Epiphanius with whom Andrew holds a deep and lasting friendship. Nikephoros, in fact, pretends to use two different sources for the composition of the text: his personal acquaintance with the saint and the adven-

a life choice, and a philosophy, which reveals itself through the language of performing arts. Therefore, by inserting the holy fool into a theatrical linguistic texture, we can, perhaps, discover him, again as vital and authentic. His artistic experience can be better understood through different performative features, techniques and modalities: the masque of foolishness, the fiction, *imitatio Christi*, *via negativa*, *kenosis-theosis*, a state of *insecuritas*, perennial liminality, iconic theatre, micro rituality. For further information: <http://www.kontejner.org/holy-fool-as-a-performer-english>

4 The city of St. Andrew The Fool, the scene of his “theatre”, is Constantinople, and his *Life* offers us a detailed topography. Andrew, like a contemporary tramp lives on the street. We can imagine that this was his appearance: a skinny man dressed in rags with a long beard and dirty hair. He wanders the streets, arcades, taverns, recesses and alleyways of the city. From *Artopoleia* (the bread market situated between the Forum of Constantine and the Forum of Theodosius) to *Chalkoprateia* (where the artists who worked with bronze lived), from Antiphoros (square located at the Forum of Constantine) to the colonnade of the arcade called *ta Maurianou* (at the north end of Constantinople) and further on to the Forum of the Ox.



Fig. 1. Icon of St. Andrew The Fool, the beginning of the 16th century, Russian Museum, St. Petersburg

tures told him by Epiphanius, a real character, the Patriarch of Constantinople (520–535). *The Life* tells that this high post had been predicted by Andrew. When the two are alone, the saint doesn't pretend madness, but stands out his erudite personality. Towards the end of the story there is a section that contains *erotapokriseis*, questions and answers of various kinds: Epiphanius interrogates the fake fool on topics such as the soul, the origin of the world, the origin of the angels, the experience of the divine, etc. We could say that Andrew is the predecessor of a particular category of holy fools: the crazy wise old man. Though, the scholarly character remains an exception because the holy fool generally wants to get rid of everything, culture included. His life is, as we can see in the icon dedicated to him (Fig. 1), a constant struggle against the demons, and the hagiographic narrative of Nikephoros is a collection that combines demonological stories with descriptions of visions, ecstatic experiences and

dreams. Nikephoros holds in the shadow the foolish behaviour of the saint, emphasizing instead his mastery in annihilation and abnegation (the despised Andrew is often compared to a stray dog), presenting him, finally, as a mystic and a visionary, a prophet.

The iconography of Pokrov

In the 10th century pagan Russia becomes Christian by choosing the Greek Orthodox rite and at the beginning of the 11th century the first traces of *jurodstvo* can be found⁵. As a prototypical model, the *salos* who has had more imitators among the holy fools is the most literary one: Andrew Salos, whose life has been translated into Russian in the early 12th century. The Scythian origin of the saint makes it feel familiar to the Russians and this contributes significantly to his popularity.

The two most famous episodes of the *Life* of St. Andrew are the vision of the end of the world or the Apocalypse of Andrew, and the vision of the Mother of God at Blachernae. The tears of the Virgin, interpreted as foretelling the end of Constantinople, can be read as an example of the apocalyptic character of the *Life* of this saint. In the church of Blachernae was not only guarded the maphorion of the Virgin, a relic from Jerusalem, but also the *Blachernitissa*, considered the protector of the city of Constantinople and

5 *Jurodstvo* is the Russian term for the holy foolishness.

the Byzantine Empire, the Virgin Hodegetria, an icon from the 7th century depicting the Theotokos holding the Child Jesus at her side while pointing to Him as the source of salvation for mankind. Hodegetria is the one who shows the way, a guide.

The influence of St. Andrew in Russia is so strong that in the second half of the 12th century the Feast of Pokrov⁶ is introduced, closely linked to the vision of Andrew Salos in the great Church of St. Mary of Blachernae in Constantinople⁷. The Feast of Pokrov becomes one of the most important liturgical solemnities of Russia and is celebrated on October the 1st, a day before the day that the Russian Church dedicated to Andrew Salos (October the 2nd). The first church dedicated to Pokrov was built on the River Nerl near Vladimir between 1158 and 1167. The first representation of the vision is the incision on the right side of the door of the west wall of the cathedral in Suzdal (Oblast' Vladimir) dated to the first half of the 13th century.

The Byzantine scholar Lennart Ryden argues that the Feast of Pokrov and the cult of maphorion were established in Russia by Prince Andrey Bogolybsky (1157–1174) precisely in the province of Vladimir. As Kiev was losing its power, Andrey decided to make the city of Vladimir the cultural, religious and economic centre of Russia. He wanted Vladimir to become the ideal heir of Constantinople, he proclaimed as its patron the Theotokos and brought from the Kiev the venerated Byzantine icon Vladimirskaja, today known as Our Lady of Vladimir.

Russia proved to be a fertile ground to receive, together with Christianity, the phenomenon of sacred madness (the Russian Church has the largest number of holy fools today) and to perceive by intuition in the object of the veil a symbol of protection of the Theotokos (the most beloved sophiological figure by the Russian people). In Russia, the cult of the Mother of God, as the previous pagan worship of Mother Earth and the religion of the earth, is according to Berdyaev “a feature radically rooted in the deepest layer of the Russian soul. The earth is the extreme intercessor. The basic category is the motherhood. The Mother of God precedes the Trinity and almost identifies with it” (Berdjaev



Fig. 2. Icon of Protection, Moscow type, 14th century from Suzdal', Tret'jakov Gallery, Moscow

6 The Intercession of the Theotokos or the Protection of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, known in Slavonic Church as *Pokrov* (Ποκροβή, “protection”), and in Greek as *Sképē* (Σκέπη), is a feast of the Mother of God celebrated in the Eastern Orthodox and Byzantine Catholic Churches.

7 For the relationship between the Life of St. Andrew and the Feast of Pokrov see: Rydén 1976.



Fig. 3. Icon of Protection, Novgorod type, 1399 from Zverin Monastery in Novgorod, Novgorodskij Muzej-Zapovednik



Fig. 4. Icon of Protection, Novgorod type, the beginning of the 15th century from Novgorod, Treť'jakov Gallery, Moscow

1992: 51). E. S. Medvedeva, cited by N. N. Voronin, argues that the date of the Feast of Pokrov was chosen in association with the pagan ritual of harvest (Voronin 1965).

In the iconography of Pokrov⁸ (Fig. 2, 3, 4), the figure of Andrew Salos appears already in the 14th century, where his image in most cases is standardized, reduced to the cliché of an ordinary ascetic, half-naked with long hair and a white beard. In the icon from the beginning of the 15th century (Fig. 4) we can see a more extravagant dress, *jurodivyyj* is here looking like a shaman in a long robe made of skin. The holy fool – for his healing abilities and clairvoyance, for his “strange” behaviour and ecstatic flight, and the habit of *jurodivyyj* to load his body with metal chains – can be compared to the shaman. It is possible to recognize, moreover, a special bond with the forces of evil and the devil. Interestingly, in this regard, as in the icon of 1399 (Fig. 3) the saint becomes a shadow, a black hole in the icon. In any case, the saint is always represented in the lower right corner of the icon, looking at Epiphanius on his left. We can see how Andrew whispers to Epiphanius the secret and with his right hand indicates the apparition of the Virgin on the top.

The Mother of God is always placed in the centre of the representation, standing on a red cloud of fire, in blue robe with a purple veil that covers her head and shoulders. Contrary as described by Andrew – after the prayer, the Virgin takes off her veil from the head – in this iconography it is never shown with her head uncovered. There are two types of icons of Pokrov: in the Moscow type the Virgin holds the veil with her hands and the angels are helping her supporting it on the sides (Fig. 2); in the Novgorod type (Fig. 3, 4) there is the Virgin *Orans*, with her soft hands raised and facing upwards as in prayer, while the veil is drawn and held by two angels above the figure of the Mother. Scholars

8 For the iconography of the Pokrov see: Kondakov, 1915; Myslives, 1935/36 with the summary in French *Deux icônes du “Pokrov”*, *ibid.*, pp. 207–212; Lathoud 1952. For the reproductions of the iconography of the Pokrov see: Alpatov 1974; Lazarev 1983.

Kondakov and Myslivec affirm that the Novgorod type is a reference to the “usual miracle” of Blachernae: a veil that in the 10th century on Friday night mysteriously rose to reveal hidden icon of the Virgin on the wall. With Lathoud and Ryden I argue instead that in the choice of representing the veil held by angels and not by the Virgin, has prevailed, to the detriment of the story, the symbolic meaning of the veil, the indication and illustration of the protection of the Theotokos. In the later type this symbolism is still immersed in the material world. The veil is a cloth woven by the hands of women, and now held in the hands of a woman. We can still sense its texture. The contact between the things here is real.

A figure that cannot be missed in the iconography of Pokrov is the Byzantine poet Romanus the Melodist (490–556), which is always portrayed in the ambo under the image of the Virgin, holding the Akathist Hymn, written in honour of the Virgin in thanksgiving for the protection of the city of Constantinople. The history of the Roman Empire is in no way connected with the vision of Andrew, but the menologies recall that Roman remains voiceless a day in which his singing was eagerly awaited, and thanks to the intervention of the Mother of God he is finally able to perform his melodic performance, represented afterwards in the iconography of Pokrov. This poet liturgist is revered in the Churches of the East as a saint on October the 1st, and it is probably because of his special relationship with the Theotokos that the same day was chosen for the Feast of Pokrov, and that the figure of Romanus the Melodist becomes a topos of the iconography of the veil. Thus, in the calendar of Orthodox Christianity, the month of October begins with a triple celebration that celebrates the sacred triad Theotokos-Madness-Poetry, in a sign of the Eternal Feminine-Freedom-Creativity.

Kenosis-Theosis

A holy fool as an ascetic lives in vertical tension, which coincides with an elevation of the spirit through practices of fasting and mortification. And yet before this ascending movement, there is an equal and opposite one of a descending nature. The first movement is of lowering, a kenotic one (from *kenosis* which means Jesus, a God as a Man). So: going down, lowering oneself, humiliating oneself, treading “I am”. The spirituality of a holy fool is, above all, a descendant type of spirituality looking at the ground. The work of a holy fool is generated from the nostalgia of origins, and according to the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard “any movement willing to explore the secrets of transformation starts with an involitional process [*via negativa*]” (Bachelard 1948). A descent corresponds to a return, back to the sources. This movement brings a holy fool

to the ground, to the humid earth, in movement (trembling). Here, in association with the etymon of the words *salos* and “fool” (the word *salós* in relation with a word *sálos* etymologically reminds of agitation, rolling, sea waves and the word “fool”, *folle*, *follis* of the wind and of movement), we could compare this earth in movement to an earthquake and then to a seaquake, a state of *insecuritas*. In this ma(d)re-terra (mother-sea-earth) a holy fool experiences free boldness of creativity. It is from here that an ascent can start. The second movement is an upward movement: to rise, to ascend, to disappear, to go into another world. Through a poetic renewal of life, this climbing movement can bring a radical transformation, which is transitory, a process of *theosis* (deification). Here, the holy fool vanishes.

Syria → Byzantium → Russia

The underground virgo-maternal presence follows the holy fool in his geographical movements, from the deserts of Egypt and Syria, through Byzantium to Russia. It seems, in fact, that *salos-jurodivyj* fulfils his trip together with the Virgin. Mary's journey is described very well by Pavel Florensky in the analysis of the icon of Prayer of St. Sergius, the Hodegetria (Fig. 5). A Russian philosopher affirms that in this icon the Rus' has found a spiritual bond and the contact with the best lessons of Byzantium: on the one hand with the ancient iconographic traditions of Syria, who are related, probably, to the cults of the divine motherhood of the Mother Earth and the soul of the world; and on the other hand with the most amazing and inspiring images of Hellenism, with the symbols of Verginal Thought, and of Pallas Athena. The conception of Verginal Thought was not only present in all the Hellenic art, but it was also the inspiration of Greek philosophy. “Because what are the ‘intelligible’ of Plato and the ‘pure thought’ of Aristotle, if not the philosophical revival of a similar worship of the goddess Athena? And again, taking up the Syrian-Egyptian conception of the divine motherhood and combining it with the absoluteness of the eternal virginity birth, Athena continues to live in the Byzantine Empire, becoming the spiritual lighthouse after having found, in historical reality, in the person of the Virgin of Nazareth, her more fully, final and pure fulfilment”, acclaims Florensky (Florenskij 2006: 185).

The historian on religions, Uberto Pestalozza, affirms that the Mediterranean basin, before the settling of the Hellenic Civilization, was characterized by a homogeneous religiousness of an agrarian-matriarchal type (Pestalozza 1996). From the deserts the holy fool moves to the urban centres of Byzantium, like Emesa and Constantinople, and it is exactly this displacement from isolation towards the community/communi-

cation, which will become the peculiar characteristic of this ascetic practice. Less than five centuries later, together with Christianity the Mother Saint Russia embraces a holy fool too. Russia actually receives three big presents from Byzantium: a holy folly, the Sophia (Awareness of Wisdom), and the *Theotokos* (Mother of God). The anthropologist Evel Gasparini in his *Slavonic Matriarchate* explicitly relates a holy folly to the matriarchal substratum belonging to the Slavonic culture. He asserts that the Slavonic world differs from the rest due to a different appreciation of the folly. Slavonic people consider a fool as a divine creature and read in his thoughtless acts a profound sense, and even a talent for foreboding and foreseeing. According to Gasparini, the hypothesis – that at the origin of the phenomenon there is a lunar conception – is ethnologically valid (Gasparini 1973: 662–664).

The gift of the “sophianic” vision is a global and cosmic vision that finds fertile ground in the tradition of the Russian Mother Earth. As a life experience, the Sophia represents already from the Christian Gnosticism, an expression of nostalgia of the centre, of the origins, the central movement in the experience of the holy fool. The Russian iconography represents her with angelic wings and with the face of fire: a “woman clothed with the sun” (Gasparini 1973: 662–664), an androgynous angel, this burning and solar figure refers to a lunar virginity. Finally, the triad Christ-Sophia-Cosmos is extremely important for the Russian culture and finds its more concrete personification in the Mother of God who rejoices loving, protects the weak, and says quietly that God is everywhere. Pavel Evdokimov points out that “the artistic sensibility, the sense for the cosmic and for the community, and a deeply mystical attitude towards life are specifically female characters of the Rus’” (Evdokimov 1980: 157).

Mother Earth

The veil and the gesture of covering, central motifs of the vision of the Mother of God at Blachernae by Andrew Salos, are other elements which reveal the presence of the feminine in the phenomenon of foolishness in Christ. In the icons of Pokrov it seems that the veil flies, creating a kind of cover, a roof. Above the veil, the domes of the city, Istanbul, Kiev, Suzdal', Vladimir. Under the veil, in the midst between heaven and earth, the Theotokos praying and dancing, present and absent at the same time, central



Fig. 5. Icon of Virgin of Hodegetria, 14th century, Trinity Museum, Lavra of St. Sergius

and dominant, almost indifferent. Often one of the two feet is placed forward, forming a step, suggesting the dynamic and the movement, a flight. Although having in common with the many Madonnas with their “protective mantle” the function of protection, this virgin remains detached, we could say “sophianic” or “spiritual”. This is a contradiction and ambiguity of her being: she’s already flying, but she’s still not leaving the material substance from her hands. Perhaps this is the secret of her flight.

Trying to figure out, with the psychologist Erich Neumann (Neumann 1981), the role and the position of the veil in the phenomenology of the Great Mother, we must start from the central symbol of the Feminine that is the vessel, and its central area that is the abdomen. The characteristic of the symbolism of the abdomen are the dark subterranean world, the night, the mountain, the cave (as the cradle and as the tomb); and its main features are to contain and to protect. The veil, the network, the coat, the dress and the shield are cultural symbols that indicate protection. And yet, from the cave: hut-house-walls-village-town. The natural symbols, linked to the symbolism of the vessel, are earth and water, that is a containment and a transformation. There is a deep symbolic meaning in the constellation that combines the mother, the earth, and the night.

The presence of these symbols in the hagiography of the Christian sacred foolishness is symptomatic. For the holy fool the moment of privilege is the night, a moment of contact with oneself and with the earth. It is the night, telluric and lunar, the ideal place for resting and praying in silence and solitude. Saint Procopius covered himself with dung to sleep in peace; Saint Maron tied himself to a rock to be closer to the ground; Isaac the Recluse (d. 1090), a holy fool shaman, closed himself for seven years in a cave near Kiev⁹. For him the cave, this cave-home acted as a refuge (initial paradise, a womb), and as a crypt. So, the earth can act both as a cradle and a grave, but also as a grave and a cradle, when the mother-earth’s womb becomes the place of the second birth¹⁰. For the holy fool-initiated neophyte, death is nothing but a transition rite: “Life is nothing but a detachment from the bowels of the earth, death is reduced to a return to oneself... a frequent desire to be buried in the ground of a homeland is nothing else but a profane form of a mystical autochthonism, a need to go back to one’s own home” (Eliade 2008: 222).

The examples of holy fools women are rare, probably because the female form of this madness usually remains veiled and inner. “We have an idiot within (*endon*)” said

9 “The Kievan Rus’, as the period of the onset of the people, opens under the sign of the ideas of divine receptivity of the world [...]. The female receptivity of the life in Kievan Rus’ finds its artistic and dogmatic symbol in Sophia as the Awareness of Wisdom” (Florenskij 2006: 139).

10 “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” (*John* 3:4).

the prioress of the Monastery of Tabennisi referring to the first Byzantine *salé* who lived in that Egyptian monastery in the 4th century, hidden in the kitchen, wearing a cloth on her head, and eating just crumbs from the earth as if she was a “sponge of the monastery”, “playing the part of mad and possessed” and behaving “like an idiot” (Palladio 1974: 163–167). According to the French philosopher De Certeau, while saying “we have an idiot within”, the prioress revealed actually their community’s innermost secret, a madness within themselves (De Certeau 1992: 37). In this *salé*’s sacrifice, who annihilates herself for the others, De Certeau recognizes a maternal and infinite love, and sees in the *salé* the “spiritual mother” of all. Another important example of the female holy foolishness may be found in *The Life of St. Xenia of St. Petersburg*, which represents the ritualization of a more concrete sacrifice, tied to an intimate question of forgiveness, which only later, when Ksenija will have been accepted by the city as blessed, becomes universal. Ksenija Grigorievna Petrova (1719–1730) remains a widow at twenty-six, and in order to redeem the sins of her husband who died prematurely, she put on his clothes and disguises herself as Andrei Petrov Feodorovič, symbolically killing Ksenija. After her army officer dress is torn to shreds, she dresses in rags maintaining the uniform colours, red and green. She distributes all her possessions to the poor, and begins to live like *jurodivaja* wandering around the streets of St. Petersburg. Nights, Saint Xenia leaves for the fields and prays there in peace.

In the Christian Orient, the pagan myth of the “humid earth” or the “wet sand” is closely related to the ritual of asking forgiveness and confession, and it was celebrated in some places, such as in the province of Vladimir, before the sacramental confession. After a brief apologies to the sun, the moon, the stars, the dawn, the dark nights, the rain, the wind, the penitent addressed in detail to the ground, saying: “I implore you, humid Mother Earth, my nurse, I beg you, I am a poor, foolish sinner, forgive me for having trampled you with my feet, for having thrown you with my hands, for having watched you with my own eyes, for having spit on you with my mouth... forgive me, dear mother, forgive me, a sinner, in the name of Christ the Saviour and his Holy Mother, the Most Holy Mother of God...” (Špidlík 1977: 347).

The transformation

According to Neumann, in the Feminine can be distinguished the elementary and the transformative female characters; the first one is conservative and the second one pushes for changes. The German psychologist explains the fundamental reversibility of these two aspects by drawing a circle with four polar points: Good Mother, Bad Mother,

the positive transformative character, the negative transformative character. Under the inspiration pole can be found all archetypal figures that may have an inspiring influence, like for example Virgin Sophia, Virgin Athena, Artemis. Under the inebriation pole can be found figures whose tempting and seductive character leads to ruin, like for example Lilith, Circe, Medea. It is interesting to note that in both poles, the transformation occurs through a kind of madness that leads to a state of ecstasy: in the case of the positive soul, ecstasy is obtained through a vision and a inspiration by immersing in oneself (in-stasis); in the case of the negative soul, the madness leads to a confusion and to a state of being “out of mind” (ex-stasis). The holy fool, as well as shaman, plays his experience on the thin thread that ties these two poles: “in shamanism, which is the primary precursor of the prophetic-mantic form, coexist side by side the sphere of “vision–inspiration” and that of “madness–ecstasy” (Neumann 1981: 79). The protector of the holy fool is Sophia, the Great Mother of the transformation that asks the man to experiment himself in freedom and creation.

Submitted 2014 06 06

Accepted 2014 10 03

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alpatov, M. V., *Early Russian Icon Painting*, Moskva, 1974.
- Bachelard, G., *La Terre et les rêveries du repos*, Corti, Paris, 1948. Eng. transl.: Bachelard, G., *Earth and Reveries of Will. An Essay in the Imagination of Matter*, Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, Dallas, 2002.
- Berdjaev, N., *L'idea russa*, Milano, Mursia, 1992. Eng. transl.: Berdyaev, N., *The Russian Idea*, Lindisfarne Press, London, 1992.
- De Certeau, M., *The Mystic Fable*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992.
- Eliade, M., *Trattato di storia delle religioni*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 2008. Eng. transl.: Eliade, M., *Traité d'histoire des religions*, Payot, Paris, 1949.
- Evdokimov, P., *La donna e la salvezza del mondo*, Jaca Book, Milano, 1980. Eng. transl.: Evdokimov, P., *Woman and the Salvation of the World. A Christian Anthropology on the Charismas of Women*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York, 1994.
- Florenskij, P. A., *La mistica e l'anima russa*, San Paolo, Milano, 2006. Eng. transl.: Florensky, P.A., *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth. An Essay on Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1997.
- Gasparini, E., *Il matriarcato slavo. Antropologia culturale dei protoslavi*, Sansoni, Firenze, 1973.
- Kondakov, N. P., *Ikonografija Bogomateri*, 2, Sankt Peterburg, 1915, pp. 92–102.
- Krueger, Derek, *Symeon the Holy Fool. Leontius's Life and the Late Antique City*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, University of California Press, 1996.
- Lathoud, P. D., *Le theme iconographique du "Pokrov" de la Mere de Dieu: origine, variantes*, “Alma Socia Christi. Acta congressus Mariologici-Mariani”, vol. 5, fasc. 2, 1952, pp. 54–67.
- Lazarev, V.N., *Russkaja ikonopis'. Ot istokov do načala 16. Veka*, Iskusstvo, Moskva, 1983.

- Myslives, J., *Dvě ikony "Pokrov"*, in "Byzantinoslavica", n. 6, 1935/1936, pp. 191–207.
- Neumann, E., *La Grande Madre. Fenomenologia delle configurazioni femminili dell'inconscio*, Astrolabio, Roma, 1981. Eng. transl.: Neumann, E., *The Great Mother. An Analysis of the Archetype*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1972.
- Palladio, *La storia lausiaca*, Mondadori, Milano, 1974. Eng. transl.: *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, edited by C. Butler, Cambridge, University Press, 1904.
- Pestalozza, U., *Eterno femminino mediterraneo*, N. Pozza, Vicenza, 1996.
- Rydén, Lennart, edited by, *The Life of St. Andrew the Fool*, Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia, Uppsala, 1995.
- Rydén, Lennart, *The Vision at Blachernae and the Feast of Pokrov*, "Analecta Bollandiana", vol. 94, fasc. 1–2, 1976.
- Špidlík, T., *I grandi mistici russi*, Città Nuova, Roma, 1977.
- Voronin, N.N., *Prazdnik Porkova*, "Vizantijskij Vremennik", n. 26, 1965, pp. 208–218.

Moteriškumas Dievo kvailybės reiškinyje: šv. Andriejaus gyvenimas ir Pokrovo ikonografija

SANTRAUKA. Šiame straipsnyje tyrinėjamas Dievo kvailybės reiškinys ortodoksų Bažnyčioje žvelgiant į jį teatrologijos studijų kontekste. Straipsnio tikslas – pasigilinti į Motinos Žemės įvaizdį *stultitia crucis* asketinėje praktikoje, atskleisti, kaip moteriškumo idėja lydi Dievo kvailelį jo kelionėse (iš Egipto ir Sirijos dykumų į Bizantiją ir Rusiją) ir išlieka pagrindinė gija šiam reiškiniui skleidžiantis įvairiuose geografiniuose ir istoriniuose kontekstuose. Analizės pagrindu tapo Nikeforo veikalas „Šventojo Andriejaus gyvenimas“, parašytas veikiausiai X amžiuje, ir ypač jo epizodas apie Blachernos Mergelės viziją, iš kurio kilo rusų Pokrovo šventė. Analizę papildė Pokrovo ikonografija, čia susitelkiama ties pagrindiniais vizijos elementais – šydu, apsisiautimo būdu, tipiniais Didžiosios Motinos archetipo fenomenologijos motyvais.

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI:

krikščionys ortodoksai, *stultitia crucis*, Nikeforas, „Šventojo Andriejaus gyvenimas“, Pokrovas.