

How Do Consecrated Objects “Speak”? The Rhetorical Function of Liturgical Objects and Garments in The Eastern Orthodox Church

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Abstract: In the Eastern Orthodox Church, liturgical space and liturgical objects, following the Byzantine tradition, occupy a central role. How is this liturgical significance transposed in the bishops and priests` ambon discourse? More specifically: the visible consecrated objects worn or used by the Orthodox Christian clergy while they are preaching -such as a blessing or pectoral cross, a bible, a lighted candle, a bishop`s staff and even the liturgical garments in themselves - are rhetorical? This paper, by reviewing some of the classical and modern rhetorical concepts, reveals that these specific “wearable” liturgical objects are referring mainly to the preacher`s *pre-existing ethos*, which indicates that he has a prior institutional and moral authority to address the faithful.

Keywords: Christian objects, pre-existing ethos, rhetoric, homilies, liturgical garments, religious discourse, institutional credibility, auctoritas

1. Introduction

It is difficult to imagine a homily, a sermon, without intent - says Zoltan Literaty (2020, loc. 73). If all intentional speeches are rhetorical by nature, as the author concludes, it is inferred that the religious discourse is subject to persuasion taxonomy and hence to the well-known Aristotelian triad *ethos - pathos - logos*. Aristotle`s *Rhetoric*, which has an enormous influence on the development of the art of public speaking, with interesting and useful starting points even for contemporary scholars, shows that in any speech situation there are three *pisteis* - forms of persuasion: presentation of the trustworthy character of the speaker

(*ethos*), the logical argument set out in the text (*logos*) and the emotional effect (*pathos*) (Kennedy 2007, 20). Focusing on the rhetorical notion of *ethos* and considering that “as the Church Fathers were well aware, literary eloquence affected a few, but visual eloquence spoke to many” (Maguire 1981, 111), this article explores how consecrated objects worn by the Eastern Orthodox priests and bishops during their homilies uttered in the churches, play an important role in establishing of the *pre-existing ethos*, which is the *pre-discursive* or *prior image of the speaker*.

Thus, my main research questions are two: Do consecrated objects “speak” simultaneously with the Christian Orthodox clergymen words? In which ways do these objects trigger and preserve a discursive role?

The paper is structured as follows. First, the introduction, then section two, will outline the theoretical concepts, classical and new, of *ethos* and particularly the *pre-existing ethos*. In section three, I will observe how the liturgical garments given to the priest and bishops during their ordination and worn by them during their future homilies are related to the speaker’s prior institutional and moral position and how listeners mainly associate these sacred objects with sacerdotal authority, which is rooted in the Apostolic tradition of ordination. In section four, I will list another category of “wearable” and rhetorical consecrated objects - a bible, a blessing cross, a lighted candle - and I will analyse to whom they are linked and how they influence the audience. The fifth section concludes the article with a summary of the findings, namely the function and importance of the consecrated Orthodox Christian objects in persuasion as *pre-existing ethos* elements and relation between faithful as audience and clergymen as orators.

2. The pre-existing *ethos* - what it is and how it works

The broadest definition of rhetoric is that of Aristotle: “Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion” (*Rhetoric* 1.2.1355b25). The Stagiritic explains his theory, using an analogy, in *Topics* (6.12.149b26-30):

“Such is the definition of an orator as one who can see what will persuade in any circumstances, and omit nothing; or of a thief, as one who pilfers in secret; for clearly, if they each do this, then the one will be a good orator, and the other a good thief; whereas it is not the actual pilfering in secret, but the wish to do it, that constitutes the thief”.

To “persuade in any circumstances” the orator will use *pisteis*, which have different meanings in different contexts: “proofs”, “means of persuasion”, “beliefs”. Aristotle, probably following Isocrates’ tradition (Maftai 2011, 374), will distinguish between *atechnic* (*non-artistic*) and *entechnic* (*artistic*, embodied in art) *pisteis* (Kennedy 2007, 20):

“Of the *pisteis*, some are *atechnic*, some *entechnic*. I call *atechnic* those that are not provided by «us» [i.e., the potential speaker] but are pre-existing: for example, witnesses, testimony from torture, contracts, and such like; and *entechnic* whatever can be prepared by method and by us; thus, one must use the former and invent the latter” (*Rhetoric* 1.2.1355b35).

Aristotle will explain at length in his *Rhetoric* 1.2.15, the five *atechnic pisteis*: laws, witnesses, contracts, tortures, oaths. We can also find references for *atechnic pisteis* at the two leading Roman rhetoricians - Cicero and Quintilian - who uses and quotes the Stagirite’s *Rhetoric* in their works, with new and personal interpretations as I will show below. It is worth mentioning regarding the Aristotelian view that the *entechnic pisteis* are uncovered and used by the orator, while *atechnic pisteis* are not and this results in the distinction between *inventio* and the other canons of rhetoric (Maftai 2011, 374). *Heurein*, the word used by Aristotle which means “to find”, will become the regular Greek word for rhetorical invention (Kennedy 2007, 38).

Next, Aristotle presents his triad *ethos* (speaker), *pathos* (auditor) and *logos* (language, speech), which will be significant to any future oratory approach: “Of the *pisteis* provided through speech there are three species; for some are in the character of the speaker, and some in disposing of the listener in some way, and some in the speech itself, by showing or seeming to show something” (*Rhetoric* 1.2.1356a).

Even Aristotle agrees with Isocrates’ *atechnic* - *entechnic* division of means of persuasion (later writers sometimes call these *extrinsic* and *intrinsic*, as Kennedy noticed), but as regards to *ethos*, he has a different opinion in comparison with others rhetorical traditions and conceptions, including Plato and Isocrates. In Plato’s, and Isocrates’ view, the rhetorical *ethos* is a means by which the speaker reveals his moral character. *Ethos* pre-exists the discourse and should be reflected in it (Žmavc 2012, 184). For example, in *Antidosis* (278), Isocrates points out that the orator displayed *ethos* even before speaking or writing, this being manifested in all actions of his life (Sabo 2015, 1). As scholars like Wisse (1989) and Kennedy (2007) noticed, Aristotle does not include in rhetorical *ethos* the authority that the speaker may possess due to position

in government or society. The probable reason for Aristotle's position is that speakers in law courts were often ordinary people unknown to the jury, and a relatively unknown person might speak in the assembly as well (Kennedy 2007, 39). The standpoint of Aristotle about rhetorical ethos, which is connected with the notion of *epieikeia*, is described in his *Rhetoric* 1.2.1356a4-8:

“[There is persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others], on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt. And this should result from the speech, not from a previous opinion that the speaker is a certain kind of person; for it is not the case, as some of the handbook writers propose in their treatment of the art, that fair-mindedness [*epieikeia*] on the part of the speaker makes no contribution to persuasiveness; rather, the character is almost, so to speak, the most authoritative form of persuasion”.

The words *epieikês* and *epieikeia* denoted in Greek a person who was reasonable, fair or morally good (Žmavc 2012, 183). As I have already shown, Aristotle affirms that it is very important for a speaker to present himself as *epieikeia*, since the audience much more trusts good or fair-minded people. How the trustworthy image of a speaker is composed, Aristotle, following the ancient rhetorical tradition, presents three attributes: the speaker's practical wisdom (*phronesis*), virtue (*arête*) and goodwill (*eunoia*) (Žmavc 2012, 183-184).

Aristotle's view about rhetorical ethos presents notable differences in Cicero and Quintilian's works. In Roman traditional oratory, the social authority of the speaker, which is the authority a speaker already possesses before he begins his speech, is an important factor that contributes to ethos. Wisse (1989) explains the importance of social authority in Roman society relying on the fact that “social authority played a much more important part in Roman culture and society, where personal relations were often decisive factors in the course of events than in the democratic state of Athens, where such relations if too openly used, were often regarded with suspicion” (245).

For Aristotle, rhetorical ethos must be achieved only by the speech itself and not by any preconceived idea of the speaker's character, and that is why he does not mention anything connected with the impression the speaker may make on his audience and does not include authority anywhere (Wisse 1989, 246). On the other hand, for Cicero the social authority of the speaker is a part of his ethos:

“Well then, the character, the customs, the deeds, and the life, both of those who do the pleading and of those on whose behalf they plead, make a very important contribution to winning a case. These should be approved of, and the corresponding elements in the opponents should meet with disapproval, and the minds of the audience should, as much as possible, be won over to feel goodwill toward the orator as well as toward his client. Now people’s minds are won over by a man’s prestige, his accomplishments, and the reputation he has acquired by his way of life. Such things are easier to embellish if present than to fabricate if totally lacking...” (*De Oratore*, 182).

Regarding the *atechnic* Aristotelian *pisteis*, Quintilian is utterly convinced that they need to be used: “But though in themselves they involve no art, all the powers of eloquence are as a rule required to disparage or refute them. Consequently, in my opinion, those who would eliminate the whole of this class of proof from their rules of oratory, deserve the strongest condemnation” (*Institutio oratoria* 5. 1, 2-3).

The different view about ethos between classical Greek and Roman rhetoric is based on the difference between *epieikeia* - the term denoted a person who was reasonable, fair or morally good and *auctoritas* - the admiration for the person that demonstrated wisdom, proficiency and a sense of responsibility in personal and public matters (especially in the context of the *patronus-cliens* relationship), says Janja Žmavc (2012, 188). According to Žmavc, the *auctoritas* is earned by the orator partly through his *ancestors*, but mainly he had to gain it with his praiseworthy actions that came from his political activity and public office service. With the *auctoritas* earned, the orator can trigger easier the discursive ethos and work on the persuasion of the audience. Žmavc continues her research by noting that often *auctoritas* replaced logical argumentation and Roman orators did not only use their own *auctoritas* but also the *auctoritas* of others: “Besides his character, a speaker (usually would be a respected patronus with notable *auctoritas*) could also employ a presentation of the character of his client, his adversary or his adversary’s pleader and combine these without restraint and solely for an oratory success” (Žmavc 2012, 188). We can also find references about *auctoritas* as a means of persuasion used in Roman judicial speeches by Cicero in *De oratore* (1. 198) and Quintilian in *Institutio oratoria* (4.1.6-7).

I cannot close the *pre-existing ethos* chapter without bringing to attention the work of Ruth Amossy. Using Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s treatise on argumentation and by considering the concept of ethos from a modern triple disciplinary perspective - Rhetoric,

Pragmatics, Sociology - the author highlights the notion of “stereotype” as a part of the ethos. For Amossy, “stereotyping consists of perceiving and understanding the real through a pre-existent cultural representation, a fixed collective schema. A concrete individual is thus perceived and evaluated as a function of the preconstructed model diffused by the community of the category in which they place that individual” (2001, 8). In the construction of the image of self which confers on the discourse a considerable part of its authority, the orator will adapt „his or her self-presentation to collective schemas which he or she believes are ratified and valued by the target public” (Amossy 2001, 8).

3. How do liturgical garments become rhetorical?

Based on what Jesus Christ commanded to His disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you”¹, in the Christian Church, preaching of the Gospel is mandatory for clergymen. Paul the apostle also urges Timothy: “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching” (2 Timothy 4, 1-2). The same does apostle Peter (1 Peter 5, 1-2). In canonical terms, it is also important to notice that preaching is not optional but mandatory for priests and bishops: “A bishop or presbyter, who is neglecting the clergy or the laity and not educating them in piety, let him be excommunicated, and continuing in negligence and indolence, let him be deposed” (58 Apostle Canon). Canon 19 of the Synod of Laodicea (343) determines, at least for that period (the 3rd and 4th centuries), the Sunday homily to be uttered at the beginning of the Holy Liturgy, after the Apostle and the Gospel readings (Floca 1990, 22). Christian Church canons, which are normative, contain clear references to how the homily must be delivered, its content and the place or time of it. (Gordon 2015, 61). We also must take note of the fact that preaching, according to the primary canons of the Church, is a prerogative of the major clergy, principally the bishops and priests.

¹ I used the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church, as in the Roman Catholic or Greek-Roman Catholic Church, the priests and bishops preach from the ambon, nowadays often a raised step, directly in front of the holy doors of the altar, facing the faithful. From the ambon, the priest reads also The Gospel of the day (Carroll 2018, 187). Given the fact that homilies are uttered during the Divine Liturgy, the priest and bishop are vested in *liturgical garments*. In this way, some theologians see the preaching of the gospel in the world as a *liturgical act* because it means that it is first and foremost a service rendered to God (Chan 2006, 46).

In my hypothesis, priestly garments are the first and main category of rhetorical consecrated “wearable” objects. Above all, it is important to note that the liturgical garments are universally worn by deacons, priests and bishops only after their ordination into these “major orders”. A deacon, a priest or a bishop can’t wear the liturgical garment (and generally to preach) before their public ordination. The ordination (of bishop, priest, and deacon) or “cheirotonia” (laying on of hands) is one of the seven traditional “sacraments” or “misteries” in the Orthodox Church, based on the Apostolic succession and authority. The others six are Baptism, Chrismation (anointing of the newly baptized), Communion or Eucharist, Matrimony, Confession, and Unction (the solemn anointing of the sick) (Prokurat, Golitzin and Peterson 1996, 286). At ordination, a candidate is brought to the iconostasis by fellow members of his rank for “passing on” into the hands of ordained clergy of the *dignity* to which he is being inducted. All priestly ordinations take place during the Eucharist, and only one ordination to any given rank can be celebrated at a single liturgy (Pettis 2011, 426). I will not expose the entire ritual of the three major orders ordinations, which can be easily found in any book of Christian Orthodox ritual. For my study the following issues are valuable. Foremost, it is important to highlight that the Eastern Orthodox clergy - the deacons, priests and bishops - are all invested during the Divine Liturgy and vested in *garments* in front of the faithful, which can see the ordination and becoming *witnesses*.

More than that, as *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, presents in the first volume, all ordinations symbolically follow the *consent* given by the congregation (Pettis 2011, 426). When the candidate is presented by the bishop by asking (nowadays exclamation) in three different languages «Is he worthy (Axios) [to be ordained]?», the faithful can respond «He is worthy (Axios)!», or «He is unworthy (Anaxios)!». Because the nature of ordination is indelible, it can occur to the same rank only once and may never be repeated. A

negative response - which is rare - would result in an ecclesiastical court investigating the accusation implied in «anaxios» (Pettis 2011, 4). At the same time with the faithful addressing, it takes place in front of the holy doors of the altar the dressing in the liturgical garments of the new deacon (the sticharion, or dalmatic, the deacon's stole or orarion, the cuffs), priest (the priest's stole or epitrachelion, the cuffs, the belt or zone girds the priest, the palitza, or diamond-shaped epigonation, the phelonion, or chasuble, the priest's cross - not shown) or bishop (the sakkos, or dalmatic, the omophorion, or pall, the miter, the pastoral staff, or crosier, the eagle rug, the bishop's mantle - not shown, or cape, the panagia, or encolpion) (Prokurat, Golitzin and Peterson 1996, 336-338).

Among all bishops' "wearable" garments we can clearly distinguish two visible signs of *authority*: the pastoral staff and the miter. The miter is "a crown that serves as an emblem of the power bestowed upon the High Priest" and the pastoral staff, or crosier, "indicates the spiritual authority of bishops over their flocks", through association by the image of the Good Shepherd (Prokurat, Golitzin and Peterson 1996, 337-338). Christ the Good Shepherd was a dominant motif of the Roman catacombs, belonging to the earliest level of pastoral imagery (the early third century) (McGuckin 2017, 1125). Even in the ordination ritual, the bishops' staff is perceived as an emblem of authority: "Receive this staff to shepherd the flock of Christ entrusted to you. To the obedient let it be a help and a support. With it, lead the disobedient and the wayward to admonishment and instruction" (Arhieratikon 1993, p.101).

The bishop who celebrates Holy Liturgy presents the candidate in front of all and, one by one, raises his right hand with a piece of the garments in his hand, while he asks (proclaims) that the candidate is worthy (Braniște 2016, 547). In the light of the foregoing, it is appropriate to note that even the word "liturgy" in classical Greek (*leitourgia*) means "common or public works", which could connote civic good deeds, political service, or the formal recognition of a patronal divinity's benefactions to a town (Prokurat, Golitzin and Peterson 1996, 200; McGuckin 2017, 691).

Speaking about the witnesses, Quintilian shows that the "The task of dealing with the evidence of witnesses present is, however, one of great difficulty" and, very important, that "one side will contend that there can be no stronger proof than that which rests on human knowledge" (*Institutio oratoria* 5. 7, 3-5). For Quintilian, the written evidence, the documentary evidence, is easier to dispose of than the oral evidence of the witnesses presents *on the scene*. Regarding the Christian

discourse, it is also interesting to follow the etymological thread of the word “homily”, which indicate that the persuasion of this type of speech is inextricably linked to an audience present *on the scene*. The term “homily”, as a genre of Christian sermon, starts with ancient Greek “homilos”, meaning “crowd” or “assembly” (Gordon 2015, 23). Greeks used “homilos” to create the verb “homilein”, which means “to be in relation with”, “to meet”, “to consort with” or “to converse”, as well as the noun “homilia” meaning “conversation”, “reunion”, “dialogue” (Gordon 2015, 23). How can a “common or public work” have rhetorical value? The answer is given by Quintilian: “With regard to rumour and common report, one party will call them the verdict of public opinion and the testimony of the world at large...” (*Institutio Oratoria* 5. 3, 1).²

Based on these observations, the faithful, *the witnesses* of the ordination, have in the liturgical garments the proof that the bishop or the priest has the institutional mandate to preach and to be obeyed. This mandate comes from Christ Himself, through the Apostolic tradition of ordination. For example, in confirmation of the Apostolic succession and according to the Council of Nicea (325), episcopal ordinations require the participation of at least three other bishops (Canon 4) (McGuckin 2017, p. 223), which shows the significance and responsibility of this ecclesiastical dignity.

Returning to rhetorical function, Cicero explains that are two kinds of rhetorical evidence: divine and human.

“Divine evidence is for instance oracles, auspices, prophecies, the answers of priests and augurs and diviners; human evidence is what is viewed in the light of authority and inclination and things said either freely or under compulsion - the evidence that includes written documents, pledges, promises, statements made on oath or under examination” (*De Partitione Oratoria*, ii. 6).

If Cicero indicates the oath as evidence, it is also essential to emphasise that the candidate to priesthood or episcopate in the Eastern Orthodox Church pronounces a *Solemn public oath* or *Faith declaration* as part of cheirotonia. In the end, the oath had to be signed by the candidate to assure the legitimacy of the document. For instance, the Romanian Orthodox Church approved in 2010, a universal text of the Solemn public oath for all candidates to priesthood, both married and monks (<http://patriarhia.ro/hotararea-nr-4218-2010-pentru-aprobarea->

² In other translation: “Common fame and report, one party will call the consent of the whole people, and a sort of public evidence...” (Watson 1903, 317).

textului-marturisirii-declaratiei-solemne-publice-rostite-la-hirotonie-in-preot-ieromonah-2838.html). The oath text has a unitary and compulsory nature. A document signed by candidates at priesthood in a public space, before the faithful community (in some cases before their future parishioners) works like a *contract*. In the Aristotelian view, the contracts “are credible to the extent that the signatories and custodians are” and “as far as rendering them credible or not credible goes, there is no difference from the treatment of witnesses” (*Rhetoric* 1.15.1376b5).

Aristotle is referring also in his *Rhetoric* to the oaths taken or refused by the principals in a trial. As Kennedy clears up,

“in Greece, an attempt to settle a matter before or during a trial could take the form of an *exculpatory oath*. The assumption is that the gods will punish anyone who knowingly swears falsely. One or both of the disputants could challenge the other to take an oath (e.g., that the terms of a contract had been fulfilled). If the matter was not settled in this way before a trial, these challenges then could be used as evidence for or against the litigants, or a challenge to swear could be given during the trial”.

About the oaths as rhetorical judicial evidence Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1.15.1377a10-30; 1377b) and Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria* 5. 6) treat widely. Another interesting angle that I found in their treatises is the fact that the oath can be bound with the consciousness to maximise the rhetorical effect. In this sense, Quintilian is more outspoken: “Or, finally, he may in addition to the other means which he employs to win his case offer to take an oath as a culminating proof of a clear conscience” (*Institutio Oratoria* 5. 6, 2). He even dedicates a whole chapter (*Institutio Oratoria* 12.1) to prove that no man can be an orator unless he is a good man.

In conclusion to this chapter, I can assert that the rhetorical function of liturgical garments is inextricably linked to the ordination or “cheirotonia”, in which the candidate to the major orders crosses the way from *epieikeia* to *auctoritas*. The solemn oath (which works like a public contract) helps the candidate (the future priest or bishop) to present himself as an Aristotelian *epieikeia* and to be seen by the community of faithful as a reasonable, fair or morally good person. This is strengthened by the consent given both by the bishop who declaims that the candidate is worthy and by the public congregation consent. Regarding the Žmavc observations - that *auctoritas* is earned by the orator partly through his *ancestors*, but mainly by gaining his praiseworthy actions that came from a public office service - I underlined that the liturgical garments are a

visible sign of Apostolic tradition and authority. That’s why the Christian Orthodox ordination in deacon, priest or bishop is done by one or more bishops, who are seen by the community as Apostle’s successors and the “chosen ones” who shall ensure the preservation and perpetuation of the Christian faith. The liturgical garments are given at ordination to the future clergymen during the Liturgy, which is a public service, precisely for being vested at their future religious public services. The witnesses of the ordination - the faithful who saw how the new priest or bishop was vested in the liturgical garments by the bishops who celebrated the Liturgy - will be probably present in the next Sunday or next feast among the audience of their homilies. Only after their ordination into the major orders, the new deacons, priests and bishops are recognized and called by their communities as “fathers” or “spiritual fathers”.

4. Other “wearable” and rhetorical consecrated objects: the Bible, the blessing cross and the lighted candle

The second category of rhetorical consecrated objects worn by the Eastern Orthodox priests and bishops during their homilies is composed, in my opinion, of the Holy Bible, the cross used for blessing the faithful and the lighted Paschal candle. I included them in the second category, not by their persuasive importance - even the liturgical garments are majority embroidered with the sign of the cross and biblical themes - but essentially having regard to the fact that they are not widely used. Regarding the lighted candle, is held in hands by the Orthodox priests and bishops during their Paschal midnight service homilies, but also on the services of Bright Week or Renewal Week.

If I already mention the images added to the vestments of the clergy, Woodfin says that they are “only part of a broader trend in the Late Byzantine Church to give visual form to symbolic thought” and that “the function of such images was to lay bare the meaning of the very mysteries they hid from the direct view of the faithful” (2012, 211). He relates to these images as “didactic”, meant primarily for instruction rather than veneration.

Every Orthodox priest or bishop is usually preaching at the ambon vested in liturgical garments, but it is not a universal or necessary practice for them to hold a bible or a blessing cross in their hand during their homilies. I need to mention that this chapter does not refer to the theological significance of the Holy Bible and the Holy Cross; it is well known that they are quintessential for the Christian teachings and

eneration. I am restricting my remarks and see them only as “wearable” consecrated objects with a persuasive role.

On many occasions, while they are preaching in church, and not only, the Orthodox priests and bishops hold in their hands a bible or a blessing cross. As regards the bible in the preacher’s hand, a practical reason can be, of course, the accurate quoting of the verses. The declamation from the Bible is present in all Christian denominations and for some of the denominations, Bible is the sole *authority* for faith.

In the early history of the Church, as McGuckin indicates, the Scripture’s authority was based on the *witness* of the apostolic preaching and become over time a guarantee of this authority:

“For the early church commentators, the Scriptures commanded authority, therefore, as a primary witness of the apostolic preaching, and thus the lens through which the church, and its biblical interpreters in a later age, could share in a commonality of experience of the Christ mystery. Dominical and apostolic utterances become, as it were, the set key signatures, within which the present music of the reexpression of the evangelical kerygma can be extrapolated: that music which is the essential expression of the church from age to age. The Scriptures thus stand as an authority over Christian tradition and a guarantee of the latter’s authenticity...” (2017, 774).

With all this paramount importance, it is self-evident that holding a bible in hand, the preacher’s authority is higher than without it. We find here a clear *auctoritas*, earned by the orator partly through his *ancestors*. More than that, it is widely known that the Orthodox Church, compared to other Christian denominations, “has a much more intimate and direct relationship with the sacred and the symbols” (Bănică 2020). For example, in some autocephalous Orthodox churches, when the candidates to diaconate and priesthood sign the Solemn public oath the Gospel Lectionary is used as a prop, proving their earnestness and contributing to their future trustworthy public image.

In addition, the blessing cross held in hands during the homilies uttering serves as *evidence* that the priest or bishop is not preaching in his name, but in the name of Jesus Christ. Usually held by the preacher in the right hand over his heart, the blessing cross can associate the orators’ *auctoritas* with that of the Apostles and even with that of Christ (John 20: 23), helping him to trigger easier the discursive ethos and work on the persuasion of the audience. In this case, the *auctoritas* becomes an *auctor*, a *respondent* (Meyer 2010, 204). It follows the importance of the *witness* in religious argumentation, where the priest or bishop must have the capacity, the practical wisdom to teach and guide. The same rhetorical

function has the lighted candle in the priest`s or bishop`s hands on the Paschal midnight service. The clergyman appears before the faithful vest in white garments, holding in his hands a big lighted candle, usually adorned with green branches and flowers - symbols of life and symbol of Christ Himself - and light, in front of the holy doors, the candles of the faithful.

By reviewing Peirce`s sign theory, Budzynska et al (2021, 526-527) conclude that

“the association between a public figure (who corresponds to a signified object in Peirce`s sign theory) and an extra-linguistic object (which corresponds to a sign or a signifier) can be thus classified into three types: the association is *iconic* if there is a quality or a feature shared by a person and an extra-linguistic object; (...) it is *indexical* if there is a physical or factual relation between a person and an object; (...) and it is *symbolic* if there is a convention or a norm which allows for interpreting an object as a signifier of a person”.

The second category of rhetorical consecrated objects - the Bible, the blessing cross, the lighted candle - have the *symbolic* and *iconic* types of association. Knowing that “the strength of the association increases from indexical being the weakest, through symbolic to iconic being the strongest” (Budzynska et al 2021, 527), means that the ambon argumentation is difficult to be broken if the audience forms itself as a community of believers, of parishioners. To understand how a cross or a biblical representation trigger and preserve a discursive role it is important to know how the faithful perceive the holy images and the image of God in the Orthodox Church. According to the doctrine of the great Cappadocian Father Saint Basil, the dialect of the image of God contains four important aspects, going from the more simple to the more profound: the image as a “portrait” of the Prototype, as a “picture” depicting the Prototype in a rather external way, the image as a “sign” of the Prototype, the image which makes its Archetype manifest and known, the image as belonging to the Archetype, and as the basis of a personal relationship with the Archetype and the image as „presence” of the Archetype. (Aghiorgoussis 1999, 9 - 10). As the author concludes, „the image makes the Prototype present, seen, and felt by all those have the spiritual eyes to see Him, and have the spiritual „extrasensory perception” to feel Him present (Aghiorgoussis 1999, 10). Being aware of the fact that the listener shows, in general, a tendency to particularly persuasion, the clergymen can use in this sense these four types of images of God.

More than that, all three elements - the Bible, the blessing cross, the lighted candle - helps Orthodox preachers to build the notion of “stereotype” as a part of their ethos. I already mention that in the construction of the image of self which confers on the discourse a considerable part of its authority, the orator will adapt „his self-presentation to collective schemas which he believes are ratified and valued by the target public” (Amossy 2001, 8). For example, when the priest or bishop starts his homily, he made the sign of the cross on to himself - sometimes with the blessing cross - while saying “In the Name of the Father” and touching the forehead, “And of the Son” and touching the waist, “And of the Holy Spirit,” and touching the right shoulder and then the left shoulder saying “Amen”. The majority of the faithful in attendance respond by doing the same gesture; it is no coincidence that the cross is the most common and popular Christian Orthodox form of prayer. More than that, “the divine liturgy is regularly interspersed with the priest or bishop emerging from the Royal Doors to offer blessings to the people” (McGuckin 2011, 170).

An ethos “stereotype”, “a fixed collective schema, where „a concrete individual is thus perceived and evaluated as a function of the preconstructed model diffused by the community of the category in which they place that individual” (Amossy 2001, 8) is achieved by through the gestures of lighting the candles by the priests and the believers on the Paschal midnight service. Year after year, the midnight Paschal homilies begin with the same specific proclamation “Christ has risen!” uttered three times by the bishop or priest in three different directions, followed by a collective response from the audience: “He has risen indeed!”. The orator is in this situation centrally located, in a place where he can be seen by a lot of people. The proclamation is accompanied at the same time by the preacher’s gesture of blessing into the sign of the cross in three directions. In this case, the image of clergymen and faithful staying together in darkness with lighted candles are referring to the preacher’s ethos, but also *pathos*. The shorter the distance, the stronger the passion between each other (Michel Meyer 2010, 243).

5. Final remarks

In the Eastern Orthodox Church, the bishops and the priests preach the Gospel not only through the words of the homilies. A series of consecrated “wearable” objects can trigger a discursive role, being related particularly to the preacher’s *pre-existing* or *prior ethos*.

As I have previously shown, the rhetorical function of *liturgical garments* is inextricably linked to the ordination or “cheirotonia”, in which the candidate to the major orders crosses the way from the Aristotelian *epieikeia* to Roman and modern *auctoritas* by using different types of proofs: *witnesses present on the scene, oath, public contract, ancestors, public consent*. Other “wearable” and rhetorical consecrated objects - the Bible, the blessing cross and the lighted candle - have the *symbolic* and *iconic* association with the preacher and faithful, but also with the *ancestors* - the Apostles and even with Jesus Christ. In these cases, the *auctoritas* of a preacher becomes often an *auctor*, a respondent. Finally, all the consecrated objects that I have mentioned contribute to the realization of *stereotyping*, which consists, as Amossy says, of perceiving and understanding the real through a *pre-existent* cultural representation, a fixed collective schema.

Called by their communities as “fathers” or “spiritual fathers”, the Orthodox clergymen needs to preserve and live up the Byzantine tradition, in which the Church is seen as in the classic phrase of patriarch St. Germanus I of Constantinople (ca. 730): “The church is heaven on earth, where the God of heaven dwells and moves”.

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