

**Tatiana Petrache, *Dicționar de nume (Dictionary of names)*, Făurei, Siluana, 2020, 318 p.**

A theologian, translator and author of religiously themed books addressed to children, Mrs. Tatiana Petrache proposes us a dictionary of names. She is not at the first attempt of this kind, the interest in deciphering the mysteries of names, especially the Christian ones, being a constant presence among her concerns.

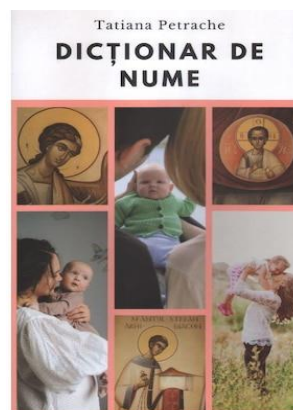
The work begins with a theoretical part, gathered under the title *Introductory Specifications* (pp. 7–21), in which some brief information about anthroponyms is provided. The *Mystery of the Name* is revealed to us at the beginning (pp. 7–9). It represents “a quintessence of the person, and the person, with all their peculiarities and energy, is present in the name” (p. 7). In the primitive societies, the name was vested with magical powers, or it could imprint a certain destiny on its bearer. As time goes on, magical and superstitious connotations are eroding; gradually, and in close connection with demographic growth and the evolution of society, the role of the name is reduced only to identifying the person in relation to the other members of the community, becoming a simple empty label of meaning. At the opposite pole, it is the name in relation to God, a relationship of “summons and answer” (p. 8), in which the man enters through Baptism; in the Church, “each is present in their own name, unique and unmistakable, from the moment of Christ’s birth. to his passing into the life after death...” (p. 9).

*Christian anthroponymy* (pp. 10–13) is the sum of currents, events, personalities, etc., that have manifested themselves in this religious space. Much of it was taken from martyrologies and calendars. Then, there appear the symbolic names that evoke God, his promises, or aspects of the cult; the names in the Holy Scripture, in the New Testament in particular, the models being the close friends of Christ (or formed from events in his life), followed by the names of the martyrs. To a lesser extent, old-testament names are also present, as well as those based on abstract nouns with theological meaning (*Agapie* “love”, *Evdochia* “willingness”), Christian holidays (*Sabbatius*), dogmas, sacraments, virtues, ecclesiastic functions (*Anastasios*, *Renatus*, *Sacerdos*).

Thus, if initially the names had a meaning, nowadays, it has remained only a reflex, “an echo of the primordial suggestive intention” (p. 14). About this aspect, the author speaks to us in the section *The relationship between the signified and the signifier* (pp. 13–14).

The following pages (pp. 14–16) focus on the *classification of anthroponyms*. Mrs. Tatiana Petrache refers here to individual names, which can be divided into three categories, namely: a) names that are received at birth (unique, double or multiple in contemporary society), b) names that can be received during life – the surnames (laudatory or pejorative), c) names that a person adopts (pseudonyms, name change). Each of these three categories being able to be analysed according to: origin and meaning, transformations and alterations, substitutions.

With regards to the origin, the author also establishes a triad: a) *devotional names* (theophoric, names of religious holidays, names of saints or calendar, biblical names), b) *affective names* (appeared as surnames and reflecting the relationship with the family, with the society and the environment: order, birth, joy of birth, physical or character traits, flowers and plants, animals, precious stones, heavenly bodies, and natural phenomena, etc.), c) *names showing admiration*



(chosen out of respect for a person – Bible prophets, heroes, reformers, athletes, etc., a people, a culture, star names etc.).

*The historical evolution of the Romanian anthroponymy* (pp. 16–20) is similar, in general terms, to the evolution of the person's names in the European anthroponymic systems, and includes elements which they have also been related to, such as the Christian calendar. Nonetheless, it also has elements that characterize it, specific to the history of the Romanian people; we find in our anthroponymy (and toponymy) the names of most of the foreign populations that have wandered on the territory of the country, and an analysis of them, vertically, easily highlights the ethnic sedimentations that outline the linguistic layers (Thracian-Dacian, Romanian, Slavic, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Pecheneg and Cuman, German, Saxon) with a variable lexical concentration, directly proportional to the duration, intensity and surface of the space in which the Romanians lived with the other peoples, correlated, therefore, with the history of society.

Therefore, Mrs. Tatiana Petrache establishes several evolutionary phases: 1. Dacian-Roman names – which circulated at the dawn of the ethnogenesis of the Romanian people – secular names consisting of words of Thracian origin, Slavic names; 2. The spread of Christianity resulted in the penetration of the Byzantine-Slavic Orthodox anthroponymy; 3. The modern stage – characterized by the taking of names from distant history, or those of Western origin; 4. The actual anthroponymy, which oscillates between traditional and modern names, foreign in particular, and the multiplication of the elements that make up the baptismal name with the aim of satisfying, in this way, all the denominative (sometimes totally uninspired) desires of the genitors. The author then concludes: “A progressive alienation from the self is seen, because the names tend to no longer reveal the mystery of the person ...”, which is “a dramatic atomization of society, this amount of isolated and independent individuals... for the name no longer has its source in the name, nor the words in the Word” (p. 20).

The introductory part ends with a *Specification on the present volume* (pp. 20–21), in which Mrs. Tatiana Petrache makes some mentions on the structure of the dictionary articles and the hagiographic table.

*The lexicon* itself (pp. 27–134) (accompanied by the selective bibliography – pp. 135–136) sums up the common names in the present anthroponymy and the religious names found in ecclesiastical and monastic environments. For each of these, its etymology, the hagiographic character of the name, the lineage through which it penetrated to us, the variants, the derivatives, the hypocoristic elements.

*The Alphabetical Table of Orthodox Saints* (pp. 137–318) contains information (more or less complex) about saints: of the Orthodox Church, but also Western saints, as well as saints canonized by the Slavic Churches of the Diaspora.

The dictionary was realized, from a scientific point of view, with special attention (as a guide in choosing first and last names), to which it is added the passion of the author and her desire to contribute to the rediscovery of the “intrinsic link between the name and the person who bears it” (p. 21). And if the name has become, at the moment, a simple label, at least care ought to be shown, “to choose it appropriately” (p. 21).

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