



License applied: [CC-BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

DOI:

Title:	LANDMARKS OF SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY FROM THE ORTHODOX SPACE IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES
Authors:	Flavius Cristian MĂRCĂU

Section: SOCIAL SCIENCES

Issue: 1(19)/2020

Received: 22 February 2020	Revised: No
Accepted: 26 February 2020	Available Online: 15 March 2020

Paper available online [HERE](#)

LANDMARKS OF SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY FROM THE ORTHODOX SPACE IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

Flavius-Cristian MĂRCĂU¹

ABSTRACT:

THIS IS A BOOK REVIEW OF: MAXIM (IULIU-MARIUS) MORARIU, *REPERE ALE AUTOBIOGRAFIEI SPIRITUALE DIN SPAȚIUL ORTODOX ÎN SECOLELE XIX ȘI XX [LANDMARKS OF THE SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES, (IAȘI: LUMEN PUBLISHING HOUSE, 2019) AND IT PRESENTS ITS CONTENT AND VALUE FOR THE CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH AND THE INTER-DISCIPLINARY VALUE.*

KEY WORDS: JOHN OF KRONSTADT, SILOUANE THE ATHONITE, NICOLAE BERDIAEV, AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TEXTS, MYSTICS.

Iuliu-Marius Morariu is already known in the scientific space thanks to his previously published books.² Spiritual autobiography was also among the topics frequently approached

¹ Lecturer, Constantin Brancusi University of Târgu Jiu, Romania, flaviusmarcau@yahoo.com

² See, for example: Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Mystique and autobiography from Romanticism to nowadays - studies in Orthodox Spirituality*, (Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2016); Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Stări, momente și personalități din Ortodoxia transilvană – pasaje insuficient reliefate istoriografic [States, moments and personalities from the Transylvanian Orthodoxy – passages not enough emphasized by the historiography]* (Târgu Jiu: Academica Brâncuși Press, 2013); Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Restitutio Grigore Pletosu*, (Cluj-Napoca: Eikon and Renașterea Publishing House, 2014); Maxim Morariu, *Sfântul Constantin Brâncoveanu - un model pentru tinerii de astăzi [Saint Constantin Brâncoveanu – a model for today's youth]*, (Cluj-Napoca: Renașterea Publishing House, 2015); Gavrilă-Tudor Zinveliu, Maxim Morariu, *Noi aspecte ale martiriului Sfinților năsăudeni [New aspects of Năsăud's Saints Martyrdom]*, (Cluj-Napoca: Renașterea Publishing House, 2016); Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Preoții năsăudeni și „Astra” (1861-1918) [Năsăud Priests and ASTRA (1861-1918)]*, (Cluj-Napoca and Bistrița: Argonaut Publishing House, Charmides Publishing House, 2016); Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Autobiografia spirituală a lui Dag Hammarskjöld – o abordare teologică [Dag Hammarskjöld's spiritual autobiography – a theological approach]*, (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut Publishing House, 2016); Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Asociaționismul cultural din zona Bistriței și a Năsăudului (1850-1918) [Cultural Associationism in Bistrița and Năsăud Areas (1850-1918)]*, (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut Publishing House, 2017); Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *„Țara Năsăudului” în Primul Război Mondial - aspecte memorialistice, socio-economice și culturale [“Năsăud country” in the First World War – memorialistic, socio-economical and cultural aspects]*, vol. 1 and 2, (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut Publishing House, 2018); Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Rolul tânărului cercetător în Asociațiunea ASTRA [The role of the young researcher in ASTRA Association]*, (Dej: Astra Press, 2017); Mihai-Octavian Groza, Gabriela-Maria Nisipeanu, Iuliu-Marius Morariu (coord.), *Sebastian Stanca*

by him in the last years. His investigations were materialised in important studies and articles dedicated to it or to the convergent topics.³ Now, the book entitled: *Repere ale autobiografiei spirituale din spațiul ortodox în secolele XIX și XX [Landmarks of the spiritual autobiography in the XIXth and XXth centuries]*, (Iași: Lumen Publishing House, 2019) comes as a synthesis of his concerns and it is the first important work dedicated to the topic in this area.

Segmented into five big chapters and accompanied by a foreword written by Metropolitan Andrei of Cluj (p. 7-12), abstracts in English language (p. 501-504), French (p. 505-510) and Italian (p. 511-515), a detailed bibliographical list (p. 435-500) and an index of names (p. 516-536), the work starts with an introduction (p. 13-36) where the author speaks about the relevance of the spiritual autobiography, the way how it can contribute to the creation of bridges between spiritualities or about its interdisciplinary value. He also evaluates critically the literature dedicated to the topic in other confessional areas or from the philological, psychological or philosophical space.

It is followed by a chapter dedicated to the explanation of the keywords of the demarche (p. 37-70), namely "spiritual" and "autobiography", where the author emphasizes which are the elements that differentiate the investigated genre by all the other autobiographical texts. Afterwards, Iuliu-Marius Morariu presents the landmarks of the spiritual autobiography from the Christian space from Saint Paul, considered the founder of the genre and until nowadays (p. 71-150). He shows there why the aforementioned author and not Saint Augustine must be considered the founder of the genre and how in different protestant backgrounds the spiritual autobiography is used with proselyte purposes (people being stimulated to write about their experience for converting others too).

(1878-1947). *Un cleric cărturar din Sebeșul de altădată [Sebastian Stanca – a cleric from other times Sebeș]*, (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut Publishing House, 2016).

³ Like: Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Aspects of Applied Ethics in the Spiritual Autobiographies from the Orthodox Space in the 19th and 20th Centuries," in Camelia Ignătescu, Antonio Sandu, Tomiță Ciulei (eds.), *Proceedings Volume: Rethinking Social Action. Core Values in Practice*, (Iași: Lumen, 2017), 548-557; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Aspects of political theology in the spiritual autobiography of Dag Hammarskjöld," in *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 74 (September-December 2018), no. 4:1-5; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Aspects of political theology in the spiritual autobiography of Saint John of Kronstadt (1829–1908)", in *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 74 (September-December 2018), no. 4:1-5; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "An interdisciplinary genre in the Theological Literature: the spiritual autobiography and its landmarks for the Orthodox space," in *Journal of Education, Culture and Society*, 8 (January-June 2018), no. 1: 145-150; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Aspects of political theology in the spiritual autobiography of Nicolas Berdiaev," in *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 75, (September-December 2019), no. 4: 1-4; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Self-development and autobiography," in *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 18 (Winter 2019), no. 4: 218-222; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "The relevance of humiliation and body pain in the spiritual autobiographies of Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint Silouan the Athonite," in *Studia Monastica*, 61 (December 2019), no. 2: 409-415; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "The Spiritual Autobiography in the Eastern space in the second half of the XIXth and XXth century", in *Astra Salvensis*, 3 (December 2014), Supplement no. 1: 166-174; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, Ștefan Josan, "Elements of spiritual autobiography in the literary works of Virgil Gheorghiu", in *Research and Science Today*, 11 (March 2011) no. 1: 83-88; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Aspects of political theology in the spiritual autobiographies of the Orthodox space? New potential keys of lecture," in *Astra Salvensis*, 5 (December 2017), no. 10: 129-133; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Saint Faustina Kowalska and Saint Teresa of Calcutta – two authors of spiritual autobiographies from Catholic space of the 20th century" in *Astra Salvensis*, 7 (June 2019), no. 13: 231-239; Cătălin, Peptan, *Information and intelligence in security equation*, Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” of Târgu Jiu, Letter and Social Science, Series 2/2019, 39-45; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Educational Aspects in the Spiritual Autobiography of Mother Teresa of Calcutta," in *Astra Salvensis*, 7 (December 2019) no. 14: 307-312.

Then the investigation of the way how the genre developed in the Eastern Orthodox space starts from the one of the three important authors, namely: Saint John of Kronstadt and his diaries,⁴ Saint Silouane the Athonite⁵ and Nicolas Berdiaev.⁶ Each one receives a chapter (p. 151-265; p. 266-368; p. 369-420), and each thematic unity has an introductory sub-unity and conclusions. The author decides also to help the reader coming from another area of research by offering a brief biographical presentation of each author's life and activity in the context of the age where they leaved.

The presentations are followed by some long and well-documented general conclusions (p. 425-434), where the author not only summarize the main aspects approached there, but also offers the landmarks of the phenomenon of spiritual autobiography in the Orthodox space.

The rich bibliography used (in English, Romanian, French, Italian, Spanish or German languages), mostly formed by recent titles, together with the beauty of the approach and the actuality of the topic make Iuliu-Marius Morariu's (hieromonk Maxim) doctoral thesis, published at Lumen's Publishing House, an important book that will be surely used in the future research dedicated to the topic. We can only congratulate the author, wish him luck with future approaches and hope that the work will be soon translated in other languages too, for being useful also for readers that are not Romanian-speakers.

⁴ John Ilyitch Sergieff, *My life in Christ, or Moments of spiritual serenity and contemplation, of reverent feeling, of earnest self-amendment, and of peace in God ... Extracts from the diary of the Most Reverend John Ilyitch Sergieff ("Father John")*, (London: Cassell and company, 1897); Saint John of Kronstadt, *Viața mea în Hristos [My life in Christ]*, (Bucharest: Sophia Press, 2005); Saint John of Kronstadt, *Adevărurile în care cred [The thruths that I think in]*, (Bucharest: Sophia Press, 2011); Saint John of Kronstadt, *Ultimele însemnări [Last notes]*, (Bucharest, Alexandria: Orthodox Book and Romanian Book Presses, 2006); Saint John of Kronstadt, *Calea pocăinței lăuntrice - jurnal duhovnicesc needitat [The way of inner penitence – spiritual unedited diary]*, (Bucharest: Evanghelismos Press, 2010); Saint John of Kronstadt, *Către păstorii duhovnicești [To the spiritual fathers]*, (Galați and Alexandria: Egumenița and Orthodox Book Presses, 2012); Saint John of Kronstadt, *Cum ne mântuiește Dumnezeu - sfaturi de urmat pentru toată vremea [How does God saves us – advices to follow everytime]*, (Bucharest: Sophia Press, 2012); Saint John of Kronstadt, *Cunoașterea de Dumnezeu și cunoașterea de sine, dobândite prin experiență [Knowledge of God and self-knowledge, received through experience]*, (Bucharest: Sophia Press, 2010).

⁵ Saint Silouane the Athonite, Sfântul Siluan Athonitul, *Între iadul deznădejdiei și iadul smereniei [Between the hell of desperation and the hell of humility]*, (Sibiu: Deisis Press, 2001).

⁶ Nicolas Berdiaev, *Essai d'autobiographie spirituelle*, (Paris: Editions Buchet Castel, 1992).

REFERENCES

1. **Berdiaev, Nicolas;** *Essai d'autobiographie spirituelle*, (Paris: Editions Buchet Castel, 1992);
2. **Groza, Mihai-Octavian, Nisipeanu, Gabriela-Maria, Morariu Iuliu-Marius (coord.);** *Sebastian Stanca (1878-1947). Un cleric cărturar din Sebeșul de altădată [Sebastian Stanca – a cleric from other times Sebeș]*, (Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut Publishing House, 2016);
3. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** *Asociaționismul cultural din zona Bistriței și a Năsăudului (1850-1918) [Cultural Associationism in Bistrița and Năsăud Areas (1850-1918)]*, (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut Publishing House, 2017);
4. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** "Aspects of political theology in the spiritual autobiographies of the Orthodox space? New potential keys of lecture," *Astra Salvensis*, 5, no. 10 (December 2017): 129-133;
5. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** *Autobiografia spirituală a lui Dag Hammarskjöld – o abordare teologică [Dag Hammarskjöld's spiritual autobiography – a theological approach]*, (Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut Publishing House, 2016);
6. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** "An interdisciplinary genre in the Theological Literature: the spiritual autobiography and its landmarks for the Orthodox space," *Journal of Education, Culture and Society*, 8 (January-June 2018), no. 1: 145-150;
7. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** "Aspects of political theology in the spiritual autobiographies of the Orthodox space? New potential keys of lecture," *Astra Salvensis*, 5, no. 10 (December 2017): 129-133;
8. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** "Aspects of Applied Ethics in the Spiritual Autobiographies from the Orthodox Space in the 19th and 20th Centuries," In: Camelia Ignătescu, Antonio Sandu, Tomiță Ciulei (eds.), *Proceedings Volume: Rethinking Social Action. Core Values in Practice*, (Iași: Lumen, 2017): 548-557;
9. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** "Aspects of political theology in the spiritual autobiography of Dag Hammarskjöld," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 74 (September-December 2018), no. 4:1-5;
10. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** "An interdisciplinary genre in the Theological Literature: the spiritual autobiography and its landmarks for the Orthodox space," *Journal of Education, Culture and Society*, 8 (January-June 2018), no. 1: 145-150;
11. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** "Aspects of political theology in the spiritual autobiography of Nicolas Berdiaev," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 75, (September-December 2019), no. 4: 1-4;
12. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** "Educational Aspects in the Spiritual Autobiography of Mother Teresa of Calcutta," in *Astra Salvensis*, 7 (December 2019) no. 14: 307-312;
13. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** *Mystique and autobiography from Romanticism to nowadays - studies in Orthodox Spirituality*, (Saarbrücken, Lambert Academic Publishing, 2016);
14. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** *Preoții năsăudeni și „Astra” (1861-1918) [Năsăud Priests and ASTRA (1861-1918)]*, (Cluj-Napoca and Bistrița, Argonaut Publishing House, Charmides Publishing House, 2016);
15. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** *Restitutio Grigore Pletosu*, (Cluj-Napoca, Eikon and Renașterea Publishing House, 2014);
16. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** *Rolul tânărului cercetător în Asociațiunea ASTRA [The role of the young researcher in ASTRA Association]*, (Dej: Astra Press, 2017);
17. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** "Self-development and autobiography," in *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 18 (Winter 2019), no. 4: 218-222;
18. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** "Saint Faustina Kowalska and Saint Teresa of Calcutta – two authors of spiritual autobiographies from Catholic space of the 20th century" in *Astra Salvensis*, 7 (June 2019), no. 13: 231-239;
19. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** *Stări, momente și personalități din Ortodoxia transilvană – pasaje insuficient reliefate istoriografic [States, moments and personalities from the Transylvanian Orthodoxy – passages not enough emphasized by the historiography]* (Târgu Jiu, Academica Brâncuși Press, 2013);
20. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** "The relevance of humiliation and body pain in the spiritual autobiographies of Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint Silouan the Athonite," in *Studia Monastica*, 61 (December 2019), no. 2: 409-415;
21. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** "The Spiritual Autobiography in the Eastern space in the second half of the XIXth and XXth century", in *Astra Salvensis*, 3 (December 2014), Supplement no. 1: 166-174;
22. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius;** *"Țara Năsăudului" în Primul Război Mondial - aspecte memorialistice, socio-economice și culturale ["Năsăud country" in the First World War – memorialistic, socio-economical and cultural aspects]*, vol. 1 and 2, (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut Publishing House, 2018);

23. **Morariu, Iuliu-Marius, Josan, Ștefan;** "Elements of spiritual autobiography in the literary works of Virgil Gheorghiu", în *Research and Science Today*, 11 (March 201) no. 1: 83-88;
24. **Morariu, Maxim;** *Sfântul Constantin Brâncoveanu - un model pentru tinerii de astăzi [Saint Constantin Brâncoveanu – a model for today's youth]*, (Cluj-Napoca: Renașterea Publishing House, 2015);
25. **Sergieff, John Ilytch;** *My life in Christ, or Moments of spiritual serenity and contemplation, of reverent feeling, of earnest self-amendment, and of peace in God ... Extracts from the diary of the Most Reverend John Ilytch Sergieff ("Father John")*, (London, Cassell and company, 1897);
26. **Saint John of Kronstadt;** *Adevărurile în care cred [The thruths that I think in]*, (Bucharest: Sophia Press, 2011);
27. **Saint John of Kronstadt;** *Calea pocăinței lăuntrice - jurnal duhovnicesc needitat [The way of inner penitence – spiritual unedited diary]*, (Bucharest, Evanghelismos Press, 2010);
28. **Saint John of Kronstadt;** *Către păstorii duhovnicești [To the spiritual fathers]*, (Galați and Alexandria, Egumenița and Orthodox Book Presses, 2012);
29. **Saint John of Kronstadt;** *Cum ne mântuiește Dumnezeu - sfaturi de urmat pentru toată vremea [How does God saves us – advices to follow everytime]*, (Bucharest, Sophia Press, 2012);
30. **Saint John of Kronstadt;** *Cunoașterea de Dumnezeu și cunoașterea de sine, dobândite prin experiență [Knowledge of God and self-knowledge, received through experience]*, (Bucharest, Sophia Press, 2010);
31. **Saint John of Kronstadt;** *Ultimele însemnări [Last notes]*, (Bucharest, Alexandria, Orthodox Book and Romanian Book Presses, 2006);
32. **Saint John of Kronstadt;** *Viața mea în Hristos [My life in Christ]*, (Bucharest, Sophia Press, 2005);
33. **Saint Silouane the Athonite;** *Sfântul Siluan Athonitul, Între iadul deznădejzii și iadul smereniei [Between the hell of desperation and the hell of humility]*, (Sibiu, Deisis Press, 2001); **Zinveliu, Gavrilă-Tudor, Morariu, Maxim;** *Noi aspecte ale martiriului Sfinților năsăudeni [New aspects of Năsăud's Saints Martyrdom]*, (Cluj-Napoca, Renașterea Publishing House, 2016);