

„Babeş-Bolyai” University Cluj-Napoca
Department of Orthodox Theology
Graduate School „Isidor Todoran”

**ORTHODOXY AND THE NATION IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE IN THE
XIXTH CENTURY (ROMANIA, GREECE, SERBIA)**

Supervisor:
Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Ioan Vasile Leb

PhD student: Ionuț Florin Biliuță

Cluj-Napoca
2017

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The Dissertation's Summary

Key-words: Nationalism, Orthodoxy, the Balkans, secular historiography, ecclesiastical historiography, modernization, the national building process, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church, political theology, state-Church relation, modernizers versus traditionalists, secularism, laicity.

The present dissertation aims to present the way in which the Romanian, the Serbian, and the Greek Orthodox Churches acted towards their independence from the Patriarchal See from Constantinople under the influence of the emerging national states from the Balkans. Also, the dissertation is a history of historiography, a history of theological and intellectual ideas, offering also a historical analysis of the Western historical discourse regarding the modernization, the formation of the national states in the Balkans, the cultural import of Enlightened ideas from Western Europe, and, afterwards, integrated in a historical worldview, that still perceives the East as culturally and economically backward. Moreover, by analysing different historiographic perceptions coming from the ecclesiastical and the secular contexts, I intend to show how the process of autocephaly of the national Churches in the Balkans from their traditional canonical high-ranking Patriarchate in Constantinople was reflected in the historiography of the aforementioned case-studies. Using a diverse set of methodological and theoretical approaches from intellectual history, history of the Church, post-colonial studies, cultural history, and social history, and the comparative history of the Balkans, the dissertation proves that historiographic and theological assumptions can differ and vary regarding different events in the life of the Church. In many respects, the historical event of autocephaly stands out as a historical pretext for historical analysis of the historiographical

assumptions stemming from the ecclesiastical and the secular historical scholarship. By engaging in an ongoing process of “asymetrical comparison” between the case-studies put forward, the present undertaking intends to underline the points of commonality but also the those of disagreement between different historiographic receptions and, one the other hand, between different national case-studies.

The thesis is shaped into four parts. First, the thesis will dwell on the intellectual origins of modern nationalism as a driving force of the modern age for the institutional and political development of the Orthodox Churches in the Balkans. By investigating the implications of the French Revolution for the Catholic Church in France and by accrediting the idea that the anti-Christian political theology of the revolutionaries was later on exported through intellectual channels into Eastern Europe, I will argue that laicist, secularist approaches of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary governments in France were adoptated and employed by the national states when defining their relation with the traditional Christian Churches. Also, the first chapter will look at the Philokalic Renaissance patronized by St. Paisios Velicicovschi in Moldavia and by St. Nikodem the Hagiorite in the Holy Mountain Athos. Initiated as a printing revival of the patristical literature related to the issue of spiritualizing human life according to the ascetical precepts of the Orthodox spirituality, in many respects this monastical renainssance had also a political and a social relevance for the countries affected by it. I argue that, although not aware of their contribution, according to their millenial tradition of contemplation and patristic writing, the Orthodox monks from Moldavia and from Greece offered a pertinent and articulated answer to the wave of secularism and atheism spread by the French Revolution across Europe.

The next chapter will look into the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Greece and its impact on the process of national building of the modern Greek nation. Mapping the situation of the Greek Orthodoxy during the late 18th century, the reader will be provided with a wide-ranging historical and theological framework of the ideas, theoretical schools of thought and social realities of the late Ottoman Empire and the various and nefarious conditions in which the populations from the Balkans were forced to live in. Following the proclamation of independence (25th of March 1821) and the bloody war with the Turks ravaging the Greek territories, the next section of the chapter will show the diplomatic and political manoeuvres of the young Greek state and, later on, by the Bavarian Regency to sever the ties between the Greek Orthodox Church and the Patriarchal See of Constantinople. Especially the contribution of Teoklitos Pharmakidis, a theologian and a canon-law expert, in finding a theological and canonical suitable solution for the autocephaly of the Greek Orthodox Church will be constantly underscored. By comparing various historiographical approaches, both secular and ecclesiastical, the present thesis will argue that, in the Greek case, the two types of historiography tend to agree on most of the points of the historical agenda of the autocephaly. Nevertheless, some Greek historians (Paschalis Kitromilides, Anna Tabaki, Vlasios Phidas) turned their attention to some of the disputed aspects of the Greek Orthodox Church's autocephaly from the Mother-Church in Constantinople, emphasizing the dramatic and the unfavorable nature of this process of ecclesiastical independence from the state.

The third chapter will discuss the historiographical projections of the Serbian ecclesiastical and secular historiography regarding the autocephaly of the Serbian

Orthodox Church (1831). By addressing the close-linked relationship between the formation of the Serbian nation and the Orthodox Church from medieval times and large contribution brought by the Orthodox clergymen in the cultural preservation of ethnic identity of the Serbian and the war for independence from the Ottomans, I will highlight the historiographical consensus that exists between various secular and ecclesiastical historians dealing with the issue of the Serbian autocephaly from the Church in Constantinople. Even after the formation of a centralized Serbian state under the prince Karageorge Petrović (1785-1817) and Miloš Obrenović (1780-1860) and the taking-over of the Orthodox Church by the Serbian state, the two historiographies continue to present the act of the autocephaly that came with state control as a benefic event for the history and the future development of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The last chapter deals with the Romanian case and with the intricate process of autocephaly of the Orthodox Church from the Principalities. After the crushing of the popular revolt led by Tudor Vladimirescu (1780-1821) and the embroilment of many boyars with the Greek secret society called *Hetairia*, under the pressure of the Tsarist Empire keeping the Principalities under constant military occupation, the Ottoman court impacted several reforms in the administration of the Principalities. These reforms reunited in the Organic Constitutions (Regulamentele Organice) placed the Orthodox Churches through their metropolitans and bishops in the administrative and decisional structures of the state, ruled over the clergy's education, conditioned the ascension to priesthood and a salary from the state to a certain number of years spent in a seminary. Nevertheless, after the Crimean War (1853-1856) and the loosening of the Russian

dominance in the Principalities, the Great Powers decided to allow the Principalities to united under a common administration.

With the election of Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859-1866) as Prince in both Principalities the way was opened towards the ecclesiastical secession of the Romanian Orthodox Church from the Patriarchal See of Constantinople. The secular historiography tends to praise exageratly the anti-ecclesiastical set of reforms patronized personally by the Prince and by his governments, while the Orthodox historians, although attempting to rebuff or to better contextualize these reforms, remain faithful admirers of Cuza's anti-Christian and anti-Orthodox initiatives. The only point of clear-cut dissonance between the two historical approaches lies with the "struggle for canonicity" caused by an edict of the government sanctioned by Cuza, placing the nomination and the final confirmation of both the metropolitans and the bishops in the hands of the monarch (11th of May 1865). Although the law was later on revised and expanded (1872), thus ending the struggle, the discussion in the ecclesiastical historiography remained open up to this day about who should have the right to nominate, appoint and confirm the bishops in the Orthodox Church.

The autocephaly of the Romanian Orthodox Church and its acknowledgment by the Patriarchal See in Constantinople (April 1885) was also a controversial event, interpreted in various ways by the lay and church historians. If the secular historiography and a large part of the ecclesiastical historians perceived the autocephaly as a benefic event for the development of the Orthodox Church, there were some voices considering this process as a dramatic change and as a coveted maneuver, placing the ecclesiastical institution even more in the state's control.