

“LUCIAN BLAGA” UNIVERSITY OF SIBIU

FACULTY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

“ANDREI ŞAGUNA”

SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

CHURCH – STATE RELATIONS DURING

THE THEODOSIAN DYNASTY

(378 – 438)

Scientific Coordinator:

Revd. Prof. PhD Nicolae Chifăr

Candidate:

PhD Student Dragoş Boicu

2013

Content

Argument.....	1
General introduction.....	3
A. Preliminary elements	3
A.1. Theme.....	3
A.2. Purpose.....	4
A.3. Structure	5
A.4. Method	6
A.5. Stage of research	7
B. Brief outline of church – state relations in the Roman Empire until Theodosius the Great (27 B.C. – 378 A.D.).....	15
B.1. From man to god: the imperial cult until Constantine the Great – the expression of a political priesthood.....	15
B.2. From god to saint: Christian monarchy until Theodosius the Great	21
B.2.1. Constantine the Great (306 – 337 AD).....	21
B.2.2. The sons of Constantine the Great (337 – 361 AD)	25
B.2.3. Julian the Apostate (361 – 363 AD)	28
B.2.4 Jovian (363 – 364 AD)	30
B.2.5. Valentinian and Valens (364 – 375/378 AD)	30
I. Theodosius the Great – divus avus (379 – 395 AD)	35
I.1. Theodosius’ ascension to the throne and the early years of his reign: A reconsideration of the sources	35
I.1.1. Geopolitical context	35
I.1.2. The election of Theodosius	38
I.2. Theodosius the Great and the Edict of Thessalonica (February 28, 380 AD). Circumstances, commentary, reception	47
I.2.1. Context of its issuing.....	47
I.2.2. Date of issue and the relation with the baptism	51
I.2.3. Commentary.....	54

I.2.4. The reception and significance of the Edict.....	59
I.2.5. Constantinople, a rising ecclesiastical center.	
Council of Constantinople (381 AD).....	62
I.2.5.1. The first conflict: Peter II of Alexandria undermines	
St. Gregory of Nazianzus.....	63
I.2.5.2. The second conflict: Timothy of Alexandria undermines	
St. Gregory of Nazianzus.....	66
I.2.5.3. The canons of the Second Ecumenical Council: delimitation of jurisdiction	
or imperial warning?.....	69
I.2.6. Councils during 381 – 383 AD	73
I.2.6.1. Council of Aquileia (381 AD)	73
I.2.6.2. Council of Mediolanum (381).....	75
I.2.6.3. Council of Constantinople (382 AD).....	75
I.2.6.4. Council of Rome (382 AD).....	76
I.2.6.5. Council of Constantinople (383 AD).....	76
I.2.7. Emperor Theodosius’ role: extending the protectorate of Constantine?.....	77
Digression A: Constantinian pontificate.....	79
Digression B: Theodosian pontificate.....	82
I.3. Theodosian law issued during 381 – 387 AD	88
I.3.1. Legislation on ecclesial staff.....	89
I.3.2. Legislation regarding apostates.....	90
I.3.3. Legislation regarding Manichaeism.....	91
I.3.4. Legislation regarding Semi–Arianism and Subordinationist doctrines	94
I.3.5. Legislation regarding temples and heathen.....	97
I.4. Theodosius the Great and Magnus Maximus: discordia sive concordia	
augustorum?	100
I.4.1. Synod of Trier. St. Martin’s intervention.	
Condemnation of Priscillian	108
I.4.2. Valentinian II's religious policy	113
I.4.2.1. XXXIX th letter to Valentinian II. Contents, time of writing, context and its	
recipients.....	114
I.4.3. Confrontation with Magnus Maximus	119

I.5. Theodosius' stay in Italy. Legislation and conflicts with Ambrose	122
I.5.1. St. Ambrose' activity: prophetic vocation or interference in secular affairs of the Empire?	124
I.6 Theodosian law issued during 388 – 394 AD	136
I.6.1. Legislation regarding heretics	136
I.6.2. Legislation on ecclesial staff.....	139
I.6.3. Legislation regarding temples and heathen.....	140
I.6.4. Legislation regarding apostates.....	144
I.7. Confrontation with Eugene: religious conflict or civil war?	146
I.7.1. Valentinian II' death and the usurpation of power by Arbogast and Eugenius	146
I.7.2. Battle of Frigidus and the death Theodosius the Great.....	148
II. Towards two Empires: Church and State during 395 – 413 AD	153
II.1. Historical – political context of the East	153
II.2. St. John Chrysostom and religious life of the Orient	156
II.2.1. Preliminaries: Egyptian authoritarianism between the claims of Oriental primacy and centrifugal national movement	156
II.2.2. The appointment of St. John Chrysostom as Archbishop of Constantinople	160
II.2.3. The Chrysostomic system – from the creation of a political theology to the fulfillment of authentic Christian politics.....	162
II.2.3.1. The legitimacy of the concept of “political theology”	162
II.2.3.2. Formulating a Chrysostomic political theology	163
II.2.3.3. The coordinates of the Christian Chrysostomic policy.....	175
II.2.3.3.1. The issue of asylum offered by the Church	175
II.2.3.3.1. The issue of the Goths' Church	178
II.2.4. Theophilus of Alexandria and his actions against St. John Chrysostom – a third conflict between Alexandria and Constantinople. The first exile ...	183
II.2.5. The actual submission and the second exile	187
Digression: Papo – caesaria and the image of the “tyrant Bishop”	190
II.3. Historical – political context of the West.....	200
II.4. Religious conflicts in the West	203

II.4.1. Gallican schism.....	203
II.4.1.1. Councils of Nimes and Turin.....	203
II.4.1.2. The beginnings of Arelates vicariate	203
II.4.2. St. Augustine and the Donatist crisis: legitimizing state’s intervention in ecclesiastical matters	204
II.4.2.1. The beginnings of the Donatist schism.....	204
II.4.2.2. Augustine and the Donatists until 398 AD	207
II.4.2.3. Augustine and the Donatists during 399 – 405 AD.....	209
II.4.2.4. The “Edict of Union” and the antidonatist legislation of 405 AD.....	212
II.4.2.5. Augustine and the Donatists after 405AD	216
II.4.3. Legislation published against the Donatists	222
II.4.4. Collatio Carthaginiensis.....	223
II.5. Religious law issued by the descendants of Theodosius the Great during 395 – 413.....	229
II.5.1. Legislation regarding heretics.....	231
II.5.1.1. Eunomians	231
II.5.1.2. Montanists and Manichees	234
II.5.1.3. Other laws against heretics	235
II.5.2. Legislation regarding temples, heathen and apostates.....	236
II.5.3. Legislation on ecclesial staff	239
III. Imposing the Theodosian heritage: Church and State during 414 – 438 AD.....	244
III.1. Historical – political context of the West	244
III.2. Church of the West after the Donatist crisis:	248
III.2.1. Pelagianism	248
III.2.2. Papal election and imperial arbitration.....	253
III.2.3. The position of the Western Church regarding the political crisis (410 – 438).....	255
III.2.3.1. <i>De civitate Dei</i> – a false treaty of political theology.....	256
III.2.3.2. <i>De gubernatione Dei</i> or the providential dimension of political failure.....	262
III.2.3.3. Letters 134 and 153: the imperative of coordinating the actions of the state with those of the Church.....	265

III.3. The political crisis in Constantinople after the death of Arcadius.....	269
III.3.1. The Alexandrine social crisis and the election of St. Cyril as bishop of the Egyptian metropolis	270
III.3.2. Aelia Pulcheria Augusta – the vow of chastity as a political solution ...	271
III.3.2.1. Marian cult in Constantinople as a solution for the inculturation of pagan cults	273
III.3.2.2. Marian devotion and the shaping a new imperial ideology.....	277
III.3.3. Pulcheria and the political life in Constantinople until the election of Nestorius	282
III.3.4. Pulcheria and the religious life in Constantinople until the election of Nestorius	284
III.3.5. Nestorius’ pastoral activity (428 – 431).....	288
III.3.5.1. The election of Nestorius – a political act.....	288
III.3.5.2. The formulation of Nestorianism	291
III.3.5.3. A new conflict between Alexandria and Constantinople (the fourth): St. Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius’ submission	292
III.3.5.4. The summoning of the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431 AD)....	296
III.3.5.5. The progress of the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431 AD)	299
III.3.6. The election and the pastoral activity of Maximianus (431 – 434 AD) .	304
III.3.7. The election and the pastoral activity of Proclus until 438 AD	307
Digression: The fifth conflict between Constantinople and Alexandria –Flavian’s dismissal by Dioscorus during the Concilium Latrocinium (Ephesus, 449 AD)....	311
III.4. Codex Theodosianus and religious law during 414 – 438 AD	314
III.4.1. General observations	314
III.4.1.1. Codex Theodosianus – Liber XVI: a model of religious legislation...	318
III.4.1.2. The confirmation of religious intolerance	320
III.4.2. Religious legislation published during 414 – 438 AD	321
III.4.2.1. Legislation regarding heretics	322
III.4.2.2. Legislation on ecclesial staff	328
III.4.2.3. Legislation regarding temples, heathen and apostates	331
Conclusions: The Emperor Theodosian – protector of Roman universalism and Church’s ecumenicity	334

Bibliography	338
Sources:	338
Dictionaries and collective works:	343
Books:.....	343
Studies:	349
Online studies:.....	356
Annexes	359
Curriculum Vitae	364
List of publications	365
Declaration.....	367

Keywords:

Imperial ideology, Codex Theodosianus, religious legislation, Theodosian dynasty, the church – state relations

If we cannot imagine a Christian Europe without Constantine the Great, we also cannot imagine the Nicene Christianity without Theodosius the Great, because the dynasty founded by him has an important role in the process of “Christianization” of the Roman Empire and an essential contribution to the restoration of Nicene Orthodoxy. Perhaps this is why the image of Theodosius was distorted with legendary elements designed to further enhance the exceptional qualities of the man who succeeded, against all odds, to impose the confession formula of a religious party in minority – the Nicene community.

The main purpose of this paper is not to give a sense of the historical events, but to present and to reconstruct as faithfully as possible the main frame of Theodosius’ reign consulting the traditional sources and secondary literature that captures fragments of the interval between 379 and 438 AD. A secondary goal of this research is to demystify the circumstances and the “facts” that defined the Theodosian dynasty.

Although it aims first at presenting the historical event, the present research focuses subjectively on certain repetitive structures that create a pattern of how the Church life progresses and its relationship with the state in the period studied. The paper is oriented mainly towards the Theodosian legislative establishment because it is virtually impossible to make any assessment of the church – state relations in the fourth and fifth centuries without the slightest knowledge of how the legal provisions on the clergy status and on the rights of heretics, apostates and pagans were issued.

These goals have materialized during reading and writing in some well defined objectives:

- the clarification of the political context, which is why I have sometimes insisted more on the armed conflict and the balance of power between East and West;
- highlighting the historic and patristic texts relevant to the research topic;
- clarifying the circumstances in which the Theodosian legislation was published;
- structuring and presenting the Theodosian legislation, subject to which I eventually assigned nearly a third of the present work;
- emphasizing the human dimension of the Church, namely the concrete way of acting of the hierarchy and clergy on behalf of God and His Church but motivated by their own agendas and egos.

This paper is divided into three major chapters formed by several subchapters and sections that develop after the *General Introduction*, where the method and the state of research are presented, together with a summary of the relationship between spiritual and secular power from the time of Octavian Augustus until the Emperor Valens (27 BC – 378 AD).

The first chapter, entitled *Theodosius the Great – Divus avus (379 – 395)* analyzes the issue of Theodosius' ascension to the throne, the publication of the Edict of Thessalonica (February 28, 380) and religious legislation during 380 – 394, and the emergence of Constantinople as an ecclesiastical center. There are also presented the religious policies of Magnus Maximus and Valentinian II, who reigned in this period as well as the Church's attempt to distance itself from political interference, and the shaping of a Christian political ethics parallel with the definition of a Theodosian pontificate.

The second part brings together under the title *For Two Empires: Church and State in the range 395 – 413* the establishing of a Chrysostomic “political theology” and the Augustinian legitimation of the political intervention in ecclesiastical matters and the approval of the use of force “for the benefit” of the Church. Besides these issues the work also examines the Donatist problem until *Collatio Carthagensis* and the religious legislation published during this period. Although it would have been more logical to limit this chapter to the year 408 or 409 I have opted for 413, as the period 408 – 413 is marked by conflict, dominated by civil wars in the West waged by different commanders against several usurpers, while in the East the peace is maintained under Flavius Anthemius' prefecture. In this troubled context on both sides of the Empire the person of the legitimate Emperor is virtually absent from the public life and therefore, I have pushed the limit range to the stabilization of the political situation in East and West.

The third chapter presents under the title *The enforcing of the Theodosian inheritance: Church and State during 414 – 438* some significant aspects for the relation between secular and spiritual authority, such as: Pelagianism – the doctrinal background for the Augustinian political ethics, the imperative to coordinate the actions of state with those of the Church and the emphasis on the providential dimension of the political failure that followed Alaric's plundering of Rome in August 410. On the other hand, in the East there is a tendency to develop new political solutions as ideological experiments with deeply religious implications such as the Marian cult from Constantinople, which has led to the over-reaction of Nestorius and eventually called for the summoning of the third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431). I also provide an overview of the religious laws published in

Codex Theodosianus until 435. Although the title announces a presentation of thesis church – state relations in Theodosians Dynasty, the present research stops at the year 438, when Codex Theodosianus was published. The reason I chose this temporal dynastic terminus is the absence of a moment commonly accepted by experts, which refers either to the year 450 (the death of Theodosius II) or 453 (Pulcheriei death) or 457 (death of Marcian). On the other hand, the year 438 is an indisputable milestone and it marks the peak of the Theodosian policy until the monarch comes under the negative influence of the eunuch Chrysaphius.

The conclusions summarize some significant issues recorded sometimes in the observations at the end of several subchapters and sections. They also contain annexes meant to clarify the administrative structure mentioned throughout the research, providing a synopsis of Praetorian and Urban prefects, the recipients of numerous decrees mentioned along, as well as two statistics on the Theodosian legislation.

I

From the chapter entitled *Theodosius the Great – divus avus (379 – 395)*, it appears quite clear that the emperor Theodosius the Great is not the man described with reverence by Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret, and his ascension to the throne is not so miraculous as it was portrayed; this paper manages to illustrate the conditions under which the founder of the Theodosian dynasty is associated to lead the Empire. Contrary to the information given by Theodoret of Cyrrihus it can be seen that Theodosius was brought from Spain on the Danubian *limes* before the Battle of Adrianople (August 378) and the lack of options forced Gratian to initially appoint Theodosius *magister militum*, but the latter was subsequently proclaimed emperor either by the remaining troops in Illyria during an usurpation or by Gratian himself, being associated to the throne on 19 January 379.

On the other hand, however unfortunate and misguided the pro – German policy of Theodosius would seem, this decision must be seen in the particular context of the Danubian *limes*, which since the time of Octavian Augustus has required the colonization of different Transdanubian populations in Moesia. There were also previous settlements of Goths in the Empire: Christians Goths were received and settled in Moesia in the time of Constantius, and in 380 Gratian gave the permission to the Greuthungs to settle in Pannonia Secunda and the surrounding provinces. Although it was rated as one of the worst diplomatic agreements of Late Antiquity and a capitulation of the Roman genius before the

brute force of a barbarian enclave, over time their alliance secured the protection of the Danubian frontier.

The rebellion of Magnus Maximus and the killing of Emperor Gratian (August 383) disrupted the balance of power in the Empire. The relations between Theodosius and Maximus during 383 – 387 raised serious problems due to the lack of clear information, especially since the allusive assertions of the few written sources and sundry material “evidences” led only to speculations or assumptions that culminated with the question: was there a tacit understanding between the two Iberians who ended the reign of Gratian?

Analyzing a number of theses and theories this research illustrates an evolution in Theodosius’ attitude regarding the usurper from Gaul: if initially he sought to avenge the murder of Gratian preparing a large – scale campaign, the August of Orient was forced to abandon this plan and due to the circumstances, to accept the peace offer, and to recognize Maximus as co – emperor. Conventionally the agreement between the two Iberians is placed sometime in the summer of 384, when Theodosius restored the territorial division before the usurpation, Maximus assuming the region of Gratian, but not the prefecture where Valentinian II reigned.

The research examines more relevant elements for the religious policy of the Emperor Theodosius the Great, still insufficiently debated, such as the circumstances of the baptism in Thessalonica, the connection between baptism and the Edict of Thessalonica (February 28, 380), the regional nature of the edict and its place in Theodosian legislation. Although the conditions and the factors that led to the publication of that document are not fully understood we can determine with certainty that the edict was by no means conditioned by his baptism, accomplished during his critical suffering in autumn 380 – half a year after issuing the document. Even though some historians consider the edict as an obscure document in no way it is a “circumstantial measure”, especially since the traditional “circumstances” lack and, therefore, we are not dealing with an act conditioned by receiving baptism as a possible moral obligation of the newly baptized to reinstate the Church whose teachings he now confessed. The publication of the document in the absence of such circumstances and in a totally unfavorable context for the Nicene faction denies the hypothesis that his decision could be a demagogical act or a political calculation meant to obtain the support of the majority. On the contrary, his edict attacks and condemns as heretics the more numerous followers of different Semi–Arian sects, dominant in Constantinople. This can only mean that Theodosius issued the edict because of his deep conviction, or for another reason which is at this time still unknown to us. But however well – intentioned

and sincere Theodosius may have proven to be, the document in question inaugurates a harsher and tougher religious policy than that of his predecessors. This means that the Emperor affords to believe that he can end the confessional and doctrinal pluralism, indicating and “recommending” to his subjects the teaching that the whole Empire has to confess.

Although the edict does not contain a program of the future religious policy, the edict of Thessalonica can be considered part of a Theodosian legislative program, uniform in content and in its provisions. It should be noted, however, that the perception of these acts of law is often distorted, leading to false conclusions regarding the religious policy of the Emperor Theodosius the Great, because the documents meant to deal with specific problems of certain dioceses received general and universal validity.

Actually some edicts appear as answers to specific requests coming from the territory, when the government representatives demanded precise instructions regarding specific situations. This observation compels to a reconsideration of the imperial initiative in publishing and formulating religious laws without denying the existence of a legislative program, but it nuances the way it was developed.

The Theodosian religious legislation issued during 380 – 394 outlines quite clearly a tough opposition to all other Christian “sects” manifested in the Roman Empire. The Edict of Thessalonica itself summarizes the imperial creed and indicates that we face a first piece of a well – established and consciously calculated program directed against heretical communities. It is impossible to explain otherwise how the heterodox were deprived not only of their religious rights but also of any civil rights, as it had been observed in the decrees presented systematically along this paper: for instance, the “heretics” were forbidden to give or to inherit something by will. They were deprived of the right to form religious communities or to freely practice any form of worship and the validity of heretical priesthood of their clergy was not acknowledged.

From the very first religious laws Emperor Theodosius draws a moral, intellectual, and religious portrait of the heretic, by the means of the specific force of the legal language, using terms that are systematically repeated in his following edicts and in those of his successors, creating a particular style, and building a stereotype of intimidation. Setting the framework and the main rules, Theodosius issued an exclusivist speech, apparently effective in his consistency. Nevertheless, the need to repeat certain provisions shows the impossibility of applying them in the territory.

The harsh language and the polemic tone, the metaphors used, the prohibitions, and the penalties reflect the legislative program focused on defending the Nicene doctrine. This

attitude towards heretics takes an even more drastic form when the law stipulated excluding the heterodox from the communities. Phrases like “a bonorum congressibus separantur” (16.5.13), “ab humana comunione” (16.5.14) or “nihil ad summum habeant commune cum reliquis” (16.5.17) shows this social isolation meant for those who are not embracing “fides Nicaena”. Even if they are not liable to capital punishment, the heretics are exposed to fines and exile outside the walls of the city. In other words, with respect to the heterodox, the whole legislation which normally protected the Roman citizens is suspended, constantly emphasizing their separation from the community because they violated and perverted the laws of public cohabitation –this means that the heretics were considered antisocial elements, which violated the basic principles of human organization.

Another interesting aspect of the edicts issued by Theodosius is the heretics’ systematic dispossession of worship places, transferring them to the possession of the Nicene communities, and the confiscation of the rest of their property by the state. The heathen temples were acquired in a similar way, after being subjected to a constant process of desacralization and secularization, incorporating them into the church’s heritage as a mark of the Christianity’s triumph on pagan religions.

Of course, one cannot overlook the discrepancy between the tough vocabulary of the documents and the delayed implementation of the announced measures. Theodosius looked rather intimidating the heterodox, a fact which is confirmed by Sozomen some decades later: “And he prescribed a harsh punishment through laws (against them). But he did not take legal action because he was not eager to punish his subjects, but to frighten them as to be united with him before God. And those who voluntarily changed their (attitude) [the king] praise them”.

The authority which Theodosius manifests indirectly into the Church by issuing those edicts raises the issue of a Theodosian political priesthood or pontificate even if there are no explicit evidences in this regard. However the Christian literary sources of the IVth and Vth century confirm the crystallization of a decisive religious – political role, which the Emperor plays in the economy of church’s life and justifies somehow Justinian’s “caesaropapism”. Otto Seeck also advocates for a Christian pontificate of Theodosius when he says, speaking about *Selbstverständnis des Kaisers*, that the August had considered him an “infallible pope (unfählbarer Papst) ... by the power of divine illumination”. The office of Pontifex was reinterpreted in a new, Christian sense, proving that the emperors were still reluctant to give up the claim to exert some authority in the religious sphere, and especially in the ecclesiastical affairs.

The characterization of Theodosius' religious policy is always accompanied by the cliché that he was the first emperor who refused the title of *pontifex maximus*, although there is not one historical source that confirms this assertion. The only argument in favor of this hypothesis is the absence of documents which contain the full title of Theodosius (starting with the names indicating the tribes he conquered, and ending with the consulate, respectively with *potestas tribuniciae*). Paradoxically renowned historians and many church historians have fallen into this trap. The present research endeavors to address this problem and capitalizes on Zosima's account, the only text that recalls the refusal of *pontifex maximus* title by Gratian, and not by Theodosius the Great. As all previous emperors Gratian held the office of *Pontifex Maximus*, but after he brought into extinction the pagan cults chaired by him as holder of this rank, Gratian refused it, causing controversy and discontent. Since the concept of *pontifex* was acceptable for Christianity, being employed with a Christian sense in the first half of the third century by Tertullian, the most natural solution was to remove the term *maximus* and hence any reference to pagan cults. Instead, there appeared the construction *pontifex inclitus* (includus), which is attested in the full title of Valentinian III († 455), Marcian († 457) and Anastasius († 518). It can be said that the supreme pontificate was rejected by Gratian, and thus by Theodosius, rather by redefining than by denying it.

The political priesthood or the imperial intervention in the Church's life is especially felt during the Constantinopolitan councils of 381 (accepted subsequently as Second Ecumenical Council) and 383. In the first case, the IInd – IVth canons (especially the IIIrd canon, which confers the honorary primacy to the bishop of Constantinople after the bishop of Rome), can be seen both as means of jurisdictional delimitation, and as imperial warning. The three canons regulate some issues regarding the interference of Alexandrian bishops into the Constantinopolitan Church. In the second case (the council of 383) we are dealing with the imperial initiative to summon a theological conference hoping that the dialogue will facilitate a theological compromise with the denominations invited to the discussion, but because of the one – sided vision, this conference endorsed only the Nicene confession and the failure of negotiations caused the emperor's frustration and anger.

Comparing the documents and the means with which Theodosius acts in the realm of ecclesiastical life and religious freedom it can be seen that the emperor's intervention, though justified by his zeal for the restoration of Orthodoxy, is as bad or maybe even worse than Valens' abusive religious policy, who, despite of all overt or covert persecution, did not dare to publish a decree and to impose his faith to the residents of any city or

region. Even Emperor Constantius, although he is considered, as Wilhelm Ensslin noticed, the first representative of “caesaropapism” because he exceeded his mandate and interfered in the life of the Church, had never taken such action. Constantius respected the Church’s formal autonomy so as to recognize the ecclesial courts’ collaboration with the state and their right to make a final decision on religious issues. This is why regarding his religious policy Constantius relied on conciliar decisions to impose his own belief.

Unlike his previous emperors, Theodosius renounced to this formal process and reversed it: the monarch proclaims his own formula of faith which he requires from the capital’s residents (*cuius regio, eius religio*), threatening with deportation and divine wrath those who do not conform to the imperial command. Only after this proclamation is a council summoned, that states the “Nicene Orthodox y”, providing the theological support for the legislation already published (February 28, 380, January 10, May 8 and July 19 381). Thus the Council of Constantinople (May – July 381) sealed the effort of the political authority to establish a single Christian identity that has been imposed and not developed through consensus and therefore was still quite controversial.

From this point of view we can say that Theodosius the Great, more than any of his predecessors, displayed a callous behavior towards other Christian factions whose faith was unilaterally asserted as heterodox even before the organization of the theological conference in 383.

The apparent bias of these measures should be linked to the political and military context of the early reign of Theodosius the Great, respectively to the Gothic crisis in the interval 378 – 382. The situation implies a political valence of the enforcement of the Nicene formula as a theological and ideological solution, designed not only as a response to the Constantinopolitan Semi–Arianism, but rather as a means of identifying and distinguishing the Roman element from barbarian enemies. The risk that the civil authorities would assimilate the Semi–Arian s to the belligerent Goths partially explains the successful conversion to Nicene Orthodox y, although the Nicene communities nearly came to extinction in Illyricum and Asia Minor during Valens’ reign.

Through politicization of the religious identity Theodosius tried, as Constantine the Great and Constantius did in their own way, to restore religious unity in order to ensure political cohesion. But despite Theodosius’ good intentions he only created a false unity, achieved against the natural order. Ideally the “power play between the ‘auctoritas’ of the Church and the ‘potestas’ of the state allows for an unsurpassed division of power in view of reaching a satisfying balance for both sides. But as great as the bishop’s or the pa-

triarch's 'auctoritas' may be, 'potestas' ultimately remains in the hands of the representative of the emperor or of the emperor himself, which means that practically he has the last word"¹. And when the state, embodied by emperors, is not always aware of the limits of its intervention into the Church's life as well as some people of the Church wish sometimes for more than they are entitled to, all this symphony as it will be called starting from Justinian, is disturbed by false and strident accents². These abuses occurred not only because "the politico – religious doctrine which claimed to be Christian was build on the Hellenistic and pagan concept identifying the king with the 'living law', and the imperial sovereignty with the image (icon) of the heavenly kingdom, with the risk of a return to an impersonal pagan sacred, susceptible to lead to a new deification of the omnipotent ruler"³. These moments of crisis reveal the key to the church and state symphony of the Byzantine theology: "the Orthodox y of the civil power". This means the suspension of the state's right to intervene in the affairs of the Church along with emperor's attachment to heterodoxy, because the adoption of heresy means in the eyes of the Church, and in those of the society, the fall from legitimacy. This could be clearly seen in the case of Valentinian II and his mother Justina.

If we can see that Theodosius is actually concerned with the religious and thus the political cohesion of his empire, it can be understood that he had sufficient reasons to try to intimidate the other Christian factions. But the religious pluralism is a natural internal phenomenon of Christianity, attested by numerous religious groups which have arisen since the first century. On the other hand the Theodosian intolerance, even if it is considered simply declarative, is presented as the result of external and arbitrary actions which politicize the life of the Church and exploit the Church in the attempt to turn it into one of the many institutions that grant unity to the Roman Empire. For issuing and implementing "a religious law made by man, out of the human reason and human necessity" violates the dignity of the faith itself⁴, usurping the very notion of the revealed mystery.

Although it was more nominal, the "Theodosian intolerance" has become a landmark and a model for the later monarchs who ignored the varying degrees of development of the Christian factions, namely the wide range of attitudes of these groups towards the

¹ François Rouleau, „Vulturul bicefal și cele două săbii”, in Ioan I. Ică jr și Germano Marani (edit.), *Gândirea socială a Bisericii. Fundamente-documente-analize-perspective*, Deisis, Sibiu, 2002, p. 345.

² Radu Preda, „Biserica în stat. Șansele și limitele unei dezbateri”, in *Gândirea socială a Bisericii. Fundamente-documente-analize-perspective*, p. 368.

³ François Rouleau, art. cit., p. 345.

⁴ André Scrima, *Funcția critică a credinței*, prefață, traducere și note de Anca Manolescu, Ed. Humanitas, București, 2011, p. 128.

Empire and other communities, and claimed instead the rallying of all Christendom to a formula subjectively chosen by the emperor.

Theodosius' authority, used to tip the scale in favor of the Nicene is the main feature of church – state relations in this period, even though, as it can be seen, his authority seems to be ineffective before a personality such as that of St. Ambrose. In this particular case the historical account should be dissociated from the legendary elements reported by Theodoret of Cyrrhus. It is necessary to forgo the traditional and pious image of the monarch bemoaning his sins on the steps of the basilica of Mediolanum. On the contrary, Theodosius had resisted and even tried to stop Ambrose from giving him penance. Knowing quite well the political life, as a devoted servant of the Church, St. Ambrose managed to temper the oriental despotism, creating a moderate position, located “between Eusebius' triumphalism and Augustin's separatism”⁵. By his continuous appeal to Old Testament models, the western bishop is associated to the prophets during the Jewish royalty, showing the superiority of the spiritual power and the prophetic vocation of the Church, significantly redefining the boundaries of a Christian monarchy.

The need to create this limit appeared after the execution of the heretic Priscillian by the order of Magnus Maximus which was instigated to this action by the bishops of a Church that was changing at the end of the fourth century. The hierarchs were faced with a misunderstanding of their own mission in this new order of the Empire. Maximus acted accordingly showing the same despotism as any *pontifex maximus* which intervened in the order of the pagan cults, promoting or banning them without appeal, as he wished. But the abuse and violence are caused by both the lack of discernment of Maximus as the “guilty and cowardly complacency of some of the high clergy, who lend themselves to all sorts of compromises”⁶.

Putting together the conviction of Priscillian's teaching and the text of his epistle to Valentinian II in 385 it is impossible not to notice the hypocrisy with which Maximus condemns Valentinian's interference, though he himself so brutally intervened in ecclesiastical matters – but fully justified according to his view. Since a copy of the epistle was sent to Pope Siricius as well it is very clear that we face a perfect example of how petty interests and personal ambitions can be cleverly concealed and presented as concern for the fate of the Church.

⁵ Conf. Dr. Marius Telea, „Simfonia bizantină – între triumfalismul eusebian și moderația ambroziană”, in *AR*, nr. 1/2007, p. 127, 130.

⁶ Magis. Lucian I. Gafton, „Acte de violență și abuz ale împăraților bizantini față de patriarhii de Constantinopol”, in *ST*, nr. 7-8/1956, p. 469.

Whereas Maximus used the existing splits that he amplified by demonizing some “enemies” of Orthodoxy and created for himself an image of Orthodox champion in order to reach the hearts of the subjects with greater ease and to gain more credibility, one can observe Theodosius the Great’s efforts to control the theological dissent and to eliminate them legally.

The strength and freedom which the Emperor affords are determined by the confessional situation of the Empire. The mere rumor that Theodosius had been defeated by the usurper Magnus Maximus, causes in Constantinople serious disorders and riots of the Arians which have torched the episcopal palace of the capital. Although these events occurred in 388, 7 years after the Second Ecumenical Council, the triumph of Orthodoxy was far from being realized. Theodosius’ importance for the Church’s life proves to be extremely high, being often seen as a providential man and his election by Gratian is also regarded as a work of God. Leaving aside the flattering appraisal of Themistius, who does not hesitate to name the emperor νόμος ἔμψυχος (living law), it can be observed that the Christian circles were ready to place Theodosius close to God, as a man with a deep spiritual life as the account of Theodoret of Cyrrhus conveys.

Actually the whole posterity, and especially Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret, writing their works during the reign of Theodosius II, creates an image that depicts Theodosius as a “superorthodox” Emperor who was responsible for all events that occurred during his reign (even though sometimes he had no connection with them) that were perceived positively by future generations. One such example is the spiritual valence given to the confrontation between the usurper Eugenius (exponent of traditional religions) and Theodosius (champion of Christianity). Despite the hagiographic halo of this event as it is depicted by Christian sources, we have no reason to regard the battle of Frigidus as the peak of the conflict between Christianity and pagans or to give a religious significance to the civil war which started after Eugenius “usurped the power and wore the imperial insignia”⁷ thus provoking a “lawless tyranny and struggles against the legitimate imperial power”⁸. Consequently, passages like those from the *De civitate Dei* and *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Theodoret of Cyrrhus should be carefully addressed, distinguishing between the historical event and the specific rhetorical flights of fancy particular for the Late Antiquity, especial-

⁷ Sozomen, HE, VII, 22, col. 1485: „ἐπεισηδᾶ τῆ ἀρχῇ, καὶ τὰ σύμβολα τῆς βασιλείας ἀμφιέννυται”.

⁸ Theodoret, HE, V, 24, col. 1253: „τῆς παρανόμου τυραννίδος, καὶ τῶν κατὰ τῆς ἐνόμου βασιλείας πολέμων”.

ly since some of the Eastern commanders were themselves pagan (Saul and Arbitio) or heretics (Alaric and Gainas).

The qualities of Theodosius are once more validated at the end of his life considering the postmortem sanctification of the emperor, being celebrated every year on January 17, the date of his death. It is hard to say whether, as Eusebius had reported in the *Vita Constantini*, Theodosius too was unanimously regarded as a saint who carried out his life in intimacy and familiarity with God, a relationship that could only naturally continue more intensely after his death, as an intercessor for humans towards God. We suspect that this sanctification was the Christian alternative for the apotheosis owed to a Roman emperor like Theodosius; the political honor was transferred to the Christian liturgical space, as was expected to happen to the one who restored Orthodox y. The sanctification substituted the deification, which became redundant in an empire where traditional religions no longer had the freedom to worship the deceased monarch. One can surmise, however, that this sanctification came not from the masses or as an initiative of the Church but from the imperial family's initiative in the same way that Theodosius himself wanted his first wife, Flacilla, to be counted among the saints, or at least to be mentioned together with them (14 September).

II

Towards two empires: Church and State between 395 and 413. Without being endowed with the tenacity, bravery and political skills of his father's, Arcadius' image is downright dull. However, both Socrates and Sozomen – residents of the capital –, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus paid him enough attention. Clearly Arcadius is associated to the Emperors valued positive in general and his Orthodox faith is asserted. Thus Socrates goes as far as to speak of θεοφιλία (love / friendship of God) of which the emperor is participating, and even tells that at the end of his life he had already the reputation of a friend of God (πρός τῆς ζωῆς θεοφιλοῦς δόξαν κτησάμενος), fact confirmed by a miracle that he performs just before death. Sozomen, more reserved, tries to emphasize that the misfortunes of the Empire during his reign were not punishments for his shortcomings, but for the conflicts between clergy so as not to affect the image of the monarch and to remove any suspicion that would damage his reputation and that of his successors, Theodosius II and Pulcheria.

Although he is unanimously presented as an Orthodox emperor, such a portrait is quite difficult to depict because of two events or two deep crises: a political one – the con-

flict with the Goth general Gainas who occupied the position of *magister militum* (399 – 400) and an ecclesiastical matter – the submission of Bishop John Chrysostom. To integrate the two episodes into the narrative discourse and to correlate them with the image of the pious emperor the historians will often use different stratagems, because these two events are extremely important for the relation between spiritual and secular authority.

Relevant to the reign of Arcadius is the particular way in which St. John Chrysostom actually implemented the principles formulated during his Antiochian activity, navigating with dignity the delicate situation created when the interests of the state are contrary to the Church's mission. The primacy of the spiritual power, often mentioned by the Antiochian preacher manifests itself through boldness (*παρρησία*), understood as both confrontation and denunciation of the transgression and as intercession and a force that can and should intervene in favor of the Church's members. The brilliant bishop draws attention to the limits of the two authorities – the Church and the Empire – that although both aim to the same universalism they cannot make overlapping notions like *katholicos* and *oikumene*, since the two institutions have different principles as regards the means to reach this purpose. Therefore St. John defends the Church's right to provide asylum and states the universalism of Christianity, showing the potential of faith as a factor of social integration for the "barbarians".

According to the Chrysostomic view, which has much in common with that of St. Ambrose, the priesthood compels the bishop to become responsible for the entire community and to assume the problems facing it. The bishop must guide all to the path of virtue and even denounce abuse and injustice, and this behavior can lead to conflicts with those in power.

One can even observe an increasing trend of integration, respectively assimilation of the episcopate as a parallel system of the imperial administration and the chief priests are increasingly aware of the role that they get to hold in her community. Thus, at the end of the fourth century, St. Ambrose, had already showed that the bishop, as supervisor of the Church, may be considered the "salvation of all the people (*totius populi salus*)" because he ensures both public and the common law (*non solum publica gubernacula, sed etiam privata jura tueamur*), that governed some minor issues of the private life.

These beliefs have not spared St. John the conflict with the secular authority, but according to the three records of the ecclesiastic historians, Emperor Arcadius was not at all involved in the events leading to tensions between the bishop and the imperial court, but rather he is portrayed as the victim of some unclear circumstances and deceptive manuev-

ers. The condemnation and banishment of St. John point to a quite harsh reality: if the secular authority can override the practice of canonical election of a diocese's hierarch by the members of that community, imposing a candidate at will, the same civil power is also able to have the bishop eliminated when he ceases to meet its requirements. Ironically, Chrysostom had to endure the hostility of both secular authorities and that of other bishops. Meanwhile Arcadius remains unanimously portrayed as a friend of God, acting solely in favor of Orthodoxy and therefore the rehabilitation that followed the death of the saint (September 14, 407) was perceived differently: Socrates cannot speak of a holy man being persecuted by another "friend of God" who performs miracles. Theodoret, writing about the relics of Saint John being brought to Constantinople presents Theodosius II as begging forgiveness for his parents, who "through ignorance (ἐξ ἀγνοίας) were wrong" and thus blurs the guilt of Arcadius. Sozomen strives to remain impartial and avoids making too many connections between the events that followed the second exile.

Although the traditional view focuses on the drama of Chrysostom's exile this research points out that the dimensions of the conflict in Constantinople are often overlooked, minimizing a schism that lasted for more than 3 years. The implications of this phenomenon are far beyond religious politics or the abuse of power committed by the secular authorities. The serious street movements had also an obvious social dimension, as it can be seen from the subcategories listed in the legislation issued during this period: for his supporters, St. John becomes the symbol of the ability to resist civil power, the symbol of force required to restore the justice. Therefore the disadvantaged identify their social destiny with the personal drama of the great bishop, especially since the Oriental ethos was prone to such biases triggered by dogmatic or political option.

At the end of the fourth century and at the beginning of the next it can already be seen that a crystallization of the emperor's powers into the religious sphere and of his way of relating to God or to the Church had taken place. Only now can one appreciate the Theodosian model, which implies the granting of a greater autonomy, already claimed by the Church since the time of Constantius after the Constantinian model had failed for being too reverential toward secular authority. The continuity of Theodosians heritage can be appreciated at its true value if we consider the restrictions contained in the laws published during January 395 – May 408 (for Arcadius), and January 395 – August 423 (for Honorius). Both sons of the great Theodosius suspended the civic privileges of those acting against the Church, be they heretics, pagans, or apostates. A special place is dedicated to

the decrees issued by Honorius against the Donatists analyzing the intervention of the secular arm at the request of Catholic Church from Africa.

A major problem remains Augustine's position with regard to the state's "coercive measures", but if his attitude's evolution is seen in the context of African councils organized by Catholic clergy during this period his progress can be understood as well as the different stages of consenting to the use of force in "conversion". Basically Augustine's attitude concurs with the general current that animates the whole African episcopate at the end of the fourth century and at the beginning of the next, because they were supporting increased constraints against pagans in view of "removing [lit. – amputation] the rest of the idols (left) across Africa"⁹. After some time Augustine supports the same principle regarding the heretics, and especially the Donatists. Faced with the anthropological optimism promoted by Pelagius and Coelestius, and with a more articulated criticism formulated by pagans against Christians after the sack of Rome led by Alaric in August 410, St. Augustine writes *De Civitate Dei* an imposing work against the pagans, which proves to be a false treaty of political theology that emphasizes the social development of humanity in relation to the two opposing paradigms and highlights the political ethics which guarantees, at least, that the monarch will be saved.

III

Imposing the Theodosian heritage: Church and State during 414 – 438. A genuine leap in Church – State relationship is achieved during the reign of Theodosius II and Pulcheria when, in the absence of an inclination towards military art the emperor devoted his attention to the life of the Church, understood as a validation source for the political power. This can be easily observed in the texts that preserved the imperial rhetoric (Sacra Imperatoria of 19 November 430 and Novela III of 31 January 438), which emphasize the affinity and even the interdependence between state and Church, the prosperity of one being conditioned by the other's welfare.

Another development is felt on the philological level and on that of historical evaluation. According to historians Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret it did not matter that the figure of Theodosius II is totally absent from the political life, because for them his dedica-

⁹ *Codex Canonum Ecclesiae Africae*, XCI, in *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, edit. J.D. Mansi, III, col. 766 (Cartagina 15/16 iunie 401, can. 2): „Instant enim aliae necessitates religiosis imperatoribus postulandae, ut reliquias idolorum per omnem Africam jubeant penitus amputari: nam plerique in locis maritimis, atque possessionibus diversis, adhuc erroris istius iniquitas viget: ut praecipiantur et ipsas deleri, et templa eorum, que in agris, vel in locis abditis constituta nulla ornamento sunt, jubeantur omnimodo destrui”.

tion to the Christian cause was extremely relevant. Thus the typology or the portrait of the emperor tends to be increasingly endowed with special moral traits justifying the divine benevolence towards the monarch and thus his special position in the Church.

Thus the three “synoptic” ecclesiastical histories highlight the “piety” of Theodosius II, who, although conducts theological discussions with various bishops “as if he was an ordained priest for a long time (experienced / tried)”¹⁰, is still aware of the distinction between his political authority and the spiritual one of the clergy, whom he particularly respects. This is due to the pure faith inherited from his grandfather along with his name. Reiterating the freedom from passions the texts emphasize the “mastering of affects” that he learned under the strict guidance of Pulcheria, as a δῖερῶν φιλόσοφια (daily philosophy).

From his moral portrait the gentleness and the philanthropy cannot be absent – φιλανθρωπία, which is also, very plastically illustrated by Socrates, who mentions that during his reign, Theodosius II had never applied the death penalty.

Political successes are not forgotten either, since the victory certifies the divine support, but for Sozomen, the success, or the sign of divine mercy in politics is first of all the fact that the political crisis has been overcome after Arcadius’ death, and Pulcheria remained devoted to the emperor child without seizing the power. Sozomen adds to all these unexpected successes against enemies. But the real proof of divine favor is actually the discovery of Prophet Zechariah’s relics in the surroundings of the Palestinian Eleutheropolis.

Although he lives a century after Eusebius of Caesarea and it would seem probable that the Semi-Arian scheme about successive delegations (God – Father – the divine Logos – emperor) was abandoned, there is still the general belief that the monarch must become an imitator of Christ (μιμητής Χριστοῦ) and Theodosius excels in this by being the best pleasing to God (θεοφιλέστατος βασιλεύς) of all Christian emperors.

Although the superiority of priesthood is always highlighted, the duties and the rights of the monarch seem to also include the support of the Church by enforcing decisions in religious matters, valid for all Christians. These laws justified the use of force with the intention of achieving certain purposes. This is the significant difference between the Eusebian prototype and the Theodosian monarch in the fifth century: the emperor is allowed and even justified to use force in religious matters because of his extraordinary status which he enjoys among the previous emperors.

¹⁰ Socrates, *HE*, VII, 22.

The legislation published and eventually systematized in *Codex Theodosianus* (438) carried forward the provisions of his parent and of his “divine ancestor”, resuming earlier edicts, whose validity is strengthened. Theodosius II sanctioned religious intolerance in the toughest and most comprehensive edict, issued on May 30th 428, formulated under the influence of Nestorius. The heresy is further considered *crimen publicum* and it is punishable as such. Regarding the pagan cults the Theodosian intolerance reaches its climax in the decree of 15th November 435 that completely bans the sacrifices, orders the confiscation or the destruction of all temples and the possibility of being executed for those who mock the Christian faith and the imperial laws that protect it.

Simultaneously, another experimental ideology was developed that sought to identify the Empress Pulcheria with the Mother of God through a sustained *imitatio Mariae* which, finally reached a transfer of imperial epithets and symbols on the Mother of God. Based on the vow of chastity, which Pulcheria had pledged in the great cathedral and based on these unique relationships the empress constructed by inserting the imperial symbols into the Church, Pulcheria seems to have presented herself as a kind of terrestrial image of the Virgin Mary and Mary’s worship, which intensifies, is also a means of promoting the image of the empress. It is very clear that the relationship βασιλίσσα – παρθένος – Θεοτόκος was crystallized during Pulcherias’ reign and the identification process of the empress with the Mother of God led to a mutual communication of the attributes of the two women.

Consequently, Nestorius’ reserve to the Marian cult and the denial of the epithet Θεοτόκος had not only a purely dogmatic dimension, but also a political one: the bishop’s allegations actually sought to undermine Pulcheria’s authority, which had its origins in the image of the chaste woman – as a living icon of the Virgin. In order to preserve her political power she needed to maintain her personal status as an immaculate virgin. This is why, her deep involvement into the mariological, and therefore Christological discussions, owed more to the preservation instinct of her social and political position and less to her commitment to the true faith. Identifying herself with Θεοτόκος by παρθενία, the Augusta had institutionalized her own status during the Nestorian crisis and tried to claim a certain supernatural power by merging the imperial power with the person of the Blessed Virgin.

The events following the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431) show even more clearly that Pulcheria integrated her personal devotion to the Blessed Virgin into the Constantinople civic religion, by transferring the traditional political ceremony into the sacred

space and especially in the ritual of greeting the holy relics, which was identical in form and order with the imperial *adventus*.

For their significant contribution to the Church's flourishing Theodosius II and Pulcheria were also sanctified as their grandfather and are commemorated on July 29th (Theodosius) and on September 10th (Pulcheria) and February 17th together with her husband Marcian. The same as for Theodosius the Great and Flacilla it is difficult to say whether their sanctification is a way of liturgically honoring them or just a recognition of merits and a pious memory of those who supported the doctrine of the Church, building and completing the Christianization of the Roman Empire.

The Theodosian dynasty marks a crucial and unique time in the history of the Roman Empire. What emerges quite clearly from this research is the special way in which the monarch comes to refer to the Church, becoming more involved in the life of the Christian community and especially in the life of the Church of Constantinople. If eastern Theodosian emperors still retain some Hellenistic powers, the western monarchy has an apparent detachment and grants, with some exceptions, an increased autonomy to the clergy before civil authorities. The cultural and ideological gap between the two halves of the Empire can be easily identified as the Eastern practice of appointing bishops of Constantinople by the emperors, while the bishops of Rome or Mediolanum are elected by the clergy or by the people. On the other hand the Church's attitude towards state evolves as a series of articulated and clear principles that defend the autonomy of spiritual authority. But the same theanthropic institution renounces this independence in order to ask for secular support to enforce canonical decisions or to discourage and punish the adversaries of the Church showing her addiction to the state's provision and the permanent need for an external authority that acts for and on her behalf.