



Doctoral School of THEOLOGY
Thesis field: THEOLOGY

SYNOPSIS

DOCTORAL THESIS

„THE ROMANIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AND
THE MISSION OF THE ORTHODOX
CLERGYMEN FROM TRANSYLVANIA UNTIL
THE UNIFICATION OF THE BIG ROMANIA”

doctoral student:
PRIEST CRISTIAN VLAD IRIMIA

PhD student's supervisor:
PR. PROF. UNIV. DR. AUREL PAVEL

SIBIU 2023

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
The Motivation and Importance of the Research.....	6
Hypothesis, Objectives and the Scope of the Research Topic	7
Research Stage and Information Sources	8
Press and Identity.....	15
Classification of the Subject in Theology Field.....	19
Research Methodology	22
Structure of the Thesis	30
CHAPTER 1. ORTHODOXY – VIRTUE OF THE ROMANIAN IDENTITY	31
1.1. Considerents on the Age and Continuity of Orthodoxy in Transylvania Area	35
1.2. The Identity Dimension of Defending the Orthodox Faith in Transylvania.....	50
CHAPTER 2. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE ORTHODOXY – NATIONALITY RATIO IN TRANSYLVANIA.....	77
2.1. Universal and National in Orthodoxy	79
2.2. Stirps and Nations.....	88
2.3. Nations’ Equality on Rights.....	92
2.4. National and Morality.....	96
2.5. National Liberty.....	104
2.6. Stirps Church	107
2.7. National Church.....	115
2.9. Orthodoxy, Culture and National Values.....	119
2.9.1. National Awareness	132
2.9.2. Patriotism and Heroism	134
2.9.4. National Language.....	140
2.10. Confessional School	151
2.11. National Communion.....	160
CHAPTER 3. ORTHODOX CLERGY AND NATIONAL-POLITICAL EMANCIPATION OF THE ROMANIAN NATION IN TRANSYLVANIA	170
3.1. National Identity and Emancipation	174
3.1.1. Nationalism.....	186
3.2. The Clergy in Ardeal and the Revolution of 1848.....	191
3.3. Saint Andrei Șaguna and the Representation of the Romanian Nation from the National-Political Point of View	204
3.4. The Orthodox Clergy in Transylvania in the Service of the National Ideal in 1877.....	219
3.5. Identity Assertion of the Clergy in Ardeal During 1878-1911	222
3.6. Haydudorog Bishopric and the Romanians’ Protests	251

3.7. The Romanian Clergy, Frontrunners and Romanian Soldiers in Transylvania Fighting to Achieve National Unity During 1913-1918.....	261
4. CHAPTER 4. TRAITS OF THE ROMANIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY	303
4.1. Civic Cohesion	303
4.2. Participatory Political Culture	314
4.3. Human Dignity and Morality.....	322
4.4. Harmony and Respect for the Romanian Law	333
4.5. Romanians' Loyalty to the Country.....	340
4.6. National School and Culture.....	346
5. CHAPTER 5. PASTORAL-MISSIONARY MILESTONES FOR CONTEMPORANEITY	359
5.1. Teachings from the Past for a Mission in the Present	359
5.1.1. The Bishop – Altar Shephard of the People.....	359
5.1.2. The Priests–Missionaries on the Lord’s Land.....	366
5.1.3. The Comfort of the People.....	377
5.1.4. The Teachings of the Orthodox Hierarchs in Transylvania to the Assembly and Diocesan Members ...	385
5.2. National Identity and Orthodoxy in Postmodernism	395
Conclusions	407
Figures	417
Bibliography	426
Attachments.....	466

SYNOPSIS OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

With the study called „ The Romanian national identity and the mission of the orthodox clergymen from Transylvania until the unification of the big Romania”, coordinated by Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Aurel Pavel I set as a target to conceptualize the relation between Orthodoxy and nationalism and to analyse the role played by the orthodox clergy in Transylvania with regard to defending and educating Romanian identity and spirituality Transylvania, until the materialization of the Great Union of 1918.

Since the contemporary society presents many challenges to the Church, making it know ever better the existential issued of mankind in order to offer them the paths to the renewal of the soul and the light of finding oneself, I believe that this thesis whose main study objective is to relate to the virtues of the Romanian identity and to rediscover the centre of gravity which the Orthodox Church enjoyed over time in the Romanian society is relevant and appropriate and shall contribute to promoting the research on the role and purpose of the Orthodoxy’s mission in contemporaneity.

My personal motivation to have inspired me to draft this doctoral thesis is the feeling and inner responsibility to contribute to honouring our forefathers who sacrificed themselves in order to preserve the Orthodox faith and Romanian identity, in a period when various authors, with their writings, try nowadays to attempt to the edifice of cleanliness, martyrdom and belief of those who entrusted us with the dearest treasure – the Orthodox Church and national identity.

The scope of this study offers the Orthodox missionaries in the area where the Romanian orthodox are a minority or are subject to dis-nationalization, in countries such as – Romania (Covasna and Harghita), the Ukraine, Serbia and the Republic of Moldova, a rich information support with regard to the scope of preaching and to the modality of carrying out and implementing missionary activities, in a hostile social and cultural context.

If we take into consideration that the people’s valuable and durable achievements in time are the product, not only of intelligence but of faith as well and that they can be understood as being the result of God’s gift outpouring onto creation, then the edification of the Romanians as a

nation, as well as the ascend on the historic ladder can be the subject of a research in the field of Theology.

The topic stated in the title is of interest for the theological research area, since by drafting it, I have tried to bring real contribution to conceptualizing the relation between Orthodoxy and nationalism in Transylvania and at the same time I have tried to recover those testimonies which helped me scientifically structure the role of the clergy in the national emancipation process, aiming to offer a theological perspective on the research.

Starting from the contribution promoted by Father Acad. Dumitru Stăniloae according to whom, the existential context of men, both in their natural context as well as in the spiritual one, bear the national seal and cannot be understood outside a life lived without God, and a nation cannot disregard its spiritual side which assumes its Christian accomplishment or its entelechy, we can deduct that studying nationalism, from a conceptual point of view, comes under the area of Theology as well.

In this doctoral thesis I have set out to make an analysis based on a history regression, with a view to remaking certain realities in the life of the Romanians in Ardeal and to understanding them from the Orthodox Church and Romanian nation relationship point of view.

The main objectives targeted by drafting this research were to capture the beautiful and solid synthesis of Orthodoxy with the nationality in Transylvania region, and at the same time to build an actual image of the role played by the Romanian Orthodox Church clergy and the frontrunners in Ardeal in the deployment of the national emancipation movement and in cultivating the Romanian national identity virtues.

Drafting this study has started from knowing the realities lived by the Romanians in Transylvania, who were the subject of several articles and history studies and it relies on capitalizing the press of the times containing the message sent out by the orthodox clergy and Ardeal frontrunners to the Romanian nation.

Given that for completing this scientific approach I have taken the course of representing the elements referring to the historic reality, individual, institutions, and society in the Transylvanian space, with a view to observing and interpreting those meanings which relate to the field of the Romanians' national movement and to the clergy mission field, the basic research directions are as following:

- knowing the religious-political measures aimed at de-nationalizing the Romanians;

- configuring the administrative, religious, cultural and social effects of the governmental, church and civilian policies;
- identifying the mission of the clergy and monastic ranks of the Orthodox Metropolitan Church of Ardeal which envisaged life aspects of the Romanian nation.

In accomplishing the scientific approach, I have targeted to obtain that information which help me formulate certain valuable deductions with regard to the level of implication of the orthodox clergy in Transylvania in shepherding the orthodox Romanians, with concern to cultivating morality and national identity virtues, by:

- awareness on the Romanians' belonging to the Romanian nation/ethnicity, assuming the Transylvanian territory as being the Country/Land of their forefathers and claiming it as a Romanian virtue, representing the Romanian language and Eastern religion as being the main resources in the assertion of the Romanians as a nation, pursuing and fulfilling the national aspirations and objectives – state organization, progress, defence, ensuring rights and freedoms;
- the orthodox clergy and Ardeal frontrunners generating inside the Transylvanian Romanian nation certain identity-culture enhancing activities aiming to pursuit the Romanian national interests represented by emancipation and self-determination, using thought, attitude and human action mobilization as an instrument.

To carry out this assessment analysis, I have taken into consideration, the following attitude elements: social unity (the Romanian community in Ardeal) and social process (national rebirth) and I have appealed to considering and corroborating the data offered by the social determinations revealed by these unities, such as: national cohesion, patriotism, determination, responsibility etc.

I structured my doctoral thesis onto five chapters (excluding the introduction) systematically containing all the aspects necessary to scientifically build and understand the topic proposed by the tile of the paper. I shall present the summary content of the chapters, as following:

In Chapter 1 I drafted a history regression aiming to identify the main aspects to characterize Romanian identity and to spot out the place of Orthodoxy within its matrix. In the second part I have recovered the testimonies showing that the Romanians in Transylvania related

to the Eastern faith as to a highly valued treasure which must be preserved and passed on to the descendants, even at the cost of the utmost sacrifice.

In chapter 2 I have defined the nation and national virtues and conceptualized the relation between Orthodoxy and nationalism in the light of the feelings and convictions expressed by the clergy and the representatives of the Romanian nation in Transylvania.

In chapter 3 I have assessed the modality and level of implication of the orthodox clergy and Romanian nation's frontrunners in Transylvania for their fight to fulfil the Romanian national desiderates.

In chapter 4 I have run research on the missionary-pastoral guiding role of the hierarchs of the Orthodox Church in Transylvania, with regard to cultivating the virtues of Orthodoxy and to supporting the crystallization of certain Romanian national identity virtues (features).

In chapter 5 I have tried to identify the relevant meanings from the pastoral-missionary guiding of the hierarchs, contained by their pastorals or preaches delivered in front of the members of the Eparchial Assembly and published in the press. Still in this chapter I have insisted on the preaching of the priests to emphasize certain aspects in connection with shepherding and comforting the people in times of suffering. The purpose pursued in this last chapter is that of conceiving, based on the teachings revealed by the holy persons whose guiding I identified, a mission plan for the representatives of the Orthodox Church in the contemporary society. At the end of the thesis, I have tried to re-establish the balance in conceptualizing the topic of nation and national identity, fighting the specific deviations trafficked by certain post-modernist authors which are not compliant to the criteria of orthodox theological reflection.

Conclusions

The attestations in connection with the existence of Christian Romanians in the Transylvania region since the 2nd – 3rd century, shepherding them by the hierarchs of the Eastern Church who were in communion with the Patriarchy in Constantinople (7th century) and with the bishops across the mountains, from the Courts of the rulers in Țara Românească and Moldova confirm the fact that the Romanians have become what they are and have developed into a nations, going through an identity Christo-genesis process.

Living by the word of the confessors filled with the Holy Spirit, such as it is the example of Saint Ghelasie from (14th century), and worshipped in over 168 monasteries and sketes, the Romanians in Transylvania tied a loving relation to God (*Dumnezeu drăguțul, Măicuța Domnului*), endearing and balanced, even Romanian we could say.

Guided in the 17th century by the Holy Hierarchs of who we name Ilie Iorest, Sava Brancovici, Simion Stefan and Iosif cel Nou from Partoș, the Romanians learned to love God and to sacrifice their lives as martyrs for the preservation of the ancestors' old altar and true faith, as shown by synaxes of October 21st(Saints Visarion Sarai, Sofronie from Cioara, Oprea Miclăuș, Ioan of Galeș and Moise Măcinic) or that of November 12th(the Nasaud Saints Atanasie Todoran of Bichigiu, Vasile Dumitru of Mocod, Marin Grigore of Zagra and Vasile Oichi of Telciu).

The representatives of the Church contributed to achieving and preserving the symphony between Orthodoxy and the Romanian ethnicity, aware of the fact that only by closeness to God, the Romanian people shall be able to last, to come true and be capable to climb the stairs to the bright horizons, to where the Heavenly Father calls for them.

The Romanian nation was blessed by God in April 1848, with a new Moise, such as Saint Andrei Șaguna was called, who knew how to hold the sacred sceptre and the national-political sceptre in his holy hand, and thus the national fight for the Romanian people became a symbol to constantly and intensely pursuit under all its aspects – institutional, politic, diplomatic, cultural and religious. In this period, the national culture became a priority field for the activity of the Church and of the Romanian frontrunners who, guided by an inner fire and grace made great efforts for the enlightenment of the people by means of the schools they established, by the catechetical activity, editing books and handbooks, cultural manifestations etc.

The servants of the Holy Altars made an effort to imprints in the souls of the Romanians the conviction according to which, alienation from Christ leads to the alienation from the Romanian identity, and fulfilling the Romanian Law which is the resultant between Orthodoxy and *Romanianism* represents the most viable solution to understand our own messianic vocation, in in comparison to the other nations.

The decision to unify Romania by affixing Transylvania and Basarabia, which basically represented the reason to join the Triple Alliance in 1916 found a correspondent in the Transylvania Romanians hearts, who realized that their chance had been born to answer the

heavenly call of sacrifice to fulfil the national ideal, honouring thus the ancestral legacy. This thing materialized by enrolling the people in Ardeal in the Romanian Army, by the warm welcome of the soldiers arrived to free Ardeal, by taking over the administrative management in the territory, by loudly claiming the resurrection of the Romanian people and choosing a new path, in compliance with the creed “that was God’s will”.

Studying the conception of the orthodox clergy in Transylvania shows a balance between the universal call of the Gospel they were preaching and the mission to educate the people, which was clad in cultivating their national awareness.

Studying the historic realities and analysing the preaching of the orthodox servants and the speeches of the representatives of the Romanian nation in Transylvania determines me to conclude that the achievements of the forefathers represent a rich source of inspiration in conceptualizing the role to be played by the Romanian Orthodox Church at the heart of the society.

The specificities of embodying the truth of faith and Gospel commands and the modality of preserving the national virtues in the course of time by the saints and forefathers of the Romanian people, which ought to be capitalized by the mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church. This requires the clergy’s involvement on the nation’s regeneration process by emphasizing the spiritual support residing in the conscience and inner energy of the members of the nation, by means of missionary programs focused on the virtues of the Gospel.

Without the pretence of an exhaustive presentation of the topic studies, I believe my approach shall contribute to subsequently deepen the topic, as well as identify certain associated topics implying a paradigmatic capitalization of the Romanian Orthodox Church’s relation to the society.

