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SECULARISATION AND ORTHODOXY IN MODERN ROMANIA, WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PRACTICE OF FASTING

1. Thesis Statement

Before the eye of the cultural anthropologists even begins to assess the outcome of modern secularisation at the grassroots level, as it is indicated by the aesthetics of the body, eating habits, cuisine industry and other such elements embedded within the social fabric of the Romanian society, one needs to understand well the intellectual and political trajectory of the dominant religion in the footsteps of the Napoleonic reforms implemented during the 19th century. This paper attempts to look first at the ways in which the advent of the secular ethos in the Romanian principalities seriously challenged the traditional understanding of one of the most distinctive religious practices for Orthodox Christianity, namely the art of fasting.

I set off to argue that during the late 19th and early 20th century, the Orthodox theologians in Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania witnessed not only the gradual alienation of the urban elite from the discipline of the ecclesiastical canons, but also the relative absence of any conceptual and narrative framework supporting the religious practices of *vulgus*. Fasting, in particular, became a collectivist practice more subjected to social censorship, than assigned to its original criteria of theological intelligibility. On the one hand, urban orthodoxy became obsolete because of an independent reason uninformed by faith, echoing the Kantian legacy in the post-Enlightenment culture of Western Europe. On the other hand, rural orthopraxy was mixed with non-Christian beliefs and very close to being divorced from any internal coherence of the theological orthodoxy praised by the ancient Church.

Seeing that the cultural conservatism and religious fervour of the Christian flocks could be defended as relevant for the urban orthodoxy of 20th century Romania, Rev. Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993) initiated the joint process of philosophical and theological reflection upon the meaning of orthodoxy and orthopraxy altogether. He wanted to purify folk opinions from any pagan reminiscences, while persuading the Romanian intelligentsia that Christianity can never be reduced to empty rituals and boring repetitions of an immobile creed. By translating the volumes included in the *Philokalia* series, he hoped not only to reject the Kantian dualism of mind-and-body, but also to rekindle the urban interest for the unknown depths of Christian religion, which in his eyes could not separate fasting from feasting, education from simplicity, faith from reason.

As a side note, I argue that there is no surprise in that this work emerges for the first time within the cultural matrix of Transylvania. Dumitru Stăniloae spoke to an audience which knew well the effects of secularisation. The reinterpreted the Christian practice of feasting and fasting in relationship to theological constitution the human mind and body, revealed by the vast liturgical choreography of the Orthodox worship. Historians of ideas and cultural anthropologists cannot neglect these important aspects when it comes to their analysis of the modern aesthetics of the body.

2. Religion and Culture in Walachia and Moldavia by late 19th Century

The intellectual history of modern Romania does not include a very generous chapter on Christian theology, discussing its relationship with the philosophical principles of modern though, as they were first outlined in Western Europe. The Islamic domination of Eastern Christendom bequeathed Sultanism, practiced by 'an administration and a military force' put in the service of 'the master,' whose 'domination' operated 'primarily on the basis of discretion.'[1] All over the Balkan area, Turkish rule allowed only slow and shallow reforms to take place in what the system of governance, education, and law were concerned.[2] The Anglo-Saxon principles of *Magna Charta*, or the British emphasis on individual rights and properties, were never seen as normative, whether in Moldova, Walachia, or even Transylvania.[3] The influence of the Tsarist Russia was

strongly felt especially in Moldova, where it took decades to replace the autocratic rule with a more participatory system of political representation, at the centre of which the freedom of the individual, whether peasant, civil servant or intellectual, to be rescued from the temptations of State arbitrary power.[4]

Keith Hitchins describes the general predicament of the Orthodox clergy in the following terms:

> Significant differences of class, education, and power divided the metropolitans, bishops, and their bureaucracies from a numerous parish clergy. The majority of the higher clergy were recruited from the *boier* class and from among Greek prelates from outside the principalities. They shared certain moral and philosophical assumptions that were characteristic of the Orthodox world of the day. As we have seen, they also sat together on the same government bodies and often pursued the same political and economic goals.[5]

This meant that the ecclesiastical apparatus paralleled the gap between the urban elite and the peasantry. The educated people had little interest in the religious practices of Orthodox people, among which one counts pilgrimages, devotion for the holy relics, strict fasting rules on Wednesday and Friday, and other such forms of bodily self-discipline. In the words of the same American historian,

> The peasantry supplied by far the greatest number of priests, and only rarely did a member of the middle class or the lesser boiers pursue this vocation. The priesthood, in a sense, formed a closed corporation, since the office was often passed on from father to son, especially in the village.[6]

The State's financial support for the Orthodox bishops prevented the latter category from addressing many of the disturbing issues which tormented the political establishment. The implementation of civic and agrarian reforms was incessantly postponed. In the wake of the 1859 union of Walachia and Moldavia, the process of modernization began then to show its first fruits, in both positive and disruptive terms. Religion came under the renewed attack of the '1848 Generation' of intellectuals, who liked their popular speeches to be permeated by the French revolutionary ethos and its rampant anti-clericalism, and utopian vision of human progress. The Scottish approach to the Enlightenment, with its balanced

view on the role of religion in the public sphere, came to be known only very late by the Romanian intellectuals, and it was never implemented in institutional terms. Equally, the Romanian statesmen did not sympathise with the specifically North-American appropriation of Christian ideas into the democratic mechanism of governance. The status quo favoured a relationship of servitude between the Church and the national State.

In the meantime, the societal habits stayed put, especially in the rural areas. Popular piety was isolated from the attention of public intellectuals. In the emerging cities of European calibre, the revolutionary ideals of took over the old religious pursuit of heaven. Ion Heliade Rădulescu (1802-1872) spoke of social justice while Nicolae Bălcescu (1818-1952), not shy to invoke the divine Providence fought the battle for national emancipation, along with Alecu Russo (1819-1859), C.A. Rosetti (1816-1885) or Ion Ionescu de la Brad (1818-1891). Members of the Transylvanian elite, such as Simion Bărnuțiu (1808-1864), emphasised the emancipating role of reason, under the influence of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Aron Pumnul (1918-1886) saw in Voltaire (1694-1778) 'the patriarch of philosophers and the begetter of the ideas about liberty, equality and fraternity.' The same general enthusiasm for the French understanding of the Enlightenment inspired other figures, among whom one counts Andrei Mureșanu (1816-1863) and others.[7]

In short, the Romanian intelligentsia started to experience a slow process of alienation in relationship with the customs of Eastern Orthodoxy, which were still prevalent among the peasantry.[8] When one of the first Romanian politicians, Prince Alexandru John-Cuza (1859-1862), decided to break away from the paternalist tradition of Sultanism, his move ended up in a quasi-unilateral declaration of war against the ecclesiastical institutions. Cuza tried to empower the 'common man' with more property rights, and to implement gradually a pluralistic view on law and education. In December 1864, the Prince's land and taxation reforms brought about great anxiety inside the Church establishment, which lost more than two thirds of its former properties.[9] A disenfranchised Church felt immediately threatened by these radical measures, which smacked of Jacobinism.[10] The great hierarchs defended their interests by employing an anti-Western rhetoric, not always short of apocalyptic overtones.

This phenomenon resembled the modern Russian history, where successive waves of centralised secularisation took place during the 18th and the 19th centuries. When Moldavia and Walachia were still

happy to live under the umbrella of *Byzance après Byzance* (as Nicolae Iorga aptly put it[11]), Queen Catherine II and Peter the Great set off to usurp the autonomy of the Russian Orthodox Church, with immediate consequences for whole of the Russian society.[12] The ecclesiastical schools, such as Moghila Academy from Kiev, suffered greatly from these transformations.[13] The reforms in Russia had long-lasting effects upon the Romanian elite, too, and this is largely documented for the entire length of the 19th century.[14]

Once the old branch of Saint Sava's Academy (founded in 1694 by Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu) was turned into the first modern University of Bucharest,[15] the traditional concept of theology (which relied on the liturgical experience of the sacred, rather than on the conceptual training) came under fire, while the relationship between the Church and the State was put at test. It is true that with the implementation of the first modern Constitution (1866), and the enthronisation of Prince Charles of Hohenzollern (1866-1914) as King of Romania (1881), the Orthodox Church seized the opportunity to gain her autocephaly status (1885). This meant first of all that, from a juridical point of view, she could function in total independence from the Patriarchate of Constantinople.[16] The Romanian society witnessed then the political transfer from Sultanism to parliamentary monarchy. The times for 'the selfish domination of a small class of boiers and high churchmen over the mass of rural population'[17] were forever gone.

On all possible levels, new strategies of collaboration between the Church and the State had to be devised, so that that the encounter between theology and culture, between the ecclesiastical activities and the representatives of modern culture would still take place. The task of translating the religious symbols and practices of Eastern Orthodoxy into the idiom of modernity was more difficult than that of rendering old texts written in Greek or Church Slavonic into the vernacular. On the longer term, this lack of interaction with the institutions of modernity resulted into the gradual oblivion of thematic richness of the traditional religious practices. Orthopraxy tended thus to become an opaque set of routine procedures, hardly explained, and even less internalised at the level of discursive intelligence by the urban class. In addition, the latter group included non-Orthodox Christians, such as the Calvinists, Lutheran, Unitarian and Roman-Catholics believers from Transylvania, together with the Jewish population more widespread in Moldavia and Walachia. The

Orthodox Church did hardly target this audience during her missionary activities, which explains the gradual merging of the ethnic identity with the religious vocation.

3. Transylvania: ambivalent attitudes towards modernity

By mid 19th century, the same situation was to be found in Transylvania. On the one hand, prominent Orthodox Christians, among whom one counts bishops such as Andrei Şaguna (1809-1870) and affluent business-men such as Emanuel Gojdu (1802-1870), repeatedly declared their allegiance to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, without cherishing the Moldavian or Walachian nostalgia for the 'lost paradise' of Byzantium. This was an explicit recognition of the positive aspects of modern constitutionalism and free-market ideas. The adherence to the 19th century project of national autonomy, educational progress and economic welfare was due to another social ethos, less permeated by the anti-Western stance encouraged in other parts of the Orthodox world. A particular suspicion towards the imperial establishment was, to some extent, justified.

Some of the extreme secular ideals promoted in Transylvania go back to the end of the 18th century, when the Austrian armies led by General Adolf von Bukow, tried either to destroy or to damage many Orthodox monasteries, such as Râmeţi (1762) or Sâmbata (1785). Many Orthodox did not forget the measures taken in 1781 by the 'Holy Roman Emperor' Joseph II (1741-1791), who was the eldest son of Maria Theresa of Austria (1717-1780). Joseph II called for the suppression of all contemplative monasteries and Catholic orders from the Habsburg lands. This order impinged upon the Orthodox monasteries, too, since they were all considered to be 'utterly and completely useless.'[18] The Austrian monarch agreed with the dissolution of more than 700 monasteries at the Western frontier of the Walachia and Moldova. This historical phenomenon, along with the 'natural selection' of the Roman Catholic, the Greek-Catholic, and the Protestant traditions as the only European voices of Christianity,[19] wounded the religious sensitivity of the Orthodox flocks in Transylvania.

Not all political, cultural and social values coming from the West were taken for granted. It is true that by the end of the 19th century, there was a significant flow of cash into the market economy of the Transylvanian

cities.[20] This led to a rapid urbanisation of the rural landscape, and to an ambivalent renovation of the societal rites of passage. The strong opposition to the secular homogenisation was led by religious leaders, rural conservatives and the supporters of old folk traditions. On the other hand, there was a certain understanding of the need to adapt the traditional *rites de passages* to the new conditions of life, marked by economic transactions across different social borders. Priestly sermons, local magazines, journal chronicles, travellers' diaries, some pieces of private correspondence – all these documents reflect the subtle, or radical transformation of the traditional understanding of religious practices, such as the feasting and fasting. Different texts record the loosening up of certain dietary rules ascribed for different periods of the liturgical year. They are, indeed, paralleled by the appearance of new codes of dressing even for the clergymen (e.g., shaven beards, and priests not wearing their cassock in public). The modern standards of urban life, erected to achieve labour efficiency and economic profit, changed the ancient perception of the sacred time and space. The old-narratives connected to liturgical practices became increasingly marginal (such as the Psalter, which was traditionally put in the service of fasting during the Great Lent).

In many communities of Transylvania, especially, the church ceased to be the *axis mundi* of the symbolic geography of ordinary people.[21] Crucifixes stopped marking the crossroads of the new towns and cities, while many religious festivals became almost forgotten. Food was not anymore sanctified in prayer by the sign of the cross. The unity between the micro- and the macro-cosmos became blurred, with the special status ascribed to the nature (regarded as apt to become an incarnational vehicle) disappearing almost completely. The natural equilibrium of ecology, previously insured by the intermingling of the basic elements of nature (air, fire, earth, water), seemed now endangered. With the advent of modern technology, the bread ceased to carry out its traditional symbolism or to display metonymically a theological significance. According to the *pars pro toto* rule, the Eucharist was traditionally regarded as the image of the world, offered to God in thanksgiving and then received back as an oblatory gift.

This set of secular perceptions endorsed the individualistic approach to life. It eventually distorted the poetic link between the body and the word. The archaic sense of belonging to a 'cosmic Christianity' faded away. By implementing a functionalist approach to food, the new

definitions of hygiene changed the understanding of the human body, and suffering. An oblique attachment to scepticism among the intellectuals, the intensification of industrialisation processes, and the rather dramatic changes operated in the calendar (with the transfer from the Julian, to the Gregorian calculation of time) seemed to endanger the traditional authority of Christian piety. After the slow erosion of the Byzantine memory during the Turkish occupation, traditional Orthodox Christians witnessed the necessity of ecumenical practices at the grassroots level, triggered, in part, by mixed marriages between urban people. The phenomenon of secularisation was implacable.

Christianity, whether Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant, began to be practiced mostly as civic religion. The religious payoff of the economic success led, inevitably, to the collective relaxation of the ancient Christian adherence to asceticism. The Orthodox Church gained more freedom of expression, and yet she felt compelled to accept a number of liturgical, architectural, iconographic and musical adaptations to the Westernised version of Christian piety. Only a few pastoral initiatives managed to bridge the gap between the religious expectations of the Orthodox people in Transylvania and the political games played by the State officials, dressed up in secular gowns.[22]

Born and bred in Transylvania, Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna endorsed the imperial respect for political pluralism and cultural diversity, in which he saw an implacable trait of the modern times. He defended capitalism and the principle of representation, while seeing in the institution of the bishopric something similar to the office of a senator in the parliament. In brief, Şaguna supported not only the modernisation of the society, but also the transformation of the Church structures from within. The Christian orthodoxy and orthopraxy depended very much upon the capacity of the Church to comprehend the historical makeover brought about by the modern age. This meant that the Christian communities from the rural areas had to be taught the overarching meaning encompassing their usual practices, while the urban class needed to be instructed about the practical rules of evangelical discipleship.[23] This pedagogical task was, however, only partially accomplished. From the very beginning, in Wallachia and Moldavia the all-encompassing vision of universal Christianity, which embraced many ethnic identities, was almost abandoned. The Jews, the Gypsies, the Germans, or the Hungarians living on the Romanian territories were never approached with a specifically Christian message.

By the end of the 19th century, the ecclesiastical leaders from the Romanian kingdom were busy in cancelling out the former Turkish influences upon the mores of the nation, and the Western ideas promoted by secular intelligentsia.[24] Before 1918, the Orthodox bishops from Transylvania could have never hoped to obtain the privileged status for the 'national Church,' which, in the event, the first two Constitutions of modern Romania (first in 1866, then in 1923) were ready to acknowledge. These legal documents explicitly stated that the Orthodox Church was 'the dominant religion of the Romanian State' (§21). The Church had powerful arguments to argue in favour of a solid recognition on behalf of the State. From the times of Stephen the Great, Moldavia teemed with monasteries, which played an important role in the maintenance of social cohesion and cultural unity. Yet, this secular recognition of the Orthodox Church as the dominant religion in Romania did not trigger a reflection upon the sources of modernity, and the meaning of the tradition, within the ecclesiastical seminaries. The latter were often seen as mere 'priest factories,' as the celebrated Romanian novelist Ion Creangă (1837-1889) once put it.[25] In 1840, the spiritual fervour handed over by the disciples of St Paisius Velichkovsky (1722-1794) from Neamţ Monastery was seemingly forgotten, since the young monk Neofit Scriban (1803-1884) from 'Three Hierarchs Monastery' in Jassy could give a sermon in which, quite overtly, he used ideas about education taken from Voltaire. Once dispossessed of its properties and officially compensated by the very same State with the status of a civil religion, the Orthodox Church was able to think through only timid strategies for keeping intact her sacred traditions, and yet for encouraging the urban believers to resist the experience of secularization.

4. Passionate Orthopraxy: Divorcing Faith from Reason

Often, rampant poverty among the farmers coexisted with luxuriant fortunes owned by the monasteries (some of which were dedicated to their spiritual patrons from Mount Athos). The health of the simple peasants was often vulnerable to diseases. The mortality rate for births was high in the villages. Despite these material shortcomings, the Orthodox Church benefitted from an undisputed spiritual prestige. Some members of the high clergy would try to change the social landscape of the Romanian

principalities by reinforcing the ascetic rules of the ancient Church. This project did not always prove successful. In the early 18th century, Antim Ivireanu disparaged the lazy boyars, who mocked the fasting rules, and went for the easy life. But asceticism, more attractive to the monastic communities of hesychasts such as St Paisius Velichkovsky, was hardly palatable for the educated Westerners. In Transylvania, the famous Inochentie Micu (1692-1768) abandoned the early monastic life with bitter feelings, while remembering the 'everlasting fasting days, offering only peas, beans or boiled lentils, cooked without oil.'[26] When, at the beginning of the 19th century, Christine Reinhardt (after marriage: von Wimpffen), who was the wife of a German diplomat, visited Moldavia, she witnessed the unflagging devotion of the Orthodox Christians and the indigent education of the priests. She noticed that there was a high number of fasting days in the liturgical calendar, apart from the 'very sever Great Lent.'[27] In her letters to her mother, Christine Reinhardt also commented on the poor quality of the food available for the peasants, who tasted only very seldom meat and dairy products.[28]

Another foreign traveller to Wallachia was Felice Caronni (1748-1815), an archaeologist by profession. He endorsed the sceptical view of Prince Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723) regarding the ecclesiastical usage of Old Church Slavonic for the religious services.[29] This decision resulted into an enormous oblivion of the doctrinal, ethical and mystical character of the Orthodox tradition. Formalism, in Caronni's opinion, plagued even the most virtuous practices. The absence of any form of instruction or catechesis was also responsible for the prevalent simony and pharisaic behaviour among the clerics and for the laity's adhesion to only the exterior aspects of religion, on the verge of idolatry.[30] An excessive number of holidays and, thus, a faint work ethic, the emphasis on ritualism (seen in the habit of crossing oneself repeatedly, the endless number of public prostrations and kissing of hands), some superstitions regarding the magic power of oaths and curses, along with the popular belief in ghosts (in Romanian: *strigoi*), create the picture of a mixed bag of the popular religion.

To be sure, Caronni was a Roman-Catholic member of the Barnabite Order (founded in 1535), who cannot be entirely credited for his biased account. Yet, he had a point. Christianity was often reduced to a certain number of rules, and the practice of fasting was not sufficient by and in itself. Not a few pagan practices remained attractive to the rural population.

With the exceptions of a few educated monastics, many orthodox Christians from the Romanian lands lacked the anchoring into the narratives of the patristic tradition. This fact is confirmed by the British diplomat William Wilkinson (†1822), who spent four years in the Romanian provinces, taking systematic notes about the juridical, political, cultural and religious system of values shaping the countries. His remarks about the lack of religious instruction cannot take us by surprise.[31] Wilkinson seems to be impressed by the fervour preserved in the practice of fasting, which was regarded by most people as expiatory.

For all the Orthodox population, whether from Transylvania, Walachia and Moldavia, the advent of literacy was slow, even among the clergy.[32] By the late 19th century, the usage of the vernacular language came to be implemented in the church services, but the literary experts complained about the strong sense of indebtedness towards Slavonic and Greek languages, which the new ecclesiastical idiom seemed to display.[33] The shortage of good translations from the Church Fathers did not help the clergy and the learned laymen to get closer to the roots of their own Orthodox tradition.[34] Religious practices were still observed, in huge numbers, though the commerce with the narratives of the Orthodox traditions was poor.[35] To our help comes the account of the Transylvanian historian David Prodan (1902-1991), who was born in Cioara village (now called Săliște) from Alba county. Here are some of his recollections about a fundamental religious practice in the Orthodox tradition:

> We went through severe fasting, that would not admit eggs or milk. […] Sovereign among the dishes were the beans, first, and then the cabbage, and then the potatoes. […]The fasting was unavoidable, despite the mumblings of the children. To trespass the rule would mean to run the risk of committing a great sin, opening thus the doors of hell with all its torments.[36]

Most Christians had to choose between either orthodoxy without practice, and orthopraxy without full-fledged reflection. Asceticism stops being 'understood as the internalisation of tradition,' called to be seen as 'the performance of the memory of tradition.'[37] Within the matrix of Eastern Christendom, we know that

> [The] ascetical practice of fasting was closely associated with the Eucharist and the rhythms of the liturgy. In an echo of Jewish practice, the *Didache* calls for two fast days each week. As with the weekly holy day, there was a shift: because Jews fasted on Monday and Thursday, Christians were to fast on Wednesday and Friday (*Didache* 8.2). The Friday fast was associated with the crucifixion of Jesus, and became a standard feature of Christian practice, as did fasting before receiving the Eucharist. Fasting was always linked to prayer, as in Jewish practice, by making one aware of the weakness and dependence on God. It was also a form of self-denial for the sake of intense prayer for others, echoing Jesus' self-sacrifice, and could become a practical act of mercy by giving away the money that would have been spent on food.[38]

This kind of awareness was present only among the religious elite. In most of the other parts of the society, oblivion or ignorance remained prevalent. The Christian response to this paradox of modernity, namely the one by which people are introduced into the culture of memory, and yet tempted to focus merely on the present, came only through a radical appropriation of the religious identity via both institutional channels (including the *translatio studii*, with the help of Western scholarship, libraries and Universities), and through personal decisions, as in the case of Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993). The latter's name must be mentioned due to his life-long determination to overcome the mutual misunderstanding between orthodoxy and orthopraxy in the Romanian society. It was Dumitru Stăniloae who tried to stop the transformation of praxis into ritualism, and the rendering of the Christian narrative into a mere myth, of no experiential value.

5. The Obsolete Orthodoxy: Divorcing Reason from Faith

This synthesis emerged rather slowly. Throughout the whole 19th century, the Church boosted her prophetic energy with the help of several hierarchs of high spiritual and intellectual standing. The list would include an eager translator and polymath such as St Grigorie Dascălul (1765-1834), a bold moralist like Archimandrite Eufrosin Poteca (1788-1858), the pedagogue and diplomat Andrei Șaguna (1809-1873), a competent historian such as the bishop Melchisedec Ștefănescu (1823-1892), a committed bibliophile in the person of Dionisie Romano (1806-1873),

a hagiographer like Gherasim Timuș (1849-1911), or a systematic theologian with a keen interest for the history of religions such as Irineu Mihălcescu (1874-1948).[39] Notwithstanding these figures, the impact of theological culture upon the public discourse of the Romanian elites was only shallow.

Despite the plurality of confessional orientations that characterised modern Romania, none of the heated intellectual debates (*Kulturkämpfe*) at the end of the 19th century religion was more than decorative. There was almost no author capable to connect the major themes running through the classical works of philosophy and literature from the Western canon to the theological reflection, liturgical splendour, mystical genius, and social relevance of Eastern Orthodoxy. The Romanians were slow to translate authors such as Vladimir Solovyov (1854-1900) or Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944), who emphasized precisely the importance of this conversation across the cultural borders.

Besides the opacity of the secular sphere towards the Orthodox world, one cannot ignore the intellectual torpor developed within the ecclesiastical circles, almost too ready to extract their legitimacy in exclusively demotic terms. For many decades following the advent of institutional modernisation, the 'national Church' officials remained confident that the popular piety would never disappear, and that the minimal support of the State would thus never be withdrawn. Culture and the academia were areas of reflection and practice which, for many Orthodox hierarchs, did not require pressing answers. Some labelled learning as 'mere vanity show,' with no direct consequences for the illiterate masses of Christians. No theologian seemed to be alarmed by the spectres of nihilism in the way in which F.M. Dostoievsky (1821-1881) in Russia, or Alexandros Papadiamandis (1851-1911) in Greece were ready to scrutinise modernity, each in his own way.

The implacable arrival of the parliamentary system could not replace the secret nostalgia for Byzantium relished by the Orthodox high clergy. The great majority of the Church theologians seemed unwilling to accept the metaphysical possibility, and the historical reality of religious pluralism. The typically Hegelian problem regarding the peaceful survival of different moralities inside the borders of an open society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) was hardly addressed in an almost completely rural country (with 90% of the population made of peasants).[40] It was easier rather to envisage modernity as the enemy of Christianity, with no political alternative, apart

from the agrarian bracketing of history and the liturgical celebration of the 'heavenly citizenship.' Only with the revival of patristic studies in the 20th century, the official curricula of Orthodox theology started to meet both the Western standards for scholarly excellence, and the popular demands for spiritual rejuvenation.

Popular Orthodoxy displayed infinite resources for liturgical asceticism, while being sluggish to respond to the multifaceted challenges of the modern age. Religious writers were unable to adopt an ironic distance towards their own passion (in the manner of Kierkegaard, say). The self-effacing type of speech, proper to many new authors, was hardly practiced. Historical triumphalism, instead, and the easy appraisal of pastoral authority made their way into the ecclesial policies. Meanwhile, the sons and daughters of the European Enlightenment were in charge for building, almost from scratch, the secular structures of the modern state. Under these circumstances, the neo-Byzantine nostalgia could provide the Romanians and the members of the Orthodox Church with a better of image of themselves.[41] With the advent of the monarchy, many plunged into the amniotic paradise of the lost Empire, from which heretics and heathens were nearly always absent, and the reality of sin unlikely, if not impossible.[42] Sentimental feats of narcissism promised the healing of long-lasting wounds inflicted by historical traumas.

The rapid sequence of modernising events left little space for deep reflections about the purpose and substance of an alternative culture. Church theologians were taken aback by the sweeping phenomena of secularisation, and tried to maintain the authority of the Christian message by adopting the local rhetoric of patriotism. Orthodoxy ceased to be preached to people other than the ethnic Romanians. The Church hierarchy was able to adapt to the present ethos, but could not easily identify the critical stance of modernity, mostly invisible on the streets of Bucharest and Jassy.[43] The 'transcendental subject' of the new *Zeitgeist* remained blurred behind its numerous empirical projections. This very fact explains why reactive polemics against the West took the place of that calm and needful theological hermeneutics, capable to trace the hidden roots of European modernity.

6. The Dilemmas of Academic Theology

With an impoverished body of peasants, and deprived of intellectual tools capable to assess the source and meaning of modernity, the Orthodox Church still offered her patronage to the modern Universities of Romania. This was a sign that the former ghetto-like status, so costly for the Christian communities under the Turkish yoke, had to be abandoned. New courses in theology, along the other disciplines of humanities, such as law, natural sciences, and philosophy, were being taught in the hope that the Romanian intelligentsia would at last start its dialogue with the Christian tradition. However, the spiritual outcome and the cultural results of this move remained doubtful. Higher-education in modern Romania followed the German model, which allowed the faculty of theology to sit next to the philosophy department, at the very top of the humanities pyramid. The project of implementing Christian teaching at the University level was of course ambitious, but dramatically short-lived. Theology courses were offered in Jassy only for a limited period (1860-1864), being then moved to Cernăuţi, while the University of Bucharest, having opened one department in 1890, which was not very convincing either. The number of religious books, journals or libraries with impact upon the public forum was insignificant. The asymmetry between Church's agenda and the cultural debates was striking. The staff of the theological academies had neither deep roots in the monastic tradition, nor many strong commitments to the secular understanding of *Wissenschaft*.[44] The tension between, respectively, personal charisma, which insured for centuries the vibrant truth of Orthodox tradition, and institutional routine, which was specific for the modern European project, became obvious right at the heart of this new type of academic theology.

The Romanian history of academic theology parallels, to some extent, the German evolution, whereby the Kantian model of knowledge led to a segregated version of human understanding.[45] The first edition of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781), in the section devoted to transcendental analytics, Kant establishes the mathematical types of judgments (both synthetic and a priori) as the universal paradigm for any metaphysical claim for truth. Consequently, the Creed of the Christian Church was excluded from any possible account related to knowledge proper. The division between 'heart' and 'intellect' (or 'reason') was endorsed by the Pietistic background of the Kantian philosophy, with the effect of neutralising the

fundamental propositions of the Christian doctrine. Theology offered no knowledge, except for its moral discourse, which needed too a conceptual foundation.[46] Theologians had to become either scholars, and thus look down upon their object of study, or to provide ethical expertise in the public forum.

With Kant, human reason trained by the University disciplines of humanities got rid of all traditional claims, which theology used to make with respect to the metaphysical realities. The gap between religious practice and sacred narratives became an ultimate mark of the Kantian project. The Scriptures had to bracketed, or simply dismissed, there where secular reason could not comprehend the significance of a certain theological dogma, or liturgical practice. Classical distinctions, such as the difference between heresy and orthodoxy, became irrelevant. There was no truth to be discovered at the end of any theological explorations. Experiential theology (inspired by sacramental practises and prayer), scriptural reasoning guiding biblical exegesis, or Church dogmas were all considered futile for the true object of philosophical knowledge: the human subject and the created being (that is, nature).

The privatisation of faith meant that the goodness of religion had to be tested exclusively in the sphere of autonomous ethics. The metaphysical tenets of religion, together with its ritual modes of expression, were thus cast into the void of utter irrelevance.[47] Since the empirical basis of academic theology did not pass the test of universality (and neither did music or painting), Kant thought it should be overtly rebuked from the select club of sciences. The Romanian adoption of the Kantian model of European University, which was very different from the German one, led to the institutional divorce between 'secular reason' (embraced by intelligentsia) and 'theological discourse' paralleling 'religious practises' (still followed by the Christian 'common man'). The divorce between the public space open to secular discourse and the private sphere accommodating persona piety meant that theologians had to be scholars, first, and not witnesses of a living tradition.

This epistemological dualism reflected an anthropological European scepticism between heart and mind, body and soul, private and public. The 'noumenal' sphere of knowledge and understanding was opposed to the phenomenal sphere, where the enquiries of human reason could lead to general conclusions of irrefutable truth-value. Among those, philologers ranked the first. Religion without theology, this was the inevitable

outcome of the Kantian understanding of knowledge, implemented by the Romanian University too. In this respect, Christian theology had to saved only through a commitment to historical erudition, or throughout the benign, and politically useful, moral education of the society. This is how, despite Nietzsche's lament over the death of Christianity, scholars such as Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889) and Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930) managed to dictate the 20th century agenda for much of the 'academic theology' that was going on in Europe. In what Romanian philosophers were concerned, different personalities adhered to the Kantian system of values: Titu Maiorescu (1940-1917), Ion Petrovici (1882-1972), Nicolae Bagdasar (1896-1971). They paid no attention to what Orthodox theology had to say about the content of Byzantine piety.

In this context, the risk of ideological dichotomies loomed large over the debate between the blind partisans of an anti-Christian modernization and the opaque apologists of a structurally anti-modern Orthodoxy. Few religious fellows were able to challenge a vision of Orthodoxy seen as an impersonal religious custom and assert that it should be viewed instead as a personally undertaken and socially lived faith. Even fewer scholars pleaded for a historically contextualized and conceptually framed understanding of Orthodoxy. There had not been many alliances between conservative modernists, who believed that all that needed not be changed should not have been changed, and optimists Christians, who did not question, like Gnostic modernists, the good order of divine creation.[48] In order protect the pre-modern traditions, as well as to suppress any theocratic illusions, such a coalition needed take the form of an institutional project. The latter came only with great delay.

The acknowledgment of Christianity's public dimension did not only require investment into missionary work and philanthropy. It required the fostering of education and to the revitalisation of the dialogue between the virtues of reason and the gifts of faith. The options between the encyclopaedic curiosities of modern scholars and the prayerful serenity of the saints had to be explored further. *Illo tempore*, Orthodoxy was known to have granted the passion for knowledge a divine rest in the garden of wonders, in which it was provided with the gift of peace. The challenge of secularisation requested that such oasis of wisdom and grace would not eschew the logic of competition, for the sake of a fictional regress into the past. The emergence of secular ideologies in the public space, many of which were indebted to the Cartesian, if not Kantian body-and-mind

dualism, could not have been disputed without the federal vocation of theological intelligence. It was not only the separate effort of biblical or patristics scholars that mattered in this debate, but the synthesis of scholarly comprehension and spiritual insight, which in the event made all the difference.

7. The Theological Synthesis of Dumitru Stăniloae

From the considerations made above it has become clear that during the 19th century there were few successful attempts to restart the conversation between the religious masses, which was fond of external orthopraxy, and the intellectual elite, which became gradually disenchanted with the theological depths of Christian orthodoxy. Many scholars in the field of liturgics, canonical law, ecclesiastical art and Church history produced an impressive wealth of knowledge. At the beginning of the 20th century, Orthodox theology began to appropriate her ancient traditions not merely in archival ways. A philosophical type of inquiry into the premises, and effects of modernity, along with a theological exposition of the traditional rationales for certain religious practices, was what Rev. Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993) wanted to bring into play. From an early age, he proved capable of taking up the critical suggestions made by different modern thinkers, or generalist historians, only to offer instead a new Orthodox performance in the art of Christian apologetics.

With the help of existentialist philosophers such as Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Binswanger, Stăniloae questioned Immanuel Kant's understanding of human subjectivity. The modern anthropology which annihilated the traditional divisions between categories, such as the 'sacred' and the 'profane,' came under renewed attack. Stăniloae rejected Kant's understanding of human consciousness, for which the notion of purity was merely moral, and the role of bodily disciplined faintly perceived. In his early study of the works of St Gregory Palamas (1296-1359), Stăniloae insisted that the practice of asceticism, which included fasting, vigils, and the noetic prayer (called at times, the prayer of the heart) was indeed necessary in the human process of self-understanding, as well as for the experience of divine grace. Stăniloae was not the only Orthodox theologians in Eastern Europe alarmed by the widespread acclaim of the Kantian *Weltanschauung* in the West. Around the same time in

Russia, Pavel Florensky (1882-1937) deplored the situation in poignantly expressionist terms.

> The idea of the holy body... Fasts serve this idea, and for the same inner reason that it rejects fasting, the intelligentsia is ashamed of eating. Members of the intelligentsia are sincere in this, and the horror is that they are sincere. They can neither eat, nor (especially) partake. They do not even know the meaning of the word 'partake,' or the meaning of holy food. They do not partake of God's gift; they do not even 'eat' plain food. Rather, they 'gobble up' chemical substances. Only a naked, animal 'physiological function' is performed, a function which is excruciatingly shameful. And members of the intelligentsia are repelled by, are ashamed of, this 'function.' They are ashamed but they do it. This is why a member of the intelligentsia eats cynically, and why he marries cynically, defiantly, injuring his own sense of shame and that of others. The soul experiences not calm and peace but agitation and heaviness, the first sign of a soul without grace, ungrateful to life, rejecting God's priceless gift, and proudly wishing to re-create all of being the way it wants.[49]

Modernity, thus read, was incapable to see the positive role of asceticism, and the mystical roots of feasting from the religious viewpoint. Both the abstention from food, and the act of sharing a meal in terms of personal hospitality or liturgical drama, became an increasingly foreign practice for the urban intelligentsia. In the words of Rubem Alves, one simply forgot to what extent,

> A dinner party is a magical ritual. Its purpose is to realize the dream of the alchemist: the universal transsubstantiation of things. It starts with the magical powers of digestion. Onions, peppers, beans, potatoes, tomatoes, bread, beef, chicken, fish, lobsters, oysters, sweets, cheese, wine, beer... They are all different entities. They have all different names. They have all different properties. And yet, through the alchemic operations of the body they lose their identity. They cease to be what they were. They are assimilated. They become like the body (from the Latin *assimilare*, to be made like; *ad*, to, and *similis*, like). They are incorporated: they become one with the body (Latin *corpus*, body). A meal is a triumph of the body over food. All differences become sameness.[50]

The boycott of a secular understanding of human body, and its relationship to the sacred, required the recapturing of the vital sources

of traditional Orthodoxy, which included the metaphysical insight and practical wisdom comprised in the patristics writings, the Eucharistic liturgy, and monasticism. This was the theological manifesto to which the young Transylvanian Dumitru Stăniloae adhered in the 1930s.

Born in 1903, he witnesses early on the gradual transformation of the religious patterns he knew as the offspring of a pious family from Vlădeni village, county Brașov.[51] He went for the primary school to Brașov, and, in 1922, he started to receive his first theological training at the University of Cernăuți. In 1927, he graduated with a thesis on 'Infant Baptism in the Early Church tradition.' Shortly afterwards, Stăniloae he embarked on post-graduate research in Athens (1927), Munich (1928), Berlin and Paris (1929) and, in the event, Istanbul (1930). On this occasion, he discovered the monastic documents about the Byzantine hesychasm, which again emphasised the role of asceticism, made of fasting, and purity of heart, for the attainment of Christian perfection. Thus, he became of the first Romanian professors of theology to draw the attention to the very rich sources of Eastern Orthodoxy.

Due to his extraordinary literary prowess, Stăniloae published hundreds of articles and several books, blending the practical insights of Christian philosophy, with the metaphysical horizon of a robust theological reflection.[52] Stăniloae's interest for the monastic spirituality led him to embark upon the monumental project of translating *The Philokalia*.[53] The first volume appeared in 1946, and the last in 1991.[54] This famous compilation of texts on prayer and contemplation, comprising the wisdom of the Greek Fathers from the fourth up to the fourteenth century, was issued in Romanian in not less than twelve volumes. In contrast, the English edition, following the initial design of St Nicodemos the Hagiorite (1749-1809) and St Macarios of Corinth (1731-1805), has only five volumes (the latter to be published soon). Regarded by Stăniloae himself as the best achievement of his theological career, the Romanian edition of *The Philokalia* had and still has a significant impact on the development of monastic life in Romania, shortly after WWII[55], and following the political revolution of 1989. Until this day, *The Philokalia* remains a best seller on the religious book market.

Evidence for his personal attachment to the monastic movement is Dumitru Stăniloae's relation with the founders of the 'The Burning Bush' Conferences at Antim Monastery from Bucharest.[56] Stăniloae's interim involvement cannot be compared with the strong commitment of

other influential figures of the Romanian intelligentsia, such as the poet Sandu Tudor (1896 - 1963) or Dr. Vasile Voiculescu (1884-1963). It is nonetheless significant that Stăniloae's desire to unearth the treasures of early Christianity, was paralleled by this ecclesial focus on the encounter between intellectuals, and Orthodox Christian monastics, such as hieromonk Ioan Kulîghin and Rev. Benedict Ghiuș (1904-1990). The Christian theologians in Romania began to oppose a liturgical understanding of human existence to the Kantian anthropology, based on the 'mind' versus 'body' dualism. This required a sophisticated account of the ascetic practices of prayer and fasting, and of other religious rites that constituted the invisible fabric of Orthodox spirituality. In 1947, Stăniloae compiled a course in which he expressed his views on the relationship between sacred narratives and sanctifying practices within the Eastern Churches tradition, focusing especially on the monastic texts later included by *The Philokalia.*[57]

8. Food for Thought, and Thought about Food

In this way, Dumitru Stăniloae offered a new grid of interpretation for the widespread religious customs pertaining to the Orthodox identity. There was a great need, Stăniloae thought, not only for opposing dialectically the modern views on man, but also for offering the theological rationales of many liturgical practices that, even among the faithful Christians, came to be misunderstood.

Stăniloae was prone to romanticise his past, when he spoke of his parents' village as about a sort of 'ecclesial republic.'[58] He was inebriated with the idea of peasantry being the true heir of Orthodox Christianity. Mircea Eliade (1907-1986) was not far from the same convictions, when he stated that, '[the] Romanians have preserved, deepened and valued the Christian vision on cosmos, as it was expressed in the first centuries of Christianity. Thus, the conservatism and archaic character of Romanian folklore protected a heritage that belonged to Christianity, but which historical processes of various sort wanted to destroy.'[59] An almost complete lack of instruction in social and economic history contributed this widespread literary idealisation of the 'perennial village.' Literary figures as different as Lucian Blaga (1895-1961), Octavian Goga (1881-1938) were all prone to imagine that, against the 'terrors' of modern history,

the 'archaic ontology' of the Romanian peasant unfolded peacefully its stories in the remote villages of the Carpathians.[60]

In such puritan dreams, Stăniloae never contemplated the vulnerable character of the religious structures in the country side, and even less the urban character of the early Christian communities which fascinated him so much. In the meantime, Stăniloae emphasised the need to construe the theological resistance against secular modernity in terms that combine both intellectual endeavour and the practical appropriation of the long-forgotten Christian traditions. While seeing secularisation is a typically Western phenomenon, with dissolving effects for the traditional fabric of rural Christianity, Dumitru Stăniloae used the tools provided by modern technology (from printing and photocopying to museum archives) in order to explore, and to launch for the educated readership the challenge of the patristic writings.

As a Transylvanian, Stăniloae must have been aware of the traumatizing effects which the violent disruption of the peasant life must have had from the 1920s onwards. The economic instability of the interwar period convinced many Orthodox-Christians to leave Romania and go to the United States, in the hope of finding better conditions of living. At their return, many adopted the neo-Protestant understanding of Christian faith, being thus prone to ignore the ancestral symbolism of many religious ceremonies, such as the Eucharist, the rule of fasting, or the burial service, all of which represented the backbone of traditional Orthodoxy. The idea that 'bread' was intrinsically sacred, for example, was inconceivable for those who refuted the argument of the tradition, for the benefit of biblical literalism. Also, the Greek-Catholic church began to have a more relaxed understanding of fasting[61], allowing in the event dairy products to be consumed on Wednesday and Friday, when the Orthodox practise allowed only strictly vegetarian (that is, vegan) food.[62] Different churches had different attitudes towards food-rites and their symbolism, allowing a greater or smaller degree of flexibility in terms of cuisine innovation.[63]

When he embarked on translating *The Philokalia*, Dumitru Stăniloae must have been aware of all these changes. Multifarious tastes started to appear to surface, and old recipes were lost. Soaked into various liberal trends, the notion of food-rite itself came under attack. Above all, the very notion of celebration, with 'frugality' or 'abstinence' as its correspondent terms, came to be threatened. If the social dimension of food stemmed initially from a religious understanding of food and cuisine,

seen as religious gestures and sacred opportunities, Stăniloae wanted to offer a theological understanding of the earliest Christian practices, which included the rule fasting between the thresholds of 'strictness' and 'dispensation', respectively.

9. Conclusions

This paper offers a novel reading of the modern phenomenon of secularisation in Romania from the intellectual history's perspective. The first part of the argument outlines, in somewhat broader terms, the cultural rift between secular intelligentsia and the religious behaviour of the 'common man.' One of the possible explanations for this historical process is the Romanian import of French ideas about the Enlightenment, together with the implementation of the Kantian model of knowledge within the framework of Romanian University. The dualism of the mind and body, and the denial of any metaphysical relevance for the religious narratives and practises, was hugely influential in the development of academic theology. It endorsed the great divide between 'the secular city' and the 'pious village,' originating in the late the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century. The theological purport of many religious practices of the Orthodox Christians became opaque to the believers themselves, and utterly incomprehensible to many educated people, as well.

At the same time, the self-understanding of religious men and women seemed to be victim, too, of subtler forms of secularisation. The latter encouraged the oblivion of the great narratives that used to give meaning to most of the practises within the Christian tradition. Very strict rules of fasting, for instance, were still observed, despite the widespread absence of the biblical or patristic interpretation of their meaning. Facing both the threat of 'peasant-like ritualism' at the grassroots level, and the menace of 'highbrow ignorance,' the young theologian Dumitru Stăniloae embarked upon the difficult task of restoring the unity between religious practices (such as feasting, or fasting) and the sacred narratives containing their perennial purport. The second part of the paper deals with Dumitru Stăniloae's reconstruction of Orthodox Christianity, with the explicit purpose of bridging the gap between 'secular intelligentsia' and, allegedly, the less modern Christians from the countryside.

NOTES

1   M. Weber, *Economy & Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 232.
2   Al. Duțu, *Coordonate ale culturii românești în secolul al XVIII-lea. 1700-1821* (Bucharest: 1968).
3   V. Georgescu, *Political Ideas and the Enlightenment in the Romanian Principalities, 1750-1831* (Boulder-New York, 1971).
4   D. Berindei, 'La constitution des Etats nationaux aux Balcans et les grandes puissances au XIXe siècle,' in S. Terzić (ed.), *Encounter or Conflict of Civilizations in the Balkans?* (Belgrade: Historical Institute of the Serbian Academy, 1998), p. 101-106.
5   Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 66-67.
6   Keith Hitchins, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
7   On the historical premises of this movement, see Pompiliu Teodor, *Interferențe iluministe europene* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia Publishing House, 1984).
8   This alienation can be better understood in the light of their early exposure to the Western universities, as it is documented by Lucian Năstase, 'Le rôle des études à l'étranger dans la carrière des professeurs d'université roumains (1878-1944)', in Victor Karady and Marius Kulczykowski (eds.), *L'Enseignement des élites en Europe centrale* (Krakow: Université Jagellonne, Institut d'histoire, 1999), p. 149-158.
9   N. Adăniloaie and D. Berindei, *Reforma agrară din 1864* (Bucharest, 1967).
10 Gheorghe Platon, 'La société roumaine et les idées de la Révolution' in Al. Zub (ed.), *La Révolution française et les Roumains*, Collection *Les Roumains dans l'histoire universelle* (Jassy : Universitatea *Al. I Cuza*, 1989).
11 Nicolae Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance* (Bucharest, 1972). It should be noted that for the reputed historian, the theological legacy of Byzantium was utterly tedious, if not almost nonsensical.
12 For this history, I rely on the account of Martin Malia, *Russia under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999).
13 Georges Florovsky, 'The Ways of Russian Theology' in *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, Vol. IV, *Aspects of Church History* (Belmont, MA: Nordland, 1987).
14 Pompiliu Eliade, *De l'influence française sur l'esprit public en Roumanie. Les origines. Etude sur l'état de la société roumaine, à l'époque des règnes phanariotes* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1898), p. 183, has the following things to say about the Russian influence : 'si les Phanariotes donnèrent les premières leçons de français à l'aristocratie moldo-valaque, ce furent certainement

les Russes qui leur enseignèrent à le bien prononcer.' This view was reiterated by the works of Eugen Lovinescu (1881-1943) and G. Călinescu (1889-1965).

[15]   J. Livescu, 'Die Enstehung der rumänischen Universitäten im Zusammenhang der europäischen Kulturbeziehungen (1850-1870),' in R.G. Plaschka and K. Mack (eds.), *Wegenetz europäischen Geistes: Wissenschaftszentren und geistige Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Mittel- und Südosteuropa vom Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1983), p. 21-35.

[16]   Claudiu Cotan, Ortodoxia și mișcările de emancipare națională din sud-estul Europei în secolul al XIX – lea (Bucharest: Ed. Bizantină, 2004).

[17]   Keith Hitchins, *Rumania 1866-1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 69.

[18]   On the general history of Orthodox Transylvanians during the 18th century, see Silviu Dragomir, *Istoria dezrobirii religioase a românilor din Ardeal în secolul XVIII*, vol. I-II (Sibiu, 1929).

[19]   Earl A. Pope, 'Protestantism in Romania,' in Sabrina Petra Ramet (ed.), *Protestantism and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia: The Communist and Post-Communist Eras* (Durham and London: 1992), p. 157-208.

[20]   In contrast to the Ottoman economy, the Habsburg Empire offered more opportunities for business and welfare. For details, see C.G. Giurăscu, *Transylvania in the History of Romania* (London: Garnstone Press, 1969), p. 63 sq. For a general history see C. Murgescu, *Mersul ideilor economice la români,* 2 vol., 2nd edition (Bucharest, 1994).

[21]   This phenomenon is documented by the literary productions of two great novelists of the time: Ioan Slavici (1848-1925) and Liviu Rebreanu (1885-1944), who both describe the lives of the Transylvanian peasants. In their account, the religious dimension of the village life is very dim.

[22]   Keith Hitchins, *Orthodoxy and Nationality: Andrei Șaguna and the Romains of Transylvania 1846-1873* (Cambridge, 1977).

[23]   Paul Brusanowski, *Învățământul confesional ortodox din Transilvania între anii 1848-1918: între exigențele statului centralizat și principiile autonomiei bisericești* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2005).

[24]   For an excellent historical account of the gradual slip into nationalism, see Lucian N. Leuștean, 'The Political Control of Orthodoxy in the Construction of the Romanian State,' 1859-1918, *European History Quarterly*, vol. 37 (2007), no. 1, p. 61-80.

[25]   Ion Creangă referred to Fălticeni Seminary, which he started to attend in 1854. Lucian Năstase, about the number of students reading theology, who visited the Western universities. For a conventional history of the Orthodox theological education in Romania, see Mircea Păcurariu, „Istoria învățământului teologic în Biserica Ortodoxă Română", *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, nos. 9-10 (1981): 979-1017.

26 apud Nicolae Iorga, Istoria bisericii românești și a vieții religioase a românilor (Bucharest: Neamul Românesc, 1908), p. 202-203.

27 *Une femme de diplomate. Lettres de madame Reinhard à sa mère, 1798-1815*, traduites de l'allemand et publiées pour la Société d'histoire contemporaine, par la baronne de Wimpffen, née Reinhardt, sa petite fille, Paris, A. Picard et fils, 1900, p. 212 sq. Similar accounts are to be found in the Austrian travelers' writings, commented by Nicolae Dobrescu, *Istoria Bisericii Române din Oltenia în timpul ocupațiunii austriace (1716-1739)* (Bucharest: Ed. Academiei Române, 1906), especially p. 50. More accounts on this theme are made available by the rich volume edited by Paul Cernovodeanu *et al.*, *Călători străini despre Țările române în secolul al XIX-lea*, new series, vol. 1 (1801-1821) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 2004).

28 For a list of dishes eaten during the fasting days, see Gheorghe Crăiniceanu, *Igiena țăranului roman: locuința, încălțămintea și îmbrăcămintea. Alimentațiunea în diferite regiuni ale țării și în diferite timpuri ale anului* (Bucharest: Academia Română, 1895), p. 195 sq. Another rubric of research is the history of the Orthodox Church in Bessarabia, for which see Zamfir C. Arbure, Basarabia în secolul XIX (Bucharest, 1898).

29 Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descriptio Moldaviae* (Bucharest : Editura Academiei, 1973), p. 371.

30 Felice Caronni, *Mie osservazioni locali, regionali, antiquarie sui Valachi specialmente e Zingari transilvane* (Milano, 1812), p. 15.

31 William Wilkinson, *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia with various political observations relating to them* (London, 1820), p. 130 (about the lack of instruction), and p. 152 (about the superstitions).

32 Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

33 Ioan Bianu, *Despre introducerea limbii românești în biserica românilor* (Bucharest, 1904).

34 See, for example, Andrei Șaguna, *Corespondența* [Correspondence] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2005), p. 156: 'A translation of the book "On Priesthood" by St John Chrysostom would greatly help our clergy and laymen.'

35 D. Drăghicescu, *Din psihologia poporului român. Introducere* (Bucharest: Albatros Publishers, 1996), p. 288 discusses the 'wholly pragmatic' and 'merely social' character of the religious behaviour among the Romanian peasants. Before Drăghicescu, Pompiliu Eliade deplored the collective ignorance imposed by the clerical tyranny. For a more recent account, convergent with Drăghicescu, see Doru Radoslav, *Sentimentul religios la români. O perspectivă istorică* (sec. XVII-XX) (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia Publishing House, 1997).

36 See, for instance, the recollections of the Transylvanian historian David Prodan, *Memorii* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1993), p. 12-13.

37 It is only natural that the breaking away with the tradition led to the abandonment of fasting practices. See Gavin Flood, *The Ascetic Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. ix.

38 Columba Stewart, 'Christian Spirituality during the Roman Empire (100-600),' in Arthur D. Hoder (ed.), *Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 73-89, here p. 78. For a thorough exposition, see E. Vacaudard, 'Carême,' *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1910), col. 2139-58; R. Pierret, 'Carême,' *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. 2.1 (Paris, 1937), col. 136-140 (for a historical account); P. Deseille, 'Carême,' *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. 8 (Paris, 1974), col. 1164-79. Other patristic references, see Pachomius, *Instr.* 1.22 (ed. Veilleux, 21): 'If you are in the desert, do battle with prayers, fasting, and mortification;' Fasting is related to the practice of memory, as many monastic writings indicate. The ascetic emulates the biblical models of fasting as a sign of repentance, or as penitential rite (Zacharias 7, 3-5; 8, 19; Jonah 3, 4-10; Daniel 9, 3-19; Joel 1, 13-14; 2, 12-13 and 15-17); fasting supporting prayer (Ps 69, 11; Judges 20, 26; II Chronicles 20, 3); fasting as preparatory method before the encounter with God (Exodus 34, 29; I Kings 19, 7-8), as with Moses and Elijah who fasted for forty days; for the prophets, fasting needs to be done as part of the noble pursuit of justice; Christ has fasted for forty days before he embarked upon his evangelising mission (Matthew 4, 2), echoing thus the works of Moses in Sinai. Finally, fasting needs to be connected to munificence and prayer (Matthew 6, 1-8), by which the Jews understood also psalmody. For other patristic references, see John Cassian, *Inst.* 3.9-10; Sozomenus, *Ecclesiastical History* 7.19.7; Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.22; John Damascene, *De sacris ieiuniis* (PG 105, 64-77).

39 For some quick references, see Mircea Păcurariu, *Dicționarul teologilor români* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2002).

40 My reading of Hegel follows the interpretation offered by Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology. The Sociality of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

41 Stephen Fischer-Galati, 'Autocracy, Orthodoxy, nationality in the twentieth century: the Romanian case,' *East European Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 1 (March 1984), p. 25-34.

42 Such neo-Byzantine leanings occur with some frequency in the works of Nichifor Crainic, who was inspired by the Slavophiles. See, for example, Nichifor Crainic, *Puncte cardinale în haos* (Bucharest: 1936).

43 I have offered the outline of this analysis in Mihail Neamțu, *Gramatica Ortodoxiei. Tradiția* după *modernitate* (Bucharest: Polirom, 2007), p. 3-25.

44 Here, the Romanian history parallels the Russian example. On the upfront position of the monastic tradition in the Orthodox theology, see Vladimir

Kotelnikov, 'The primacy of monastic spirituality,' in Giuseppe Alberigo and Oscar Beozzo (eds.), *The Holy Russian Church and Western Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1996), p. 21-32.

[45] England, which had not experienced the fever of French anticlericalism, promoted a different view on the public dimension of the University. Eloquently theorised by Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890), the British University stood for many centuries against the ideological monism of European Enlightenment. Religious praxis and reflection was never kept out the central pursuit of truth. Being much closer to the parliamentary model, the academic domain represented the privileged site for strong, but collegial, debates among various 'parties'. Consequently, theology kept rhetoric, history, and philosophy as active partners for dialogue (as illustrated by the Oxford Tractarian movement between 1833 and 1841).

[46] So Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, ET by James W. Ellington, 3rd ed. (*Indianapolis: Hackett).

[47] M. Kuehn, *Kant. A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 371, 'Only moral service will make us pleasing to a moral God. Prayer, liturgy, pilgrimages, and confessions are worthless.'

[48] On modernity as essentially Gnostic, see the writings of Eric Voegelin, *Modernity without Restraint*, vol. 5, *Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* (Columbia, 2000).

[49] Pavel Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of Truth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 213.

[50] Rubem A. Alves, *The Poet, the Warrior, The Prophet* (London: SCM Press, 1990), p. 11.

[51] For the biography of the Romanian theologian, I rely on M. Păcurariu, *Dicționarul teologilor români* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2002), 455 ff. For a more personal account, see Lidia Stăniloae, *„Lumina faptei din lumina cuvântului": împreună cu tatăl meu, Dumitru Stăniloae* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2000). For the late Stăniloae, see also Sorin Dumitrescu, *Șapte dimineți cu Părintele Stăniloae* (Bucharest: Anastasia, 1992[1], 2003[2]). Literary snippets are available in the following books: Petre Pandrea, *Amintirile mandarinului valah* (Bucharest: Albatros, 2001), *passim;* Al. Paleologu, *Despre lucrurile cu adevărat importante* (Jassy: Polirom, 1998[2]), p. 102 ff. M. Lovinescu, *Jurnal* 1981-1984 (Bucharest: Ed. Humanitas, 2003), the entry: 10 octombrie 1981; Sanda Stolojan, *Nori peste balcoane* (Bucharest: Ed. Humanitas, 1996), p. 41 ff, and p. 111.

[52] D. Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos și restaurarea omului* (Sibiu: 1943, reprinted at Craiova: Omniscop Publishers, 1993).

[53] Summing up more than five thousand pages, Stăniloae's edition of *The Philokalia* includes many more patristic writings than the first Greek edition. Here are the *supplementa* coined by Stăniloae. Vol. I (1946[1]): Evagrius, *On prayer*; Mark the Ascetic, *On Baptism*; Vol. II (1947): Maximus the Confessor,

On the ascetic life; the *scolia* to *Chapters on love*; *Quaestiones et dubia*; Vol. III (1948): *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, instead of *Various chapters*; Vol. IV-V are identical with the Greek version; Vol. VI (1977): *Ethical discourses* 1 and 5 by St Symeon the New Theologian; plus *On paradise* by St Nikitas Stithatos; Vol. VII (1977): Gregory Palamas, *The Triads* II. 2-3; *On the godly and deifying participation*; Vol. VIII (1979): A study by D. Stăniloae on the history of Romanian hesychasm, and some texts on prayer written by various Romanian saints (Vasile from Poiana Mărului, Calinic from Cernica, and a certain Iosif from Văratec (19th century); Vol. IX (1980): *The Ladder* of St John Climacus, Abba Dorotheos, *Instructions* i-xiv; *Letters* 1-2; Vol. X (1981): St Isaac the Syrian, *The Ascetic Writings* (Greek version). Vol. XI (1990): The writings of Abba Barsanuphius and John; Vol. XII (1991): *The Writings of Abba Isaiah the Solitary*. The inclusion of the works of St Maximus Confessor is a clear sign of Stăniloae's desire to challenge Romanian intelligentsia, and prove the metaphysical texture of Orthodox Christianity, which was far from being reducible to collective ritualism.

54 Maciej Bielawski, 'Dumitru Stăniloae and his Philokalia' in Lucian Turcescu (ed.), *Dumitru Stăniloae: Tradition and Modernity in Theology* (Jassy: Center for Romanian Studies, 2002), p. 25-52. For the impact of *Philokalia* on Stăniloae's thought, see Maciej Bielawski, *The Philocalical Vision of the World in the Theology of Dumitru Stăniloae* (Bydgoszcz, Poland: Homini, 1997).

55 See André Scrima, 'L'avénement philocalique dans l'orthodoxie roumaine,' *Istina*, vol. 5 (1958), p. 295-328; and p. 443-374.

56 For some insights into the yet not fully documented, but tragic episode of the history of the Romanian Orthodox Church, see André Scrima, *Timpul Rugului Aprins. Maestrul spiritual în tradiția răsăriteană*, foreword by Andrei Pleşu (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1996), rendered in Italian translation as André Scrima, *Padre spirituale* (Bose: Edizioni Qiqajon, 2001); Antonie Plămădeală, *Rugul Aprins* (Sibiu: Editura Mitropoliei Ardealului, 2002), who writes also as a personal witness; and, with greater caution, M. Rădulescu, *Rugul Aprins. Arestare. Condamnare. Achitare* (Bucharest: Agapis, 2003).

57 Dumitru Stăniloae, *Spiritualitatea ortodoxă. Ascetica și mistica* (Bucharest: Ed. Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1981¹, 1992²) – a book translated into English under the title: *Orthodox Spirituality* (St Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2002), and having its first draft version dating already from 1947.

58 Marc-Antoine Costa de Beauregard and Dumitru Stăniloae, *'Ose comprendre que Je t'aime*,' (Paris: 1983), p. 16.

59 Mircea Eliade, 'Destinul culturii românești' (1953), *Împotriva deznădejdii* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1992), p. 173 (my translation).

60 Sorin Antohi, 'Romania and the Balkans: From Geocultural Bovarism to Ethnic Ontology,' *Tr@nsit-VirtuellesForum*, vol. 21 (2002), online version.

[61] Dissertatio de ieiuniis graecae orientalis Ecclesiae, 1782. Raphaelis de Martinis (ed.), Iuris pontificii de propaganda fide.: Pars prima, complectens bullas, brevia acta s.s. (Rome: 1890), p. 70: 'vel, si ad abstinentiam huiusmodi tam ex praecepto quam ex consuetudine Ecclesiae Graecorum, ut nobis exponitur, tenerentur, cum iis eadem auctoritate dispensare dignaremur, ut piscibus, oleo et vino, in dictis quartis et sextis feriis, et in quadragesima.'

[62] Council in Trullo (692 AD), canon 55, forbids the practice of fasting on Saturday.

[63] Veronika Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting, the Evolution of a Sin* (New York, Routledge, 1996).