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## **SAINTS AND HEROES, WAR AND PEACE. A ROMANIAN ORTHODOX HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

*In the Orthodox tradition, there is no systemic theory on the issue of war. Some contemporary authors attempted to deduce a theory and to establish Orthodox regulations concerning war, but, in most cases, these attempts proved to be only personal reconstructions, based upon a particular pattern.*

*This is the reason why historical research proves to be useful; it evinces all the concrete ways the Orthodox world dealt with war, in various temporal and spatial contexts.*

*My communication focuses on the perspective Romanian Orthodoxy has had upon war, from the creation of the Romanian states (in the XIV-th century) until today. The organisation of the Orthodoxy into national churches, each having its own particular evolution, makes this attempt legitimate.*

*My paper does more than selecting the references to war from the documents. The problem of war has never been an autonomous issue, but it is closely connected to the fate of a community, to the choices it makes, according to its major aspirations, to the ways the community represents itself and relates itself to the others. Therefore, war is discussed in the broader context of the relations between religion, church, society and state.*

**Keywords:** *saint, hero, war, peace, Romanian Orthodox Church*

After WWI, if the international public opinion had been asked about the role that religion played on the world stage, most answers would have focused on the fact that religion and churches were meant to bring peace.

One hundred years later, religion is regarded as a threat, as a source of violence. Religious beliefs are connected with international terror-

ism, the conflict among civilisations is considered to be religion-driven. War is again regarded as an efficient way of solving international problems, a fair war becomes justified, and a holy war is taken into consideration.

Who is right? Is religion a peace factor or, on the contrary, is it a source of conflict? From the historian's point of view, I can only ascertain the contextual character of these statements, a context which is both temporal and spatial.

I will not insist on proving this idea, which is a premise for our discourse. I shall only assert that the theme „orthodoxy and war” has a contextual character. In Romania, this subject is not of interest at the moment. From the point of view of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the problem was solved at the beginning of the 90's. The civil society and the academic environment are more interested in the relationship between orthodoxy and democracy or, more recently, in the Church's funding problem from the state budget and in the fact that there are too many churches and a very small number of hospitals (În România..., internet; Minciuna..., internet). The situation is entirely different in the former Yugoslavian space, which was devastated by the civil war. What happened in Yugoslavia exceeded the regional context and became global food for thought on the relationship that exists between religion, nationalism, democracy, and the peace and war problems.

In the extremely rich bibliography regarding the issue of religion and of the “just war”, there were written a lot of papers that insist on the fact that religion creates violence and poisons everything. The rejection reaction came immediately afterwards, which tried to identify religion with pacifism. Meanwhile, the problem has begun to be analysed more seriously, especially by appealing to history and theology, fact which offered depth to the discourse.

Out of the works that I have read, I would like to mention the volume “World Religions and Norms of War”, edited by Vesselin Popovski, Gregory M. Reichberg and Nicholas Turner. The study “Norms of War in Eastern Orthodox Christianity” was drawn up by Yuri Stoyanov. The editors state about this chapter that it “undertakes a huge, almost impossible, task to analyse attitudes of the Eastern Orthodox

Church toward the use of armed force and methods of warfare.” (Popovski 2009: 6-7) The study is really impressing, being a pioneering one, because in the orthodox environment there hasn't been a systematic reflection regarding the issue of war, as there is in the catholic one.

The study written by Stoyanov inspired me in choosing this theme. Firstly, the author doesn't say anything about the Romanian orthodoxy; he only talks about Byzantium, Russia and the Balkan orthodoxy. This is why I consider my research to be a complement to the volume written by Stoyanov. Secondly, I noticed that, despite the analysis of the issue on historical steps, the author tends, under the pressure of the context, to outline a “theology of war”, i.e. of pacifism, by relying on dogmatic texts, considering that this is the dominant vision of orthodoxy. In my approach I wished to have a historical perspective and I focused more on practices rather than on dogmatic definitions, starting from the reality that, in the orthodox environment, there hasn't been an attempt to systematize the issue of peace and war.

This doesn't mean that I have neglected the theological aspect, but here, too, I took into account the idea of contextual theology, that has been developing in recent years (Brunner, internet). The problem of war is an excellent topic for the contextual theology, because in such moments of major crisis we tend to ask ourselves what is happening / going on or, as believers, to ask God. I consider that for our subject, the question of having faith in God or not is very important because nowadays we meet people who conceive religion as an ethical and social pedagogy, but also people living under the sign of divine providence. In Romania, even now, after two centuries of modernity, there is a high percentage of religious people. Historians generally ignore this reality, although they should notice that, for example, during the Second World War, the speeches addressed to soldiers fighting against the Soviet Union are full of references to the crusade and God's will.

I will also make the distinction between the individual and the community. In what concerns violence, what strictly applies to an individual becomes much more nuanced when we are dealing with a group of people.

Finally, I notice that Orthodoxy is very often identified with the ascetic and mystical practices. It is true, unlike other Christian denominations, prophecy and millennialism are less obvious, but these symptoms should not be ignored, especially since they are most related to the subject of war.

I divided my study into three parts. In the first part, we addressed the realities of the Middle Ages. For those who know less the history of Romanians, we remind that until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Romanians lived divided into three state formations, out of which only two had a Romanian ruler: Moldavia and Walachia. The Romanian state structures were only formed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, much later than the Balkan people, and entered the sphere of influence of Byzantium, who had then lived its last moments of statehood. From their early days, the Romanian medieval states had to face the Ottoman threat, therefore the first written documents that we find on the Romanian territory about war are related to the idea of the crusade. I focused on the literature written in Moldavia because here there is more emphasis on the subject than in Walachia and the ideas are the same.

In the second and third part of my presentation I focus on the Romanian Orthodox perspective on war in modern times and nowadays, considering the development of the national movement, of a secular society and of the rethinking of the war from the international law perspective.

**The medieval period.** In „Description of Moldavia” (Cantemir 2001: 59, 203-204), Dimitrie Cantemir, prince of Moldavia and well-known European scholar, emphasise a model of Byzantine inspiration governed by the principle of symphony between the political power and the spiritual one and the existence of a prince-metropolitan bishop two-headed leadership, with a tendency towards Caesaropapism (Hussey 1967: 9-16, 105-111). War and peace depend exclusively on the prince, fact which reminds of the “imperial wars” from Byzantium (Dennis 2001: 34; Simion 2010: 111; Hussey 1967: 34-54; Popovski 2009: 177-179). War means fighting against the enemies of the prince and of the country, whoever they might be, the subjects having to obey to the letter the state ruler’s decision, because the most powerful law

of the country is, in extreme cases, his sovereign wish which can be efficiently censored only in cases of church dogma.

Dimitrie Cantemir presents us with a 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century strongly militarized Moldavian society, where bravery is exalted. He underlines the fact that relatively small country managed to defence itself and wage victorious wars against much bigger and more populated states, through a massive mobilization of the population. There were professional soldiers but the army was largely formed of peasants, free men, who, in times of peace, would work their lands themselves (Cantemir 2001: 174). Moldavia is not a warrior society, which makes its living especially through war, as the Tartars do, for instance, the eastern neighbours who often engage in short plundering campaigns. There are no clan feelings as in the case of the Western knights, based on the code of honour, but the peasants cultivate a feeling of pride and freedom, differentiating themselves from the dependant peasants. Moldavia's fighters are military who do not wage wars on their own but who join the army on the order of their supreme commander, who is the prince. The only exception is on the east border with the Tartars where these peasants are organized in a real "republic" and have the liberty to respond to the plundering attacks whenever the case (Cantemir 2001: 174).

If the church as an institution does not intervene in the issue of war, religion however is present in the speech about war (Harris 2000: 19-31; Rauzduel 2000: 480-518). We can emphasise this nuance if we analyse the speeches about Steven the Great and Holy (Papacostea 1990; Gorovei 2005).

Steven the Great is the emblematic historic character of Moldavia. The most detailed biography of Steven the Great was written by the chronicler Grigore Ureche, a great boyar from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Steven's literary portrait, made by Grigore Ureche, is the most famous of all prince's characterizations: "Prince Steven was a short, angry and spender of innocent blood; many times, during feats, he killed without trial. Besides this flaw, he was always full of vigour, energetic, always one step ahead of others. He was very skilled in the matters of war, personally intervening wherever necessary, so as his soldiers may see

him and summon up their courage. This is why he would win almost every time. And if he was defeated, he did not lose faith, but he restarted the fight till he won.

Steven was buried by the people with great sadness. Everybody was crying as after a parent because they knew they had lost a prince who had done a lot of good and who had protected them. Since his death (1504) till today (the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) people have called him the Holy Steven not for his soul, which is in the hands of God, as Steven himself was a sinful man, but for his military deeds which were not surpassed by any other prince.” (Ureche 2001: 65-66)

Steven the Great was considered holy among the people for centuries but it was not until 1992 that the Romanian Orthodox Church officially proclaimed this fact (Tomosul..., internet). On this occasion there were voices which contested Steven’s holiness, many arguments being taken from this text: he spilled innocent blood, he waged wars, he sinned, having several wives or mistresses. Many of these reproaches appeared due to a misunderstanding of the medieval mentality and to the use of a restrictive vision upon the idea of holiness.

As Dimitrie Cantemir underlines, only God and the law are above the prince, and the prince, provided he wishes so, may ignore the law and even tempt or challenge God (Cantemir 2001: 203-204). Wrong judgments will be repaired by other princes and God will punish, one way or another, the one who defied him. Even if he was sometimes wrong when judging someone, Steven, in exchange, excels in his relationship with divinity. He is God’s anointed, who sent him on earth, just like the Byzantine emperors, to take care of the country and its people, to spread justice, to bring prosperity to his subjects and to protect them, seeking the ways of God (Enache 2014<sub>1</sub>: 399-408). Two extremely popular stories circulated the Romanian Middle Ages. One is “Varlaam and Ioasaf”, in which young Ioasaf, son of emperor, seeks holiness and, therefore, leaves his father’s palace to follow monk Varlaam into the wilderness. In another story, entitled “The Wise Archir and His Nephew Anadam”, a public servant advises his adoptive child on how to serve the emperor, according to justice and the divine laws (Cărți populare 1998). On the one hand, we have the mystic, on

the other, we have the political man. Both instances are accepted by God since the political ruler himself is blessed in church, being called to fulfil the political mission that was granted to him, among which waging war as well.

Steven the Great waged many wars, winning most of them, due to “luck” according to Ureche (Ureche 2001: 36-38). By “luck” one should understand something similar to the Roman title of “Augustus” which designates the auspicious nature of the person in front of the state (Enache 2014, : 404). However, under certain circumstances, luck was not enough, Steven being defeated. And this is attributed to the divine providence, whose logic may be perceived sometimes but other times it remains hidden. Steven knows that God’s help, Virgin Mary’s help and that of the saints’ is the one that brings him victory and this is why he takes care every time to thank divinity especially through rising churches ( Gorovei 2005: 254-343).

Along his chronicle, Grigore Ureche deals with the history of the Ottoman state (Ureche 2001: 73-74). He says at a certain point that the Turks were left on earth by God to punish the Christians for their sins. Osman and his descendants spread in Asia Minor and later on in the Balkans due to the rivalry among Christians, and Ureche uses hard words to talk about John Palaiologus and John Cantacuzino, who asked for help from the “non-friend of the cross” in order to solve the misunderstandings between them.

If the war against the pagans (Turks, Tartars) is something natural, Ureche does not perceive the conflict between Christians as a natural one. The sins of the Christian princes generate war and God intervenes in order to do justice (Ureche 2001: 38, 54-58). Thus, when the king of Hungary, Matthias Corvinus, attacks Moldavia, he is decisively defeated by Steven. Commenting on the results of the battle, Ureche says: “This is how God punishes those who are vain and mighty, to show that worldly things are temporary, so as no one trusts their own strengths but should trust God, and wage no war if God stands against them.” (Ureche 2001: 38)

Beyond various ideological discourses, it clearly results from all historic documents that the Romanians identified themselves as a part

of the Orthodoxy and of Christianity in general, trying each and every time to fight the Ottomans not only because the latter were pagans, but more importantly because they were oppressing the Christians living under their rule (Pop 2004: 23-28). In the Romanian vision, a crusade is the fight of liberating the Christians from the “pagan” oppression and not a fight meant to destroy or convert the unbelievers. From a certain perspective, the anti-Ottoman war is a just war and, under certain circumstances, a holy war. However, there is no official mention of the idea that someone could redeem themselves through the war against the “pagans” or that death on the battle field would turn someone into a saint; but living in the vicinity of the “pagan”, on the border, had significant consequences regarding the behaviour, including the religious one. Dimitrie Cantemir describes the inhabitants of the south-east region of Moldavia, at the border with the Tartars, as being used to living in a state of war, being better soldiers than those from the rest of the country. “As for the religious ceremonies, says Cantemir, these inhabitants do not know much. Most of them believe that every man’s dying day is decided by God and nobody can die or get killed in war before that particular day. This fact gives them great courage in battle. They do not consider as sinful to kill or rob a Turk, a Tartar or a Jew.” (Cantemir 2001: 179-180)

In exchange, the inhabitants from the north of Moldavia are seen by Dimitrie Cantemir as less skilful soldiers and better used to working the land. “They are stubborn in their faith, says Cantemir, and that is why one can find more than 200 large monasteries, made of stone, all over the region and the mountains are full of monks who quietly devote their lonely and humble life to God.” (Cantemir 2001: 180-181)

What has been told so far can be better understood if we study the inner and the outer paintings of the monasteries from the north of Moldavia, paintings done especially in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Sinigalia 2015). Here we have a true theology in images which express the “official” vision about the world and its relation to divinity. The man is assaulted by demons and sinful thoughts. The fortresses are sieged by pagans. The walls of the Moldavian churches often depict the siege of Constantinople in 626 (Treadgold 1997: 297-



298) but instead of Byzantines there are Moldavians and instead of the Persians and the Avars there are the Turks. The unseen enemies and their seen instruments are trying this way to attack the Christians, the physical conquest of the Christian fortress also signifying the conquest of the soul by the enemy. The defence against these threats can be accomplished only with the help of divinity. God and his angels help us escape the devilish temptations and, to the same extent, God sends his angel armies to support the true believers in their fight against the pagans, who are in fact worshipers of the devil. In 626, the image of Christ, unmade by human hand, and the intervention of Virgin Mary prevented the fortress of Constantinople from being conquered by the pagans. Christians must be aware of this help and must thank God for the given support. That is why the theme of the Constantinople's siege is always associated with the theme of the glory Hymn addressed to Virgin Mary (Mândru 1995: 81-92, Scorțea, internet).

Expression such as “Constantinople – the fortress guarded by God” is often used in various discourses (Baldovin 1986: 57-70; Charlton, internet). This expression make sense to the extent to which those who inhabit these regions confess and accept Jesus Christ as the true saviour, but God's help is not granted unconditionally and no one believes that the worldly kingdom is identical with the heavenly one. God creates a clear cut between believers and non-believers but the Christians must constantly maintain the connection with God, and this is done through prayers and spiritual perfection. Guarded against the “pagans”, Christians start their spiritual journey which will end in God's true kingdom which will be established at the end of time, when the final judgement will take place. At this judgement, angels will protect with spears the soul from being captured by demons and will guide it to heaven. The certainty of salvation will motivate those who live on earth to believe in the power of God and the saints' prayers along with the help of divinity will guard them against the unseen temptations but also against the attacks of the seen enemies. The prayer binds heaven and earth and those who pray become Christ's warriors who obtain God's favour for men, and those who defend the Christian community with their weapons are doing the right thing according to the divine or-

der. It is not a coincidence that in the images describing heaven we see that the saints who lived in fasting and praying are sitting next to the kings of the world, because the latter fulfilled with honour the mission given to them on this earth, seeing that God's will is done.

There is a tendency to perceive the Christian's relation with God only as a strictly personal one, thus ignoring the community-God relation which is present in the Christian vision, even if no mention is made about a "chosen people". One way or another, our life on this earth is influenced by the one next to us. If a community goes wrong in the eyes of God (especially the leaders of that community), God will punish that community one way or another. The individuals who went steadily on God's path will be saved but the community as such will perish. At a certain moment, as it also happened to Israel, God will take his protective hand from over the kingdom and the community will enter a new phase of its relation with God (Lipschits 2005; Roncace 2005).

Starting with the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Romanian Principalities go more and more under the political control of the Ottoman Empire (Cândea 2003: 803-852; Cernovodeanu 2002: 435-523). Princes lose one of their most important sovereign attribute: they can no longer declare war and make peace on their free will but they have to obey the sultan's will (Cantemir 2001: 61). The state gradually loses its warrior purposes (Cantemir 2001: 125-128), people no longer have the feeling of being protected. The change of the political situation is visible in the spiritual field as well, where the prophetic feeling, inspired by the book of Psalms, shifts to a secondary level, in favour of the mystical feeling. The man stands alone in front of the world's wickedness; he cannot rely on anybody, the only hope being God, while the purpose of life is redemption. From an iconographical viewpoint, the theme of the Constantinople's siege disappears. There is no Christian fortress to be defended anymore. The theme of the Praise Hymn addressed to Virgin Mary is however preserved. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, monasticism experiences an exceptional development, especially the Hesychastic current which ensures the unification path between the believer and God (Moldoveanu, internet). More and

more people retreat to deserted places, to pray. The others continue to do their duty into the world but, towards the end of their lives, they wish to get closer to monasticism, one way or another. There is no political community on earth that is loved by God and whose defence is worth fighting for. There is only one thing left: the unseen fight with the spirits for personal redemption.

**The modern and contemporary period.** At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the national movement is developed on the Romanian territory. The goals of this movement focused both on national independence and on a modern development of the Romanian society (Berindei 2003).

The accomplishment of this national ideal was carried out by means of propaganda, of the development of a national conscience, of civic movements, of diplomacy but also by means of war. From this point of view, war is perfectly justified if this is the only way to accomplish the national ideal. After a long period in which Romanians couldn't call up the army and fight a war, Romanians' warrior past is exalted and there is an increasing concern to create a national army (Iorga 1929; Istoria militară... 1987; Mircea, internet).

The maturity moment of the Romanian national movement is the 1848 revolution (Berindei 2003: 241-315). Romanian revolutionaries sought to implement an extensive program of reforms, meant to introduce progress on the Romanian territory. For them, progress was the meaning of history itself, a history that was protected by divinity. Under the influence of Edgar Quinet's and Jules Michelet's ideas, the Romanian revolutionaries redesigned Christianity as a religion relying on progress, and the Gospels as the place in which freedom, justice and people fraternity are heralded. This is why these revolutionaries tried to turn the Orthodox Church into an instrument of progress. Mysticism and monasticism were considered to be a lack of responsibility towards the challenges of history. The apostles were regarded as revolutionaries, as fighters for justice, and the church was asked to be active and to get involved in the life of the nation, this being the sacred duty that it must accomplish (Enache 2014: 703-738). The last lyrics from the poem "Un răsunet" ("An echo"), a poem written during that

period, which subsequently became the Romanian national anthem, state: “Priests with the cross in their hands! For the army is Christian / The motto is freedom and its goal a holy one / We’d rather die in battle in full glory / Than be slaves again on our ancient land”.

The Messianic vision of the revolutionaries from the mid - 19<sup>th</sup> century was soon forgotten. The Orthodox Church is accepted in society only because, throughout history, it has preserved the Romanian identity and it has fought together with the people for national affirmation (Enache 2008: 371-403). In parallel to redefining the role of the church, the Romanian military doctrine is developed, which is essentially a defensive doctrine, meant to defend the country and the nation. By reinterpreting the past, it has been said that, in its entire history, the Romanian people haven’t attacked anybody, always being forced to defend themselves (Vlad, internet). From this perspective, all the wars fought by the Romanians have been fair wars. Gradually, an ideology has been built, which lays three fundamental institutions as the foundation of the state: the church, the army and the school (Lucaciu 1915).

The extremely high number of victims from World War I (10% of the Romanian population) stimulated the generalisation of hero-worship (Mormântul..., internet). There wasn’t a single village in Romania that didn’t build a monument in honour of those who died on the battlefield. In villages, these monuments were mostly erected in the churches’ yards. In Bucharest, a monument of the “unknown hero” was built. In 1932 this monument was the reason for which fierce clashes between authorities and a number of students from Bucharest took place because the students regarded the tomb without a cross of the Unknown Hero as the symbol of a new type of paganism, without connection with the historical tradition of the nation. Rejecting the argument that tomb would represent a symbol for all those who sacrificed themselves for Romania, regardless of ethnicity or religion, the students constantly militated for putting a cross at the Unknown Hero’s tomb (Enache, internet).

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 1932, a procession, headed by a priest, took a marble cross to the tomb of the Unknown Hero. Near the tomb, the

gendarmes waited for the protesters. The priest Nicoale Georgescu-Edineț knelt, took the cross in his hand, and said to the armed soldiers: “If blood is shed for the cross, I want to be the first one to die” (Enache, internet). Thus, Romania enters a new stage of its history, dominated by a belief in prophecies and the obsession for martyrdom.

In fact, we assist to a rethinking of orthodoxy in relation to the community. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the church and the priests have their autonomous role regarding the personal salvation of individuals. The priests only have to publicly repeat among believers the message of the national interest. This fact was regarded as a subordination of the church to the nation. The solution was the merger between religion and the national ideology and the birth of a nationalism “transfigured” by the Holy Spirit. In this new vision, the Romanian people identify itself with the true believer people. This doctrine was called orthodoxism (Ornea 1980).

One of the promoters of orthodoxism was Nichifor Crainic, a poet and a theologian, the minister of Propaganda in World War II. In 1943, Crainic delivers a speech, entitled “The transfiguration of Romanianism” (Crainic 1943: 517-529). In this speech, Crainic highlights the role that orthodoxy played in Romanian history and the fact that the Romanians have always fought in order to defend orthodoxy. Any nation has a mission to accomplish on this earth and must develop a “great idea”. For the Romanians, this “great idea” must be orthodoxy, which develops both on a horizontal axis by means of the culture that it generates, and on a vertical axis by means of the connection it establishes with God, ensuring the salvation of souls. Up to that moment, nationalism lacked the spiritual dimension, stimulating conflicts in the name of national egotism and vanity. A nation, which is transfigured with the help of faith, will conquer its justice “on behalf of the sacrificial offerings brought to the holy ideals of the Christian world.” Crainic uses the notion of “theanthropy”, which means merging the human nature with the divine nature. He considers that the name given by the people to the orthodox faith, “law”, shows the identity that exists between Romanianism and Christianity, and the Romanian nation will increase its relevance in this world together with its spiritual growth.

These ideas were extremely popular in the interwar period. In this period there are definitions, with an identity character, of the type: Romanian = orthodox (Ionescu 1930). There were two major trends that could be used to exploit this speech: one came from among the categories who protested against the existent social order and the other one came from the part of the political and religious elite, who held the power.

In the first case, the most representative example is the Legion of the Archangel Michael (The Iron Guard) (Țiu 2010; Ronnet 1995; Sima 1995; Veiga 1993). An anti-Semitic and antidemocratic political movement, The Iron Guard included the religious speech in its own discourse so much that some historians tend to regard it rather as a sect, a fundamentalist movement with a millennial character, than as a political movement. The history of the Iron Guard Movement represents one of the most complicated subjects in contemporary history, and the disputes will not cease too soon, especially because of the explosive, but fascinating for some people, mix between religion and politics.

One of the representatives of the Iron Guard was the priest Ilie Imbrescu. His book, "The church and the Iron Guard", is dominated by a powerful prophetic spirit (Imbrescu 1940). Imbrescu introduces the concept of "grace-induced nationalism" and suggests that the entire Romanian people should be closer to God by means of repentance. Afterwards, Romania will be a true theocracy, in which the Gospel will be the true law. Imbrescu describes a totalitarian regime, but one in which people will find true freedom through "love". Following the ideas of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the leader of the Iron Guard, Imbrescu considers democracy a decadent regime, which allows for multiplicity within society, thus contributing to the weakening of the nation's energies. The Iron Guard Movement is guided by the Holy Spirit, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu being chosen by God, and all the other people who oppose the Iron Guard project, politicians or bishops are the enemy of the nation and of God.

In this case, we have another interpretation of the verses from the Bible: "May they all be one!" (John, 17,21) Romania must belong

only to the Romanians, everybody must be an Orthodox and practise their religion as saints did. From this point of view, the Romanian people were becoming the chosen one and Romania turned into the “Garden of Virgin Mary”. Later, after the events that followed in history, the Iron Guard Movement was identified as an opportunity to update the Orthodox spirituality on the Romanian territory. However, in the interwar period, the Iron Guard was dominated by the prophetic and eschatological sense, in a battle with the visible or invisible forces of evil. In this battle, which was considered fair, the representatives of the Iron Guard killed representatives of the system that were considered to be the enemy. The iron guardists introduce the practice of political assassination in Romania. They are aware of the fact that killing someone is a crime, but they assert that the injustice is so great that someone must assume the role to do justice, bypassing the institutions that have this role. The iron guardists assume the sin of having their hands stained with blood so that the people could be saved (Strejnicu, internet). After the crimes they commit, they do not try to escape but, on the contrary, they surrender to the authorities. Their comrades consider this gesture an act of self-sacrifice for the nation in front of God, they consider them heroes. In 1938, when Corneliu Zelea Codreanu was killed by the state authorities, together with other 13 comrades, who were involved in crimes, they were all considered martyrs, and Corneliu Zelea Codreanu was even considered a saint. George Racoveanu, a theologian and a supporter of the Iron Guard movement was the first one who introduced for debate on the Romanian territory the opinions of the Saint Vasile cel Mare regarding the stopping of the Communion for the soldiers who came from war (Racoveanu: 24). He makes the distinction between individual killers, who sin, and the warriors for the “community of destiny”, who only “have blood on their hands” (Racoveanu: 29). After years of confrontations, with a lot of victims on both sides, a lot of members of the Iron Guard Movement gave up on these ideas, considering a crime what happened or criticising some people’s certainty that they may know God’s will better (Enache 2014<sub>2</sub>: 235-240).

In the second case we are talking about the reign of King Carol II and about the dictatorship of the general Ion Antonescu (Enache 2012:



276-300). Carol II wanted to be a medieval king and he proclaimed the communion state-church. In 1938, he imposed an authoritarian regime, naming the patriarch Miron Cristea as Prime Minister.

Ion Antonescu ruled Romania in World War II. Having a military career, he was less interested in prophecies and Messianism. Instead, he wanted to turn the army and the church into two fundamental institutions that should discipline and educate society. Becoming an ally of Nazi Germany in order to retrieve the Romanian territories occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940, Ion Antonescu, together with the Orthodox Church leaders, proclaimed the crusade against communism and the justness of the war that should be fought in the East.

Communism is considered to be the new paganism. The same way as in the Middle Ages there was a crusade against Islamic aggression, in Romania a crusade against communism had to be organised because communism was considered to be the greatest threat for Christianity (Transnistria 1942). At the same time, the war fought by the Romanians had to be an expression of a superior civilisation. The Romanian propaganda insisted on the fact that, far from destroying, the Romanian military authorities contributed to the economic recovery of the occupied territories (Solovei 2004: 51-82). Moreover, with the help of the Romanian Orthodox Mission and of the military priests, the re-Christianization of the populations affected by the Bolshevik atheism was initiated (Solovei 2004: 127-139).

It is interesting that the transition towards the speech about war was made after a long period in which the Romanian Orthodox Church was deeply involved in the ecumenical movement and in its efforts to establish peace (Ispir 1943: 363, 372-273). The ecumenical movement preached for the unity of the Christian church and the spreading of the Gospel to all peoples, as a pre-condition for durable peace. In Romania, three ecumenical conferences were organised. On these occasions, the Romanian Orthodox Church asserted that international solidarity is the only way to face the hardships of the era. In the same period, the inter-orthodox relationships witnessed a remarkable development, several conventions took place and the convocation of a new ecumenical synod was proposed.



Romania's defeat in World War II and the establishment of communism ended both the prophetic sense from the interwar period and the development of a harmonious relationship between Christianity and democracy. The true life of the church found refuge in monasteries and in mystical practices in the search for individual salvation. The hesychasm has a remarkable development (Enache 2009). For a few years, a part of the population fought at gunpoint in order to resist the communist regime (Onișoru 2007). In communist prisons a lot of people were tortured and imprisoned because of their religious belief and their sacrifice, in extreme situations, gave birth to a strong sense of martyrdom, like in the first centuries of Christianity (Martiri... 2007).

Regarding the official discourse of the church during the communist era, it had to justify its existence in an atheist regime. One of the strongest arguments was the involvement of the church in the fight for peace, a fundamental propagandistic subject of the communist regime. The patriarch Justinian (1948-1977), who was a defender of the church, had to make compromises in this case, which may be identified in his speeches (Enache 2005).

Justinian asserts that the fight for peace has always been one of the fundamental duties of the Church: "Our action in the service of peace corresponds to the teachings, tradition and to the genuine spirit of the Ecumenical Orthodoxy. Our firmness in asserting the Christian ideals regarding peace and understanding among peoples represents the defence of the belief truths which the Orthodoxy has kept unchanged from the golden era of the apostolic preaching up to now." (Justinian VIII: 29)

Peace is considered to be the ultimate ideal of the contemporary people, a supplementary reason for which the church supports it. The fundamentals of the peace discourse were variable, pursuing the winding road of the relations between the two political and military blocks from the era. These fundamentals take into account the identity – otherness ratio. Peace can be maintained when the difference that exists between people is accepted without an axiological dimension of the peace discourse. Another kind of peace is when the values of the other are rejected, but his/her existence is accepted. But the devil must not

be tolerated, it must be destroyed, because it can undermine you at any time. Only when the devil is destroyed may real peace be established. The attitude of the two camps regarding the peace issue varied between the last two possibilities. Both camps declared one another as being evil, presenting their opponent as an eternal conflict-initiator and declaring itself as peace defender, that undertakes only defensive military action. Peace was going to be established when one of the parties was defeated and a unique system of values governed the world. In competition with the first type of discourse, depending on the political needs, a peaceful co-existence between the military and political blocks was considered, despite the diverging views regarding the future of mankind. The second type of discourse was used when it was obvious that an open conflict was going to take place or it was used to undermine the opponents' positions, trying to implement among the supporters of the other block the idea that the alleged enemies are, in fact, peace lovers, the own authorities artificially maintaining the conflict.

The patriarch Justinian also spoke about the devil with whom we must fight to the end. The devil of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was, in his opinion, inequality and social oppression. If these didn't disappear, there couldn't be peace or freedom. Obviously, justice and freedom were to be found in the socialist camp whereas the others were the servants of the devil. The "Imperialists" were the ones who wanted war whereas the communists only wanted peace. The peace calls from the tense periods from the part of the two blocks unmask the perfidious policy of the Western people. The easing that occurs when Khrushchev becomes First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and especially when the Romanian communism chooses the national path and becomes the advocate of a greater flexibility in international relationships, determines the Orthodox Church to adopt mainly the second type of discourse, the pacifist one.

**After 1989.** In December 1989 the Romanians started their protests against the communist regime. The authorities ordered the repression of the protests. Numerous victims resulted. Eventually, the force institutions of the state, especially the army, stopped supporting the regime

and went on the revolutionaries' side. That is why one of the most frequently shouted slogan in that period was: "The Army is with us".

Another catchphrase of the revolution was: "Without violence". People protested peacefully so as those who were killed were considered innocent victims. Moreover, during the revolution they shouted "God is with us". December 1989 was considered a new providential moment when God gave Romania a new chance again. The prayers were always present during the entire revolution. The Romanian Orthodox Church took immediately the people's side and, in the first weeks and months after the revolution was over, it was involved in the managing the memory of those who had been killed. The dead of the revolution were buried in special cemeteries, monuments were erected for them and they started to be mentioned permanently during the religious sermons as "martyr heroes" who gave their lives for the freedom and dignity of the Romanian people and for the defence of faith.

Once the Communist Party was gone, the pillar of society till that time, the 1989 events brought back into the Romanians' consciousness the perspective of the army and the church seen as two institutions fundamental for the security of the state and for the sustainability of the nation (Sondaj..., internet; Stanciu 2011). The association between these two institutions is symbolically expressed by joining saints with heroes. Thus, in the prayers during the mass, in all churches across the Romanian Patriarchy, the following words are uttered: "May God, our Lord, remember in His kingdom the happy ones who fell asleep, the heroes, the Romanian soldiers and fighters, of all times and all ages, who fell on the battle fields, in camps and in prisons to defend the motherland and the forefathers faith, for the unification of the people, for our freedom and our dignity." (Anania 2011)

The metropolitan bishop Bartolomeu Anania explained the introduction of this commemoration as follows: "Due to circumstances and historical evolution, the vast majority of Orthodox Churches organized as National Churches, with strong implications in the life, culture and traditions of the people. Hence, the moral duty of each Church to participate, through praying, to the celebration of heroes, that is in the commemoration of all those who, one way or another, sacrificed

themselves on what is called the motherland's shrine. This participation is not limited to the special sermons that we hold on heroes' day (the feast of the Ascending Day), but it is done at every Holy Mass through the above-mentioned words. The Commemoration includes the soldiers who died in battles, because the only war accepted by the Orthodox Church is the defense war. Those who fell for our freedom and dignity are the young of December 1989." (Anania 2011; Pruteanu 2013: 315-320)

In the Romanian Orthodox Church, the holiday of the Ascension is also the day dedicated to the nation's heroes. The decisions of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1999 and 2001 consecrated the Ascension Day as Heroes' Day and Church National Holiday (Înălțarea Domnului – Ziua Eroilor..., internet). One of the biblical arguments for making this decision is a verse from Saint John the Evangelist: «Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.» (John 15:13).

I will end with a sermon fragment said on Heroes' Day which might facilitate the understanding of the present perspective of the Romanian Orthodox Church regarding the issue of war and its relation with the nation's heroes: "With profound gratitude in our souls and consciousness, we value all long gone heroes of the battles for freedom, unity and defence of Christianity and the entire Europe, those from the battles of the Independence War in 1877-1878, those from the battles of the War of Unification of the Nation in 1916-1918, those who sacrificed themselves for the country in 1941-1945 on the front of the Second World War, those who died in the communist prisons to defend and strengthen the orthodox faith, those who sacrificed themselves for freedom and faith in December 1989, as well as for all those who made the supreme sacrifice wherever the country has needed them in recent years.

It is the heroes where, in an expressible connection, the transient coexists with the eternal in the human being. They are the ones who make the everlasting book of the nation. Their sacrifice was motivated by the fact that he who fights for justice, honour and freedom, fights for God, defends the family, the land, the culture, the law, the nation." (Înălțarea Domnului!..., internet)

## Conclusions

- Orthodoxy differentiates between the individual and the community. Killing is absolutely forbidden for the individual. In case we talk about the community, things are more complex.

- In the Byzantine tradition, embraced by the orthodox tradition as well, the state and the church are the institutions that run the community. Unlike other Christian cults, which see the state as an enemy, the orthodoxy sees the state as given by God and the emperor, the prince, are persons invested by divinity to take care of the earthly existence of me. The model is the royalty established by God for the Jewish people.

- Only the leader of the state may start a war, which must be waged only by soldiers under his command.

- Orthodoxy has not clearly conceptualized the notion of just war and holy war but these notions can be used to describe the manifestations of war within the space of orthodoxy. We may speak of just war when through war justice, order and the law are established or re-established, according to the accepted norms. The holy war takes place when the Christian faith is directly threatened. Both types of war obey God's will, the armies enjoy the divine protection and, thus, these wars are sacred.

- History made the Byzantine Empire wage, most often than not, defence wars. The same holds valid for the Romanian case. That is why the just war is identified with the defensive war. The mentality of sieged fortress has been preserved for a long time.

- There are two worlds: Christianity and the pagans. The pagans wage war against Christians because they are instruments of the devil or of God's wrath; Christians fight among themselves due to not applying Christ's teachings in their daily life. Therefore, war exists because the world is decayed and ignorant.

- Orthodoxy did not think it is possible to establish God's kingdom on earth. God's true kingdom is not from this world. It can be reached by personal effort of completion. For this reason, the orthodox spirituality is dominated by the mystic and ascetic tendency. Moreover, at the core of orthodoxy lies the idea of hierarchy and order.

Paradise is the community of saints true believers who worship God. The church and the state try here on earth to anticipate these hierarchy and order, signs of perfection. Hence, the feeling of impermanence conveyed sometimes by orthodoxy.

- Prophetism and millenarianism are much less present in orthodoxy than in other Christian confessions. Hence, the tendency to equate the orthodoxy with the “law”. Despite all these, the whims of history generated this kind of manifestations as well, by means of which people tried to decipher God’s hidden will. The serious errors of the leaders who received God’s blessing, the fall of the states considered up to that point under divine protection, the victory in the fight for freedom, are as many opportunities to rethink the traditional patterns of dogma. Prophetism appears in various historical contexts and it is related in many situations to the idea of fight, including war.

- The great challenge of national orthodoxies today is to define the community the church represents. Is the nation the same with the Christian people? Is the modern state the same with the medieval state, assumed as orthodox? Are the orthodox a sieged minority within society? Can they have a distinct political destiny, outside the legitimate political structures? In the Romanian case, the official church considers the political authorities as legitimate in front of God and, in the matter of war and peace, it supports those steps that are legitimized by the international community and international law.

- The problem of peace and war is related to the problem of holiness. Generally speaking, the orthodox space accepts that saints are those who live an ascetic life in prayer with the purpose of becoming one with God and martyrs are those who sacrifice for their faith. The category of martyrs includes, however, those who fight, in extreme situations, to defend faith; recently, the church also accepted the notion of hero, which designates those who fight for justice.

## **СВЯТЫЕ И ГЕРОИ, ВОЙНА И МИР. РУМЫНСКАЯ ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ ИСТОРИЧЕСКАЯ ПЕРСПЕКТИВА**

*Данная статья посвящена вопросу создания системной теории войны и военной истории в контексте румынской православной исторической ретроспективы, начиная от периода создания румынской государственности (XIV в.) до наших дней в различных временных и пространственных контекстах. В результате автор приходит к выводу о том, что вопрос о войне никогда не был самостоятельным вопросом румынской православной исторической традиции, но был неразрывно связан с судьбой общества в целом, с выбором, который делает общество в соответствии со своими основными устремлениями и соотношением себя с другими. В результате война рассматривается в более широком контексте взаимосвязей между религией, церковью, обществом и государством.*

*Ключевые слова:* святой, герой, война, мир, Румынская Православная Церковь

*Джордж Енаке*

## **СВЯТІ І ГЕРОЇ, ВІЙНА І МИР. РУМУНСЬКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ІСТОРИЧНА ПЕРСПЕКТИВА**

*Дана стаття присвячена питанню створення системної теорії війни на військовій історії в контексті румунської православної історичної ретроспективи, починаючи від періоду створення румунської державності (XIV ст.) до наших днів у різноманітних просторових та часових контекстах. В результаті автор доходить висновку про те, що питання про війну ніколи не було самостійним питанням румунської православної історичної традиції, але було нерозривно пов'язано з долею суспільства в цілому, з вибором, яке робить суспільство у відповідності до своїх*

прагнень та співвідношення себе з іншими. В результаті війна розглядається у більш широкому контексті взаємозв'язків між релігією, церквою, суспільством та державою.

**Ключові слова:** святий, герой, війна, мир, Румунська Православна Церква

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## THE HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE: ROMANIA'S ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECE

*This paper explores the controversial history of one of the world's biggest buildings: the House of the People. A paradox in many ways, the structure was meant to symbolize the power of the people in a country with a dictatorial system in which the people had virtually no power at all. Similarly, the building is the most expensive manmade construction of all times, yet it was built in a country where the*