

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE CHURCH IN THE ROMANIAN COUNTRIES (14TH - 18TH CENTURIES)*

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History shows that, in setting up its organization, the Christian Church has always taken into consideration the historical context. In the Romanian Countries, as with other Orthodox peoples, "there was a strong connection between the organization of the political power and church organization."¹ The founding of the medieval Romanian states of Wallachia and Moldavia, in the latter half of the fourteenth century, was soon followed, by the establishment of the earliest bishop's sees.² Church organization "remained unchanged as long as the original political organization of the Romanian states remained unchanged too." The evolution of social life in the Middle Ages was monitored by two fundamental powers: the State and the Church. These two institutions also conditioned "the whole chain of historical development" of the Romanian people.³

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The Byzantine influence on state and church organization.

State organization, both in Wallachia and Moldavia, in the Middle Ages, was of Byzantine inspiration. From the Byzantine model also derives "the duality of the secular and spiritual power of the leader of the state."⁴ Chancery

* In this study we have dealt with the relationships between the State and the Church in Wallachia and Moldavia. In another study we shall examine the relationships between the State and the Church in Transylvania.

¹ S. Reli, *Relațiile dintre Biserică și Stat în România veacurilor trecute*, in "Candela", XLIV, 1933, no. 1-12, p. 25.

² See also N. Dobrescu, *Întemeierea mitropoliilor și a celor dintâi mănăstiri din țară*, București, 1906; Nicolae Iorga, *Condițiile de politică generală în cari s-au întemeiat Bisericele românești în veacurile XIV-XV*, București, 1913; G. Marinescu, *Înființarea mitropoliilor din Țara Românească și Moldova*, București, 1924; Constantin C. Giurescu, *Întemeierea Mitropoliei Ungrovlahiei*, in "B.O.R.", LXXVII, 1959, no. 7-10, p. 673-697; Răzvan Theodorescu, *Implicații balcanice ale începuturilor Mitropoliei Moldovei*, in "Teologie și viață. Revistă de gândire și spiritualitate", serie nouă, III (LXIX), 1993, no. 8-10, p. 5-28; Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Biserica și statul în Evul Mediu: întemeierea mitropoliilor Țării Românești și Moldovei*, in "C.D.P.", 1994, 1, nr. 2, p. 7-14; Calinic Argatu, Grigore Constantinescu, *Întâiul înalt scaun vlădicesc din Țara Românească*, in "Argessis", 1995, 7, p. 263-267.

³ S. Reli, *op. cit.*, p. 25-26.

⁴ Valentin Al. Georgescu, *Bizanțul și instituțiile românești până la mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea*, Ed. Academiei, București, 1980, p. 41.

documents style the leader of the state as *mare voievod și domn* (great prince and ruler), as he concentrated both the supreme political and military positions of the country in his hands. As in the Byzantine Empire, and as in the whole medieval world, Wallachian and Moldavian rulers became, once anointed, political leaders *din mila lui Dumnezeu* (*omnis potestas a Deo*), which conferred upon them absolute power over their subjects, a position which the formula *de sine stătător* (independent) enhanced. The insertion in the appellative of Romanian rulers, before their names, of the word *Io*, abbreviation of Ioannes, the one chosen by God, underlines the divine source of the ruler's power.⁵ Rulers obtained that quality through the religious ceremony of anointing with the holy oil and coronation, which transferred divine grace upon them and confirmed the divine nature of their power. The theocratic character of the ruler's authority thus combined with the charismatic one. "This gift of supposedly divine origin" turned the leader of the state, in the eyes of the people, into "a sort of God on earth." In the extra-Carpathian Romanian Countries, "this theocratic conception and the corresponding mentality" preserved despite frequent changes of rulers, due to the policy of the Ottoman Porte and rivalry of the boyars (nobility). In the history of Wallachia and Moldavia, there are no certain data about "a well-established belief" in the thaumaturgic power of the ruler. Instead, there was "the ritual of prostrating before the ruler, as if he were divine."⁶

Despite obvious Byzantine influences, the Romanian ruler was not "a mere copy" of the emperor from Constantinople. In fact, there were "references to", both Byzantine and Western models, "in the sense of the affirmation of an autocratic monarchy in the guise of a local synthesis."⁷ In the long run, "the direction would be the ethnic and statal-national, that is non-Byzantine."⁸

As vicar of God on earth, the Romanian ruler, like the Constantinople emperor, exerted absolute power, which was controlled by no state body. However, there were some limitations to his power, because of the essential role that he played as representative of the interests of the boyars (nobility); to the dimensions of the "economic, military and political action

⁵ D. Ciurea, *Originea lui Io*, in "A.A.R.M.S.I.", s. III, t. XXVI, 1943; A. Sacerdoțeanu, *Titlul de mare voievod al Țării Românești*, in vol. *Omăgiu lui I. Lupăș*, București, 1943, p. 793-806; P. P. Panaitescu, *Io în titlul domnilor români* (prezentare de Ștefan Gorovei), in "A.I.L.A.I.", XXIV, 1987, no. 2, p. 63-72.

⁶ Valentin Al. Georgescu, Petre Strihan, *Judecata domnească în Țara Românească și Moldova (1611-1831)*, Partea I. *Organizarea judecătorească*, vol. I (1611-1740), Ed. Academiei, București, 1979, p. 28.

⁷ Valentin Al. Georgescu, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 46.

which the ruler of a small country, vassal to the Ottoman Porte, could carry on, as compared to a king, or emperor"; to the medieval conception that the power derived from God; to local customs and laws, to the system of autonomies and judiciary immunities, to the recognition of church jurisdiction as "a technique of the organization of the state", to Ottoman suzerainty.⁹

The Church in Wallachia and Moldavia felt the strong impact of Byzantium. As a global institution, it remained within the "Constantinople ecumenicity, that is, imperial and Byzantine."¹⁰ As a national institution, it did not become autocephalous, in the sense of the five patriarchates. However, Romanian rulers opposed, both before and after 1453, to the claims of the Ecumenical Patriarchy.¹¹ The position of the Orthodox Church in Wallachia and Moldavia was similar to the position of the Patriarch in relation to the Byzantine emperor¹², "except for the role of ecumenical direction, the latter played in relation to other oriental churches."¹³

The relationships between the State and the Church in the Romanian medieval society was established and preserved in the spirit on the Roman-Byzantine tradition.¹⁴

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The rights of the ruler over the Church. The almost sacred character of the power of the Romanian rulers allowed them, as representatives of the State, to exert, according to the imperial Byzantine tradition, their authority over the Church of their countries. In the ancient Romanian law, there was no clear and strict delimitation between the competence and the jurisdiction of the Church and lay jurisdiction. The distinction does not appear in Romanian historical process. Yet, the division between the powers of the two institutions was known, in the sense that the Church enjoyed autonomy in

⁹ Valentin Al. Georgescu, Petre Strihan, *op. cit.*, p. 40-41.

¹⁰ Valentin Al. Georgescu, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² For the relationships between the State and the Church in the Byzantine Empire see also: J. M. Hussey, *Church and Learning in the Byzantine Empire 867-1185*, London, 1937; N. J. Pantazopoulos, *Church and Law in the Balkan Peninsula during the Ottoman Rule*, Institute for Balkan Studies, no. 92, Thessaloniki, 1967; *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV. *The Byzantine Empire*, Part. II. *Government, Church and Civilisation*, Cambridge, 1967; P. Charanis, *Church-State Relations in the Byzantine Empire as reflected in the Role of the Patriarchs in the Coronation of the Byzantine Emperor*, in *The Ecumenical world of Orthodox Civilization - Russia and Orthodoxy*, vol. III. *Essays in honour of George Horovsky*, The Hague-Paris, 1973; J. M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, Oxford, 1990; T. Teoteoi, *Empire et Sacerdoce à Byzance au temps des Paléologues*, in "Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes", 1995, no. 1-2.

¹³ Valentin Al. Georgescu, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹⁴ Vezi, Mircea Basarab, *Raportul dintre biserică și națiune în biserica ortodoxă*, in "Tribuna", Cluj-Napoca, 1995, 7, no. 37-38, p. 10-11; V. V. Munteanu, *Statul și biserica la români (sec. XIV-XX)*, in "R.I.", 1996, 7, no. 5-6, p. 437-451.

spiritual matters, and the rights of the State were limited to the Church's external relations.¹⁵ Like the Constantinople basileus, the Romanian ruler was like a bishop appointed by God to regulate the external relations of the Church.¹⁶

The Romanian rulers had the right to confirm the election of bishops and metropolitans, "to choose from the prospective candidates, and hand over the crosier to elected bishop/metropolitan¹⁷, a decision that was afterwards ratified by the synod of the ecumenical patriarchy." The handing over of the pastoral staff "took place during a lay ceremony"; however, for the mitre¹⁸, "a solemn, religious ceremony was held, after the approval from the Constantinople Patriarchy was received."¹⁹ The ruler's approval was also necessary to validate any appointment in a bishopric, or metropolitan chair. The incumbent metropolitan could be removed from his office either by the ecumenical council, at the ruler's request²⁰, or if he resigned.²¹ Appointments and dismissals of priors, or abbots were also a prerogative of the ruler²²

The ruler directly participated in some religious ceremonies: his role, though important, was secondary to the metropolitan's or, as the case may have been, "to a visiting patriarch's."²³

¹⁵ S. Reli, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹⁶ Dimitrie Cantemir provides us with information about this, when he says that "the external survey of the church of Moldavia is the responsibility of the prince, who oversees that the conduct and the learning of the church's servants is in line with the fundamentals of the Orthodox religion. [...] The care for spiritual matters, that is the guidance of souls along the path to God, is the metropolitan's duty, who controls, like a true and faithful servant of God – the churches under his guidance (Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei*, Ed. Minerva, București, 1973, p. 264).

¹⁷ A tall rod, made of wood, sometimes of metal, case or inlaid with gold, ivory or silver plates; the head often ends in two opposed serpents, surmounted by a globe and a small cross.

¹⁸ A ceremonial headgear, richly decorated, which the bishop wears during the service.

¹⁹ Andrei Pippidi, *Tradiția politică bizantină în țările române în secolele XVI-XVIII*, Ed. Academiei, București, 1983, p. 38-39.

²⁰ As in the case of Ștefan I (1653) or Antim (1716, after an earlier attempt in 1712) (*Ibidem*, p. 39, n. 173), metropolitans of Ungro-Wallachia.

²¹ This was the case of Varlaam de Glavacioc, Metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia, in 1679 (*Ibidem*).

²² With reference to this aspect Dimitrie Cantemir comments: "only the prince can judge the lifestyle and learning of those elected, and find faults with those who have to be removed from office, as well as take the necessary decisions. The prince has assumed responsibility for these, only the blessing, according to the canons, established by the Apostles, is the metropolitan's duty" (Dimitrie Cantemir, *op. cit.*, p. 268).

²³ The ceremony that took place on Maundy Thursday, when the princes and the boyars washed the feet of others in imitation of Jesus who washed the feet of his apprentices. "It was practiced in Moldavia before 1588, and is mentioned by Paul de Alep, at Târgoviște in 1657, but during the fanariot age it had fallen into desuetude, it was rarely observed, and the prince attended it

Like Byzantine emperors, Romanian rulers protected the Church in their countries, granting it numerous immunities and exemptions from certain obligations, and making generous donations. They were the most important founders of monasteries and churches, which they endowed with everything that was necessary for them to function properly.²⁴ In the beginning, the monasteries founded by the rulers were exempted from taxes, but as their needs increased, the rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia had to ask them to pay taxes too. Thus, in Moldavia, in 1551, during the reign of Ilie II Rareș (1546-1551), monasteries were obliged to pay their due taxes to the ruler, while in Wallachia, under Mihnea Turcitul / Mihnea the Turned-Turk (1577-1583), during his second reign, monasteries were forced to pay for the tribute to the Ottoman Porte.²⁵

Romanian rulers protected the Church, its dignity, and kept religious peace. The state bodies intervened only when the church authorities wanted to solve disputes among believers, when they refused to subject to the representatives of the Church. Thus, in 1765, Grigore III Ghica, ruler of Moldavia (1764-1767; 1774-1777), ordered state officials to give the necessary consideration to the representatives of the Church in order to serve as models to the people. At the same time, conscious of the rights of the State to monitor the implementation of the canon laws of the church by the clergy and believers, without affecting the spiritual autonomy of the Church, Grigore III Ghica ordered the representatives of the State to take no measures against any clergymen who did not respond to his call, but only keep the church authorities informed about it.²⁶

The rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia "gave assistance to hierarchs in all clerical and civilian problems, showed interest in the training of the ordained clergy, in their material and moral situation."²⁷ The permanent support which the ruler granted the Church also meant "the ruler exerted some control over Episcopal churches, and monasteries."²⁸

Romanian rulers continued the Byzantine emperor's policy toward all the Orthodox Churches in south-eastern Europe and the Middle East.²⁹

but did not participated in it" (Andrei Pippidi, *op. cit.*, p. 39); S. Reli, *Ceremonii și obiceiuri religioase în viața socială publică din trecutul românesc*, în "Candela", XLI, 1930, no. 4-6, p. 188-189.

²⁴ Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, ediția a II-a, Ed. Institutului biblic și de misiune al B.O.R., București, 1991, p. 357; see also, Valentin Al. Georgescu, *op. cit.*, p. 154-179.

²⁵ V. Costăchel, P. P. Panaitescu, A. Cazacu, *Viața feudală în Țara Românească și Moldova (sec. XIV-XVII)*, Ed. Științifică, București, 1957, p. 453-454.

²⁶ S. Reli, *Relațiile dintre Biserică și Stat...*, p. 31-32.

²⁷ Mircea Păcurariu, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

²⁸ V. Costăchel, P. P. Panaitescu, A. Cazacu, *op. cit.*, p. 454.

²⁹ Romanian princes provided massive and systematic support for the Ecumenical patriarchy in Constantinople, to the other apostolic patriarchies (Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem), to

Numerous gifts and "donations" were granted by Romanian rulers to patriarchs, monasteries and, generally speaking, to religious settlements in the Middle East, as an expression of the strong connection of the rulers and of the boyars in Walachia and Moldavia with the above-mentioned institutions. In no way did these involve the direct intervention of the metropolitan. When the metropolitan gave his "endorsement" to such documents, this was only a confirmation granted by a high rank Romanian hierarch to a private act, which frequently happened when the Patriarch of Constantinople travelled through the Romanian Countries. Visiting high prelates of the Orthodox Church used to ask the ruler's support and appealed to the generosity of the country's nobility. Nevertheless, the contacts they established with the metropolitan were not essential for their mission, and rarely did these help to strengthen the ecclesiastic relations between the respective churches.

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The rights and the obligations of metropolitans. In Wallachia and Moldavia, the rights of the ruler as representative of the state's power, in problems concerning the church's relations with the world, were not absolute, but based on "the friendly and harmonious cooperation with the metropolitan, as representative of the church's power."³⁰ According to the laws of the country, the Metropolitan had the right to confirm, or correct, in front of the Divan (Prince's Council), a ruler's abusive or unjust sentence.³¹ The ruler usually subjected to the decision and power of the metropolitan, "out of Christian piety, despite the fact that all the clergy, the metropolitan himself, had always been subjected to the authority of the state, represented by the person of the ruler." The State and the Church, through their representatives, cooperated "in exerting their rights in problems that concerned external religious life."³²

Like any archbishop, the metropolitan enjoyed divine grace, but they also held a leading position among hierarchs (*primus inter pares*), hence the title

national Orthodox churches and numerous monarchical settlements, particularly those on Mount Athos (Mircea Păcurariu, *op. cit.*, p. 357); For the Romanian Countries relationships with Mount Athos see: N. Iorga, *Muntele Athos în legătură cu țările noastre*, in "A.A.R.M.S.I.", s. II, t. XXXVI, 1913-1914, no. 14, p. 447-517; Idem, *Portretele domnilor noștri la Muntele Athos*, in "A.A.R.M.S.I.", s. III, t. IX, 1928; Teodor Bodogae, *Ajutoarele românești la mănăstirile din Sfântul Munte Athos*, Sibiu, 1940; Petre Ș. Năsturel, *Dix contributions roumaina athonites (XIVe –XVIe siècles)*, in "Buletinul Bibliotecii Române din Freiburg", vol. XII, 1985, p. 1-46; Idem, *Le Mont Athos et les Roumains. Recherches sur leurs relations du milieu du XIVe siècle à 1654*, Rome, 1986.

³⁰ S. Reli, *op. cit.*, p. 27; Dimitrie Cantemir provides information about this: "The Prince cannot change, add or eliminate anything from pastoral life without the agreement of the Metropolitan, although he is sole master of all his subjects" (Dimitrie Cantemir, *op. cit.*, p. 268).

³¹ Dimitrie Cantemir, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

³² S. Reli, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

of archbishop which he bore both in Wallachia and in Moldavia, starting with the 15th century.³³

During the 14th-16th centuries, the metropolitan crowned and placed the prince on the throne, in a special ceremony held in the Metropolitan Cathedral, similar to the coronation of the Byzantine basileus. Another ceremony was held at the prince's palace, where the metropolitan delivered the congratulation speech. Starting with the latter half of the 16th century, a crowning ceremony was first held at the Patriarchal Cathedral in Constantinople, by the Ecumenical Patriarch, the members of the Patriarchal Synod, and representatives of the high Orthodox clergy attending, in accordance with the old Byzantine crowning ceremony. Once in the country, Romanian rulers were crowned a second time, by the metropolitan of the country, with the high clergy and officials of the country attending.³⁴

The baptism, the wedding and the funeral of any of the members of the princely family were carried by the country's metropolitan. Only in case he was sick or too old to perform the ceremony, the metropolitan was replaced by one of his suffragant bishops.³⁵

As far as religious life was concerned, the Church enjoyed full liberty from the prince. The metropolitan was responsible for the choice of suffragant bishops, whom he ordained and installed, in their respective eparchies. However, the prince had the right to comment on the person proposed. The hierarchs conducted the dedication ceremonies of the churches raised in their eparchies, paid canonical visits, appointed priests and deacons to the vacant parishes, ordained priests and performed service in their cathedrals, and in the churches in their eparchy. The metropolitans and the suffragant bishops had the right to have their portraits painted in the churches raised in their eparchies, their names to be remembered during service, to be buried in the metropolitan (episcopal) cathedral, or in any other monastery in the country, etc.³⁶

The metropolitan and the suffragant bishops guided the whole cultural and artistic activity in their eparchies, the work of social assistance in monasteries³⁷ and controlled the activity of craftsmen guilds.³⁸

³³ In Walachia, from mid sixteenth century (the earliest documents dates from May 27, 1554) and until the former half of the seventeenth century (July 29, 1636), all the metropolitans of this country assumed or were given the title of „archmitropolitan”. In the last quarter of the sixteenth century, metropolitans of Moldavia also assumed this title (Niculae Șerbănescu, *Autocefalia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române cu prilejul centenarului (1885-25 aprilie-1985)*, in vol. *Centenarul autocefaliei Bisericii Ortodoxe Române 1885-1985*, Ed. Institutului biblic și de misiune al B.O.R., București, 1987, p. 62-63).

³⁴ Mircea Păcurariu, *op. cit.*, p. 357; See also S. Reli, *Ceremonii și obiceiuri...*, p. 180-184.

³⁵ Mircea Păcurariu, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 359.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 358.

In canonical problems, the clergy was tried by church courts only, as "boyars had no power to judge the priest in case of misbehavior."³⁹ Among the punishments administered to priests for serious misconduct was „exclusion from the orders of the Church”, loss of the right to perform service in the altar and denial of the Sacred Liturgy.⁴⁰

However, the limits to the autonomy of the Orthodox Church in Wallachia and Moldavia went beyond the sphere of religious preoccupations. In addition to the freedom the Church needed in order to fulfill its mission, and the support it always received from the State, the Church was also granted rights in the public life of the country, not related to the sphere of spiritual power. Though subjected to the authority of the State, the Church enjoyed great rights in the political life as well, as members of the hierarchy of the Church participated directly in the affairs of the State.⁴¹ The metropolitans of the two principalities held a position in the State similar the Patriarch's relation with the Byzantine emperor. Once placed on his chair, the metropolitan became a high dignitary, second in rank only to the ruler. In both countries, metropolitans and archbishops started exercising their prerogatives in the worldly life of the State once they were given the pastoral staff, the symbol of their authority. They received it from the ruler on their installation, after they had received the gift of preaching, through ordaining. That is why, when an archbishop or metropolitan resigned, he "laid the omophor⁴² on the Sacred Table in the altar as if it were laid in the hands of God from whom he had received the gift", while he placed the pastoral staff in the hands of the ruler of the country, "as the chief of State from who he had received it on his installation."⁴³

The metropolitan was a counsellor to the prince, a member of the prince's council, and, in this quality, we can find him in both countries, as early as the latter half of the fifteenth century. In Moldavia, as early as the fifteenth century, the metropolitan and the archbishops were present in the prince's

³⁸ S. Reli, *Relațiile dintre Biserică și Stat...*, p. 35-37; Al. Georgescu, Petre Strihan, *op. cit.*, vol. II (1740-1831), Ed. Academiei, București, 1981, p. 125.

³⁹ Stelian Marinescu, *Dispozițiuni de drept laic în Pravila de la Govora din 1640*, in "B.O.R.", LXXXI, 1963, no. 3-4, p. 331.

⁴⁰ Ioan N. Floca, *Pravila de la Govora din 1640-1641*, in "B.O.R.", LXXXI, 1963, no. 3-4, p. 315.

⁴¹ The metropolitan is responsible, "only for the affairs of the Church and the clergy, when they are menaced or endangered by those in power (representatives of the State), but also has great influence in political affairs", Andreas Wolf, a Saxon doctor tells us in *Beiträge zu einer statistisch-historischen Beschreibung der Fürstenthums Moldau*, Hermannstadt, 1805 (Apud S. Reli, *op. cit.*, p. 38).

⁴² A sort of scarf wrapped round the neck whose ends fall on the chest of the bishop. In the middle, on the neck a small icon is embroidered representing Jesus. The omophor can be either long or short.

⁴³ S. Reli, *op. cit.*, p. 38-39.

council even when the problems discussed did not regard the Church. As a rule, the presence of the high prelates in the prince's council was required whenever problems connected to the life of the Church were debated. This does not mean that the metropolitan did not participate in other meetings of the council, but his presence is especially mentioned with reference to these problems, which the prince solved, only if the representatives of the Church were present. The metropolitans and the archbishops were consulted whenever the prince and his council had to take some measures.⁴⁴ In Wallachia, the metropolitan, sometimes archbishops too, participated in the meetings of the council when problems affecting their institution were discussed. When the prince's council had to solve more complex civil cases regarding inheritance, the metropolitan participated in the meetings of the council to give the best solution according to the canon law.⁴⁵

The metropolitan was often used by the prince to lead delegations for good neighborhood negotiations, the Church being a major mediator of peace. Sometimes, the high prelates mediated the conflicts between the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia.

In 1507, Bogdan III cel Orb / Bogdan III the Blind (1504-1517), ruler of Moldavia, invaded the Wallachia of Radu cel Mare / Radu the Great (1495-1508), because the latter had supported Roman, a pretender to the Moldavian throne. The Wallachian prince sent Maxim, metropolitan of the country (cca. 1505-1512) to Bogdan's camp, located near Râmnicu-Sărat, to mediate peace. The high Walachian hierarch prevented the bloodshed, by telling the two princes they were Christians and belonged to the same people. Peace was concluded, and Radu cel Mare and his boyars swore on the Sacred Bible that they would observe the borders between the two countries.⁴⁶

In 1644, Metropolitan Varlaam of Moldavia (1632-1653)⁴⁷ went to Târgoviște in front of a delegation of boyars, pleading for the reconciliation of the two rulers, Vasile Lupu (1634-1653) and Matei Basarab (1632-1654), after the fratricide battle of Ojogeni. His efforts also materialized in the raising of

⁴⁴ Such measures were taken during the reign of Miron Barnovschi (N. Grigoraș, *Situația clerului moldovenesc în prima jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea și reforma domnitorului Miron Barnovschi și a mitropolitului Anastasie Crimca*, in "M.M.S.", XXXIII, 1957, no. 1-2, p. 74).

⁴⁵ Nicolae Stoicescu, *Sfatul domnesc și marii dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova*, Ed. Academiei, București, 1968, p. 82-86.

⁴⁶ N. I. Șerbănescu, *Mitropoliții Ungrovlahiei*, in "B.O.R.", LXXVII, 1959, no. 7-10, p. 746.

⁴⁷ Macarie Ciolan, *Varlaam Moțoc (+1657). Un vrednic ierarh al Bisericii moldave*, in "M.M.S.", LVIII, 1982, no. 10-12, p. 768-772.

two churches, one in each country (Stelea at Târgoviște, and Soveja, at Putna), an act with deep national significance.⁴⁸

At the beginning of the 18th century, Constantin Duca, ruler, for a second time, of Moldavia (1700-1703), was in conflict with Constantin Brâncoveanu, his father-in-law, over some Moldavian boyars who had found refuge at the court of the Walachian ruler. They decided to reconcile, and sent delegations to negotiate, lead by each country's highest hierarch. Moldavia sent Metropolitan Mihail (1701/1702-1708)⁴⁹, together with four boyars, to Focșani, a town on the border between the two countries, while the archbishop of Buzău, accompanied by two boyars led the Wallachian delegation. Although an agreement was finally reached on this occasion, not all the Moldavian boyars returned home.⁵⁰

Other hierarchs of the Church were sent on diplomatic missions abroad, to conclude peace treatises and alliances:

In 1507-1508, Maxim, Metropolitan of Walachia, was the messenger of Radu cel Mare to the Hungarian king, Vladislav II (1490-1516), and to the Transylvanian Saxons to establish good neighborhood relations.⁵¹

Gheorghe Ștefan, ruler of Moldavia (1653-1658), sent Metropolitan Ghedeon (1653-1659; 1664-1671) on a diplomatic mission to Moscow, where he concluded, on May 7, 1656, an alliance with Tsar Alexei Mihailovich (1645-1676). On this occasion, Ghedeon received the Tsar's pledge in the Dormition of God's Mother Church, from Kremlin.⁵²

Dosoftei, Metropolitan of Moldavia (1671-1674; 1675-1685), was sent to Moscow in 1684 by Ștefan Petriceicu, during his third rule of Moldavia (1683-1684), on a diplomatic mission, which failed to produce positive results.⁵³

⁴⁸ Al. I. Ciurea, *Șirul mitropoliților Bisericii Ortodoxe din Moldova. Elemente esențiale biografice și bibliografice*, in "Teologie și viață. Revistă de gândire și spiritualitate", serie nouă, III (LXIX), 1993, no. 8-10, p. 67.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

⁵⁰ Ion Neculce, *Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei de la Dabija Vodă până la a doua domnie a lui Constantin Mavrocordat*, in *Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei*, Ed. Hyperion, Chișinău, 1990, p. 347.

⁵¹ N. I. Șerbănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 746.

⁵² G. Bezviconi, *Contribuții la istoria relațiilor româno-ruse (din cele mai vechi timpuri până la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea)*, București, 1962, p. 93-94.

⁵³ Nicolae Iorga, *Histoire des relations Russo-Roumaines*, Iași, 1917, p. 98; Virgil Zaborovschi, *Politica externă a celor trei principate Țara Românească, Transilvania și Moldova, de la asediul Vienei (1683) până la moartea lui Șerban Cantacuzino și suirea pe tron a lui Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688)*, București, 1925, p. 52; P. P. Panaitescu, *Pribejia lui Constantin Șerban și a lui Ștefan Petriceicu și testamentele lor*, in "A.A.R.M.S.I.", s. III, t. XXI, 1939, p. 391-392; I. C. Negru, *Mitropolitul Dosoftei*, in "M.M.S.", XXXIII, 1957, no. 1-2, p. 110-126; G. Bezviconi, *op. cit.*, p. 106-107; Ștefan Ionescu, *Epoca brâncovenească. Dimensiuni politice. Finalitate culturală*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1981, p. 67; Al. I. Ciurea, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

During the Russian-Turkish war (1769-1774), Wallachia and Moldavia, each sent a delegation to Russia, in 1770. The Wallachian delegation was led by Metropolitan Grigorie (1760-1787), while the Moldavian one, by Archimandrite Vartolomeu Măzăreanu of Putna. The two delegations were received by Tsarina Ecaterina II, in Petersburg, on April 8. On this occasion, the Wallachian delegation asked for a complete union of Wallachia with Russia.⁵⁴

Frequently, especially in the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, in case the princely throne was vacant, the metropolitan temporarily replaced the prince.

As head of the country's Church, the metropolitan was consulted by the prince when taxes were decided. In the 18th century, the rulers of Moldavia had to swear in the presence of the metropolitan that they would not lay new, or higher taxes.

In 1757, Constantin Racoviță, ruler of Moldavia (1749-1753; 1756-1757), decided, on the advise of the Council, to do away with cattle taxes. To prevent the reintroduction of this tax in the future, the prince asked the Ecumenical Patriarchy in Constantinople to send him a book of anathema that denounced anyone who dared to reintroduce this tax, which was read in the metropolitan church of Iași / Iassy. Four years later, Prince Ioan Theodor Callimachi (1758-1761) wanted to reintroduce the cattle tax, and asked the Ecumenical Synod to give him the necessary approval. But the country's Council, led by the metropolitan, "did not grant him the approval and decided to observe the anathema of the country's metropolitan." Consequently, the prince had to concede to their decision.⁵⁵

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Moments of crisis of the relationships between the State and the Church. The attributions of the metropolitan in Wallachia and Moldavia seemed to be extensive, however, in political matters, in which he did play a role as representative of the church, the prince, as the supreme representative of the power of the state, preserved his authority untouched. The metropolitan's subordination to the prince is expressed by the fact that "at the prince's election, it was not the prince who kissed the hand of the metropolitan who consecrated him, as would be natural, but the metropolitan who kissed the prince's hand."⁵⁶ The prince could be made responsible or punished for his sins and

⁵⁴ N. I. Șerbănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 794; G. Bezviconi, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

⁵⁵ S. Reli, *op. cit.*, p. 33-34.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

wrongdoings in matters of policy only by God and his own conscience.⁵⁷ In case the metropolitan did not follow the prince's policy, he was frequently and abusively removed from office and sent to monastery.

The Orthodox Church generally supported the prince's authority. There were however, both in Walachia and Moldavia, several conflicts between the State and the Church, but their consequences were less serious than those known in the Western Middle Ages.⁵⁸

Wallachia. A conflict between the State and the Church broke out during the reign of Radu cel Mare. Brought by the prince to organize Wallachian church life, Patriarch Nifon II claimed he and the prince should lead the country's spiritual life "on equal footing." Because he dared to confront the prince, Nifon II was banished and accused of "not observing the country's age-old customs."⁵⁹

Another crisis in the relations between the State and the Church sparked off during the reign Mihnea cel Rău / Mihnea the Evil (1508-1510). Metropolitan Maxim, fearing the prince's cruelty, because of his connections with Radu cel Mare and the Hungarians, tried to flee the country. The occasion appeared in the autumn of 1508, when Mihnea cel Rău sent him as his messenger to Vladislav II to inform the Hungarian king about his ascension to the throne of Wallachia. Metropolitan Maxim successfully fulfilled his mission, sending the Wallachian voyevod the royal diploma of recognition, but did not return to the country, as long as Mihnea cel Rău and Vlăduț (1510-1512) ruled over Wallachia.⁶⁰

In the reign of Mircea Ciobanul / Mircea the Shepherd (1545-1552; 1553-1554; 1558-1559), several hierarchs of the Wallachian church paid with their lives for their opposition to the prince's policy. To escape from persecution, Metropolitan Anania (1554-1558), a partisan of the deposed prince Radu Paisie (1535-1545), seems to have fled to Transylvania, together with a number of boyars, where he remained throughout the reign of Mircea Ciobanul.⁶¹

His involvement in the intrigues for the succession to the throne of Constantin Șerban (1654-1658) caused serious trouble to Metropolitan Ștefan I (1648-1653). After the victory at Finta (May 1653), Prince Matei Basarab

⁵⁷ Dimitrie Cantemir, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

⁵⁸ See August Franzen, Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor. Misiunea lui Petru în ideea și realizarea ei istorică*, București, 1996.

⁵⁹ V. Costăchel, P.P. Panaitescu, A. Cazacu, *op. cit.*, p. 455; For Nifon II, see Nicolae M. Popescu, *Nifon II Patriarhul Constantinopolului*, in "A.A.R.M.S.I.", s. II, t. XXXVI, 1913-1914, p. 731-798.

⁶⁰ N. I. Șerbănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 746-747; Andrei Pippidi, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

⁶¹ N. I. Șerbănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 757; Andrei Pippidi, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

decided to remove him from the metropolitan chair. On June 12, 1653, the Wallachian prince demanded Ioanichie, the Patriarch of Constantinople, to approve of this measure, complaining that Ștefan “was cunning and evil.” Patriarch Ioanichie met the princes’ request and consented to the accession of Ignatie (1653-1656) to the metropolitan throne of Ungro-Wallachia.⁶²

Metropolitan Teodosie (1668-1672; 1679-1708) did not enjoy his office, because of the struggle between the two boyar parties, the Cantacuzens and the Bălenis. Supported by the strong party of the Cantacuzens, Teodosie was appointed metropolitan on May 21, 1668. During the reign of Antonie Vodă of Popești (March 13, 1669-February 1672), Teodosie took part in the retrial of seneschal Constantin Cantacuzino, killed on orders from voyevod Grigore I Ghica (1660-1664). On June 18, 1669, the same metropolitan tried Stroe Leurdeanul, minister of domestic affairs, who was morally responsible for the death of the elderly seneschal, and found him guilty. Three years after this trial, Grigore I Ghica (1672-1673), the man of the Bălenis’, acceded to the throne of Walachia for a second time. Because of his involvement in the political struggle in the country, Metropolitan Teodosie was removed from his chair, before June 24, 1672, and replaced by Dionisie, abbot of Radu-Vodă Monastery, from Bucharest. However, Dionisie died before December 24, 1672, and Varlaam, bishop of Râmnic (1672-1679) was brought “against his will” to replace him. In November 1678, the country’s throne was occupied by Șerban Cantacuzino (1678-1688). To give satisfaction to those members of his family who had suffered, the new ruler called the former metropolitan Teodosie from Tismana monastery, where he had withdrawn, and summoning a large number of priests in Bucharest, returned him to the metropolitan chair, on April 15, 1679.⁶³

In 1712, following an unmotivated denunciation, Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688-1714) demanded the resignation of metropolitan Antim Ivireanul (1708-1716), accusing the hierarch of plotting against him. On January 15, and on February 3, 1712, Antim brilliantly conducted his own defense before the voyevod, and, finally, managed to remove all doubts about him from the ruler’s soul. Constantin Brâncoveanu calmed himself down, and Antim Ivireanul continued to occupy the metropolitan’s chair after that incident.⁶⁴

Another conflict between the State and Church broke out in 1757. On September 8, Matei, Patriarch of Alexandria, writing to Prince Constantin Mavrocordat, told him that he had received some letters from Antim, the former archbishop of Buzău (1753-1757), in which he complained of the ruler’s

⁶² N. I. Șerbănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 776; Andrei Pippidi, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

⁶³ N. I. Șerbănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 779-784.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 786; Andrei Pippidi, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

wrongdoings. Matei did not elaborate on the problem, which he detailed in another letter, of November 20th, the same year. "Antim had not left his position willingly. Withdrawn to Mount Sinai, the prelate complained to Ali Hechimoglu Pasha that the Romanian ruler had dismissed him wrongfully, stealing forty purses of money from him, too." The Sinai Archimandrite and the Patriarch of Alexandria tried to calm Antim down, who was very determined to defend his own rights. In 1759, Matei pleaded with the Patriarch of Constantinople in Antim's favor, however Rafail, Antim's successor to the bishopric of Buzău, kept his position.⁶⁵

Moldavia. The tension between the State and the Church reached its climax when Iliș Rareș Vodă / Iliș Rares Voyevod (1541-1551) converted to Islam, in 1551. His giving up the Orthodox religion had been preceded by a series of measures against the clergy.⁶⁶ Actually, in addition to his disputed conversion, Iliș Rareș had another reason to do this. "The increase of the tribute (paid to the Porte) obliged him to tax nobility and the clergy, who, until then, had been given various fiscal exemptions. It was not a theological controversy, but a political struggle, in which the accusation of heresy was used as the main weapon."⁶⁷

Another conflict between the State and the Church is documented in the latter half of the 16th century. During the reign of Ion Vodă cel Viteaz / Prince John the Brave (1572-1574), numerous assets of the Church were secularized for the benefit of the ruler, and his collaborators. The measures against the high prelates were extremely cruel. Metropolitan Teofan II (1564-1572; 1578-1581; 1582-1588) was forced to runaway to Transylvania.⁶⁸ The reason for this religious persecution was not "the ruler's doubts, but his desperate need of money"; he was ready to use the high income of monasteries for the interests of the state. The death of Ion Vodă, in his struggle against the Turks, led to "annulment of the measures by means of which monasteries had been secularized."⁶⁹

As with Byzantium, there were moments in the history of Wallachia and Moldavia when, in the confrontation between the ruler and the metropolitan, the high hierarch of the Church got the upper hand. Andreas Wolf, a Saxon doctor, describes such a moment: When, in 1775, Grigore III

⁶⁵ N. Iorga, *Un conflict al Bisericii cu Statul în anul 1757*, in "B.O.R.", LV, 1937, no. 7-10, p. 385-386.

⁶⁶ Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei de când s-au descălecat țara și de cursul anilor și de viața domnilor carea scrie de la Dragoș-vodă până la Aron-vodă (1359-1595)*, în *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, Ed. Hyperion, Chișinău, 1990, p. 84.

⁶⁷ Andrei Pippidi, *op. cit.*, p. 101-102.

⁶⁸ Al. I. Ciurea, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁶⁹ V. Costăchel, P.P. Panaitescu, A. Cazacu, *op. cit.*, p. 456; Andrei Pippidi, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

The relationships between the State and the Church in the Romanian Countries

Ghica (1764-1767; 1774-1777), ruler of Moldavia, favored "a courtier that had been very detrimental to the state, and no boyar dared raise his voice against the courtier's wrongdoings, then Metropolitan Gavriil Calimachi (1760-1786)⁷⁰ seriously and insistently reproached the voyevod with doing this. Since the ruler rejected his accusations, the metropolitan ordered that the all alarm bells in the town should be rung, and then, with the cross in his hand, he walked from the Metropolitan Palace to the ruler's court, accompanied by so many burgers and peasants [...] that Ghica Vodă / Prince Ghica got so scared that he had to hide and was forced to banish his favorite from court."⁷¹

In the history of Romanian political thought, there was no caesaropapist conception of the relationships between the State and the Church. Caesaropapism⁷² "influenced the attitude of the leaders of the Romanian Principalities to the Church, only exceptionally, and without any far-reaching consequences."⁷³

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The conception of the relationships between the State and the Church, practiced in Wallachia and Moldavia, from the 14th century to the 18th century, based on the ancient Roman principle: „Non enim Republica est in Ecclesia, sed Ecclesia in Republica."⁷⁴

⁷⁰ C. Mosor, *Aspecte principale din viața și activitatea mitropolitului Moldovei, Gavriil Calimachi (1760-1786)*, in "B.O.R.", LXXXVIII, 1970, no. 7-8, p. 764-777.

⁷¹ Apud S. Reli, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁷² Caesaropapism is the idea of combining the power of secular government with, or making it supreme to, the spiritual authority of the Christian Church; especially concerning the connection of the Christian Church with government. In its extreme form, it is a political theory in which the head of state, notably the Emperor is also the supreme head of the church.

⁷³ Gh. Cronț, *Justiția bisericească din Moldova și Țara Românească în secolele XIV-XVII*, in "M.M.S.", LI, 1975, no. 3-4, p. 272.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 274.

