

Byzantium for Priests. Image of Byzantium in Romanian Theological Textbooks of the Late 20th Century

Preliminaries

In Romania's last national census, held in 2011, 81% of citizens declared themselves to be of the Orthodox faith¹. Of course, not all of them actively participate in the life of the Romanian Orthodox Church but still, most of them keep the important religious holidays and use the religious and liturgical services of Eucharist, marriage, baptism, extreme unction, and house consecration. All of these, not to speak of the Sunday liturgy, are connected with the priest's preaching. Therefore, the Romanian Orthodox clergy is very influential and enjoys a broad social basis to which to spread ideas. It is thus important to know what discourses and narratives the theological education system conveys to its trainees, the future priests, in order to form an idea of the Church's cultural and social impact, specifically on shaping opinion on national level.

In the following study, I will address the image of the Byzantine Empire or Byzantium in Romanian textbooks for theological instruction and education. Before doing so, however, I shall briefly discuss the history of this phenomenon, beginning with the 19th century.

Historical overview

Up to the end of the 18th century, the training of priests in the Romanian Principalities was the task of the monastery schools in the various bishoprics of these countries. The first specialized seminaries appeared only at the beginning of the 19th century: Socola-Jassy in 1803, Sibiu in 1811, Arad in 1822, Bucharest, Buzău and Argeş in 1836, and, finally, Râmnic in 1837². The schools moved from monasteries in the countryside to the episcopal centres of the Danubian Principalities Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania.

The first Romanian universities and their theological faculties were established later, after the unification of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859, in the capital cities of these two

provinces, Jassy in 1860 and Bucharest in 1864. They continued the tradition of these countries' old academies³. In Transylvania, there was no Romanian university; the first was established in Cluj in 1918, after the armistice. The academies of Jassy and Bucharest, which were later transformed into universities, were founded in the 17th century and their official language of instruction was Greek. The first step on the way to a national education system in the 19th century was to change it to Romanian (Jassy in 1814, Bucharest in 1818) before the institutions adapted themselves to the standards of Western European universities⁴.

In this context, the need emerged for specialized textbooks for these institutions' various curricula. At the beginning of specialized theological instruction, so-called »historical theology« included only the history of the universal Church (*Istoria Bisericească Universală* or *Istoria Bisericii Universale*), which meant the history of all Christianity from the beginning to the 19th century. The diversification of historical theology occurred only in the 20th century, when the discipline was split in three: history of the universal Church, history of the Romanian Orthodox Church and, finally, Byzantine studies. The teaching of Church history in the 19th century had thus combined universal Christianity, Romanian Christianity and Byzantine history⁵.

The first textbooks were translations of consecrated Greek authors. For instance, the Metropolis of Wallachia's Greek secretary, Alecsandru Geanoglu-Lesvioudax, in 1845 translated into Romanian the *Church History* of Stephanos Kometas, which in turn was a shortened version of Meletius', the Metropolitan of Athens (1661-1714), *Church History* of 1783-1785⁶. Geanoglu-Lesvioudax published his little manual under the title *Short Ecclesiastical History, Including the Most Noteworthy Events of the Holy Eastern Church* (»Istorie bisericească pre scurt, cuprinzătoare de cele mai vrednice de ştiut întâmplări a sfintei Biserici răsăritene«)⁷. He supplemented the book with information regarding the Christian history of the Danubian Principalities. The first »professional« textbook of Church History was also a translation. Athanasie Mironescu

1 INSEE, Recensământ 2011.

2 Păcurariu, IBOR theological faculties 1, 45.

3 Iacob, Universitatea din Iaşi 10. – Varlaam Ploieşteanul, Teologia Ortodoxă 484.

4 Livescu, Entstehung 21-22.

5 Păcurariu, IBOR theological faculties 1, 44.

6 Meletios of Athens, *Historia*. See also the contribution by Dimitrios Moschos to this volume and Păcurariu, IBOR theological faculties 1, 45.

7 Geanoglu-Lesvioudax, *Istorie*.

and Gherasim Timuș translated the collected teaching scripts of Eusebiu Popovici (1838-1922), their professor of historical theology at Czernowitz, in two volumes in 1900 and 1901 under the title *Universal Church History and Ecclesiastical Statistics* («Istoria Bisericească Universală și Statistica Bisericească»; one further edition in four volumes, ²1925-1928)⁸. It was the most complete academic Church history to have appeared in the Orthodox world to date, written according to the discipline's Western standards, and subsequently translated into Bulgarian and Serbian⁹.

As already mentioned, the History of the Romanian Orthodox Church emerged as a separate discipline at the beginning of the 20th century. Professor Nicolae Dobrescu (1874-1914) of the University of Bucharest in 1911-1912 published a teaching script for the history of the Romanian Orthodox Church¹⁰. This was also published in 1912 as a textbook for seminaries, running to three further editions (²1921, ³1923, ⁴1926)¹¹. These are only a few examples from a longer list of works on both universal and Romanian Orthodox Church history used in institutions of theological instruction. It should be mentioned that, although there was no centralized curriculum, Popovici's enjoyed the status of a definitive work and was widely used in the teaching of Church history.

From the beginning of theological education in 19th century until the middle of the 20th century, there were calls to standardise instructional material, but the first successful implementation of such measures came only in the context of the pedagogical reforms in Romania after 1945¹². This time, not only was the material carefully adapted to the students' age, but also, centralized curricula for the whole of Romania were enforced.

Therefore, we have now the first textbooks for theological faculties, one for universal and a separate one for Romanian Orthodox Church history. In the beginning, they were also used for teaching in seminaries. Professors from the universities of Bucharest, Sibiu and Cluj, Teodor M. Popescu, Teodor Bodogae and George Gh. Stănescu, together wrote the textbook of *Universal Church History* in two volumes (1956)¹³. Professors from the same three universities, Alexandru Filipașcu, Gheorghe I. Moisescu and Ioan Lupaș, the textbook of *Romanian Orthodox Church History*, also in two volumes (1957)¹⁴. It seems they waited for the manual of universal Church history to appear, in order to contextualize in it their Romanian Orthodox Church history.

New textbooks appeared in the 1970s. The new *Universal Church History* by Ioan Rămureanu, Milan Șesan, and Teodor Bodogae was published in 1975¹⁵. In a condensed form, it was also used, beginning in 1992, as a textbook for theolog-

ical seminaries, with only Rămureanu credited as author¹⁶. In 1972, a new textbook of *Romanian Orthodox Church History* appeared by Mircea Păcurariu¹⁷. This became the standard manual for this discipline and was translated into German¹⁸. This textbook, which formerly had been used only in seminaries, was expanded to three volumes between 1980 and 1981 and became the new manual of Romanian Orthodox Church history for university use.

These last two manuals, the *Universal* and the *Romanian Orthodox Church History* by Ioan Rămureanu and Mircea Păcurariu respectively, in their condensed form for seminaries, are the focus of this study because of their centrality to theological instruction in contemporary Romania. It should be noted that after 1989, Romania saw a boom in theological instruction, with almost every bishopric establishing not only a seminary but also a theological faculty. That is why the editions, both legal and illegal, of the textbooks of Rămureanu and Păcurariu are by now uncountable.

Ioan Rămureanu's »History of the Universal Church«

Before proceeding with this discussion, it should be pointed out that, in Romanian theological instruction, the discipline of universal Church history deals mainly with the history of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and only incidentally with other Christian confessions inasmuch as they concern and interact with the Eastern Orthodox Churches. It is easy to see why Byzantium, the Eastern Roman Empire, should play a crucial role in this approach.

In the following, I will paraphrase the main ideas, clustering them according to the narratives they feed.

Relations between Emperor and Church: The Constantinian »revolution« in Christian affairs is seen as an altogether positive event. The important role of »Holy Constantine« (306-337) and Theodosius I (379-395) in forging a unified Christian religion throughout the Empire, without heresies that might have undermined the state's religious, social and political stability, is accorded a special position in Ioan Rămureanu's historiography. To these emperors fell the merit of officialising Christianity and elevating it to the rank of state religion, making the Roman Empire a »Christian Empire«, as Rămureanu puts it¹⁹. That is why these two emperors were deservedly sanctified by the Church. Of course, Constantine's questionable decisions are blamed on inept counsellors at his court, as is his problematic religious policy after the First Council of Nicaea in 325, when Arian bishops influenced him.

8 Popovici, *Istoria*.

9 Păcurariu, *Dicționarul* 392.

10 Dobrescu, *Istoria BOR*.

11 Dobrescu, *Istoria seminar*; Păcurariu, *Dicționarul* 157.

12 Păcurariu, *Îvățământul teologic seminarial*, ch. 5.

13 Popescu/Bodogae/Stănescu, *IBU*.

14 Moisescu/Lupaș/Filipașcu, *IBOR*.

15 Rămureanu/Șesan/Bodogae, *IBU*.

16 Rămureanu, *IBU*.

17 Păcurariu, *IBOR seminaries*; in the following, I use the 4th edition of the book (see bibliography).

18 Păcurariu, *Geschichte*.

19 »Imperiul roman devine imperiu creștin« (the Roman Empire becomes a Christian Empire), Rămureanu, *IBU* 101; see also 103 and 106.

A critical reference to Constantine and all emperors after him is that they, due to their closeness to religious matters, also became masters of the Church²⁰. Ioan Rămureanu repeats this point when he describes the reign of Justinian I: »The Orthodox Church found in this emperor a protector, but at the same time also a master, because the ruler interfered far too much in Church business, even when it was a matter of dogma and liturgy«²¹. However, the Eastern Roman emperors are given a positive assessment: Even the heretic emperors are excused by being »laymen«, unfamiliar with high theological speculation²².

The Romanian people in international arena: Ioan Rămureanu already uses the ethnonym »Romanian people« (*poporul român*) in the lesson concerning the first four centuries of the Christian era. He points out that »the Romanian people resulted from the fusion of Geto-Dacians with the Romans south and north of the Danube. This people emerges in history, already in the beginning, as a people both Romanic and Christian, in short, as the Geto-Daco-Roman people«²³. The sloppy syllogism aside, this theory does not consider the ethnic variety in the region between the 1st and 4th centuries²⁴.

This Geto-Daco-Roman people was supposedly Christianized by the Apostle Andrew himself, after he left Byzantium²⁵, so the Romanian people was a factor in civilizing all other migrating peoples that traversed the area, like the Goths, Slavs, Moravians or Magyars. The vigorous Christian faith among Geto-Daco-Romans was the result of the strong bonds with the »Oriental *latinitas*«, as Rămureanu calls it, meaning of course the Eastern Roman Empire and the attraction and influence it exerted²⁶. The Christianization of the Magyars in the 10th century provides an example: »In the Pannonian and Tisza Basin, [the Magyars] made contact with the Christian population, from which they borrowed some *Orthodox* (?) terms and some *Orthodox* (?) customs. [...] The important historical fact is that the Hungarians adopted, at the beginning of their Christian existence, the Orthodox faith, which they received from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople«²⁷. Geto-Daco-Roman Christianity, south and north of the Danube, in a highly dynamic way supported not only the Christian mission of the Empire among the migratory peoples but also the Orthodox dogma against heretics as well as Constantinople's ecclesiastical jurisdiction against the Papacy²⁸.

Ioan Rămureanu underscores the contribution of regional synods to fight heresy. He proudly mentions the participation

of the bishops from the Danube area at the Ecumenical Councils in the Empire²⁹ or lists the region's Christian authors who made major contributions to the Christian faith in Europe: John Cassian (ca. 360-435), Dionysius Exiguus (470-540) or Nicetas of Remesiana (d. ca. 414). All of them are considered to have been »Geto-Daco-Romans« from the Danube basin. For example, Rămureanu's account of the third ecumenical council against Nestorius (June 431) proudly reports that »from *our lands* the Bishop of Tomis, Timotheos from Scythia Minor took part. He signed Cyril's [of Alexandria] anathemas against Nestorius [Patriarch of Constantinople] on the seventeenth position in the list. Other bishops from territories south of the Danube were on Nestorius's side«³⁰. Leaving aside the anachronism, Rămureanu strongly contrasts the orthodoxy of the bishops in »our lands« with the heresy of the »others« elsewhere.

The Danube principalities also played an important role in the Middle Ages, sending representatives to »international congresses« as part of Byzantine delegations³¹. By »congresses«, Rămureanu means the councils of Constance (1416-1418) and Ferrara-Florence (1438-1439). He stresses that the Moldavian Metropolitan Damian, who signed the union with the Latins in Florence, was no »Romanian« but a »Greek«³², so no blame fell on Romanians for compromising the Orthodox faith.

Byzantium and the Orthodox faith: Although Ioan Rămureanu speaks about the decadence of Christian life after the 4th century compared to the first centuries³³ – which also happens to be a common trope in Protestant historiography³⁴ –, his textbook stresses throughout the role of the Byzantine Empire in building the Orthodox faith, especially in the context of the seven Ecumenical Councils. He points out several times that the seven Ecumenical Councils, summoned by wise Byzantine emperors on the advice of the Ecumenical Patriarchs, were *all* held in the eastern part of the Empire and that no pope had ever attended one of them³⁵, which implies that the popes deserved little merit in the development of Christian dogma. In sum, the Eastern Empire fulfilled the fundamental task of maintaining Christian life and spirituality as well as purifying the Christian faith from heresy and Latin deviation. The Eastern Empire exported important Christian cultural features, such as monastic culture, education and arts, all under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate³⁶. In this regard, the Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox Church merge and are used synonymously in Ioan Rămureanu's text-

20 Ibidem 102.

21 Ibidem 108.

22 Ibidem 144.

23 Ibidem 109.

24 Tacheva-Hitova, *Eastern Cults* 58-62. 152-154. 210f. 244-248. – Ehrensperger, Paul 63-100. 105-140. – Kaiser, *Mittelmeerwelt* 20-29. 168-172. – Mitchell/Greatrex, *Ethnicity*. – Derks/Roymans, *Ethnic Constructs*. – Ligt/Tacoma, *Migration*.

25 Rămureanu, *IBU* 109.

26 Ibidem 113f. 211.

27 Ibidem 211f.

28 Ibidem 168. 235.

29 Ibidem 124f. 130f

30 Ibidem 139.

31 Ibidem 260.

32 Ibidem 265.

33 Ibidem 223.

34 See for instance Gieseler, *Kirchengeschichte* 12f. This idea of decay and decadence of the Christian life after the first four centuries could be a direct Protestant historiography's influence on Rămureanu, who studied in several Protestant institutions, for instance the Faculties of Protestant Theology in Paris and Strasbourg (Păcurariu, *Dicționarul* 411).

35 Rămureanu, *IBU* 170; see also 124 and 144.

36 Ibidem 224-227.

book, sometimes as the »Orthodox Empire« and sometimes as the »Byzantine Church«³⁷. The destiny of the Church depended, according to Rămureanu, was inseparable from the political situation of the Empire³⁸.

»The confrontation between Orthodoxy and Catholicism«³⁹ is also one of the main topics of Rămureanu's textbook. In his account, the Latins bear most of the blame for the Great Schism because they sent the arrogant, violent and supercilious cardinal of Silva Candida to Constantinople, where he caused trouble. From the Latins, »nothing good could have been expected« (*nu se poate aștepta la nimic bun*)⁴⁰. The Latin crusaders had undermined the political unity of the Byzantine Empire in the Near East due to their perfidy, disloyalty, obsession with power, greed and violence⁴¹. Ironically, these were also the epithets used in Latin sources when speaking of the Byzantines⁴². The Church unions from 13th to 15th centuries between the Churches of Constantinople and Rome were in fact, according to Rămureanu, a form of blackmail by the Latins, who bet on the weak position of the Empire under the pressure of Turkish populations⁴³.

Rămureanu harshly condemned the emperors pushing for union with the Latins. For instance, while quoting Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos (1353-1354 and 1364-1376), Rămureanu judged emperor John V Palaiologos (1341-1391) to have been a »traitor to Orthodoxy«⁴⁴. Elsewhere, Rămureanu refers to the Empire – contrasting it with »pravoslavnic Russia« (*Rusia pravoslavnică*) – after the Union of Ferrara-Florence as »apostate Byzantium« (*Bizanțul apostat*)⁴⁵. The conquest of Constantinople was in part caused by the »blameful myopia« (*miopia condamnabilă*, as Rămureanu puts it) of the Western powers, who watched Byzantium be destroyed while busy with their own »petty interests« (*interesele lor înguste*)⁴⁶. Rămureanu concludes his account of the Byzantine period with an emotional statement against the Turkish conquerors of Constantinople of a kind that should have no place in a scientific treatise: »Time wears down and wrecks everything, even the glory of Barbarian and bloodthirsty conquerors whose name, during their lifetime, filled the whole world with butchery and terror. Only Asia Minor, Constantinople and a little territory around the Dardanelles are now left under Turkish rule for all the conquests and military victories of Mohammed II, which he won by tremendous bloodshed«⁴⁷.

In conclusion, the image of the Empire in Rămureanu's textbook is largely positive. He describes, for instance, the fall of the Constantinople in 1453 in very dark terms, concluding that in its millennium-long history, the Byzantine Empire had fulfilled a great political, religious and cultural

mission, spreading Christianity in throughout the southern Mediterranean, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia. The Empire »defended and shielded the Christian faith against all heresies and Islam, representing Orthodoxy and supporting it with all its power. Byzantium was a lodestar of culture and radiated civilization upon all European peoples«⁴⁸. This neatly encapsulates the main narrative transmitted in the textbook discussed here: the polarisation between civilized and Orthodox Byzantium on the one hand and the barbaric (and occasionally non-Orthodox) rest of the world.

The focus falls upon relations between the Eastern Roman Empire and the Christian Church. The period of the ecumenical councils is discussed in detail – also because Ioan Rămureanu's own field of expertise lay here⁴⁹. He emphasises and approves of the symbiosis, almost the confusion, between state and Church, and celebrates the fact that with Theodosius the Great began the existence of a »Roman Christian Empire«. Of course, Rămureanu does not omit to criticise the interference of the emperors in Church business, especially when they were non-Orthodox – Arian, Monophysite, Iconoclast. However, in sum, he exalts this tutelage as a form of *cura religionis*, a term that also denotes the Christian mission towards the barbarians, as well as the protectionist policy towards other Christian denominations.

Another goal of Rămureanu's *History of the Universal Church* was to contribute to the national narrative of the Romanians, namely their ethnogenesis from victorious Romans and conquered Dacians. The Romanians were a historical miracle, the only ethnicity to combine a Romance language with the Orthodox faith. »Geto-Daco-Romans« living north and south of the stream assisted the Empire and the Ecumenical Patriarchate in their struggle to civilise the barbarians and preserve the Orthodox faith. Universal Church history, as Rămureanu intends to write it, means to show how Romanians influenced universal Christian history.

Mircea Păcurariu's History of the Romanian Orthodox Church

The main difference from Ioan Rămureanu's textbook is that Byzantium does not take as prominent a place in Mircea Păcurariu's analysis. As before, the main narrative arguments shall be summarised below.

The ethnogenesis of the Romanians: Mircea Păcurariu declares that before the 9th century, there existed not a »Ro-

37 Rămureanu, IBU 233.

38 Ibidem 239.

39 Rămureanu titles one of his subchapters that way: »Confruntarea dintre ortodoxie și catolicism« (139), with no regard to the anachronistic terminology.

40 Ibidem 234.

41 Ibidem 246-248.

42 Herbers, Nikolaus I. – Schreiner, Byzanz und der Westen. – Geanakoplos, Byzantium 356-381. – Carrier, Greeks. – Tyerman, Crusades 111.

43 Rămureanu IBU 256-260.

44 Ibidem 259.

45 Ibidem 266.

46 Ibidem 351.

47 Ibidem 355.

48 »El a apărut [creștinismul] contra ereziilor și islamismului, a reprezentat Ortodoxia și a susținut-o cu toate forțele lui, a fost un centru de cultură și civilizație care a iradiat asupra tuturor popoarelor Europei«. Ibidem 355.

49 Păcurariu, Dicționarul 411.

manian Church« but a »Daco-Roman Church, which is to say, the Church of the Romanian people's forefathers«⁵⁰. The successful fusion of Roman conquerors and Geto-Dacians formed a new ethnic entity at the middle and lower Danube, which Mircea Păcurariu calls »Danube Romanity« (*romanitatea danubiană*), »Oriental Romanity« (*romanitatea orientală*) or »the Daco-Roman population« (*populație daco-romană*)⁵¹.

St. Andrew, who is known to have preached in Scythia, is supposed to have Christianized the Geto-Dacians living in the Danube region in apostolic times⁵² – that is, before the Roman conquest. Mircea Păcurariu calls St. Andrew the »apostle of the Geto-Dacians«⁵³. The Romanian scholar devotes much effort to arguing that by »Scythia«, the ancient sources in fact meant »Scythia Minor«, what today is Dobruja in Romania, on the Black Sea coast⁵⁴. In this way, the ancestors of the Romanians were from the beginning part of fundamental international developments, unlike other peoples.

Moreover, these early-Christianised inhabitants of the Danube area contributed themselves to further civilizing the barbarians, Goths, Slavs, Avars or Magyars, i. e. Christianising them. To give an example, after a general discussion of the Latin origins of Romanian Christian terminology⁵⁵, Mircea Păcurariu concludes that »all these terms prove the Romanian people had been completely Christianized by the time Slavs reached this area. It [i. e. the Romanian people] even contributed to the Slavs' Christianisation when they settled in the provinces of the Eastern Roman Empire (which became the Byzantine Empire)«⁵⁶. This way, Păcurariu creates the »happy link« between Christianity, Daco-Romans/Romanians and Byzantium.

All of these migratory peoples first made contact with the Christian religion when they settled north of the Danube; therefore, it was a much easier task for missionaries from Constantinople to disseminate the word of God among them⁵⁷. Important Christian personalities in the region, for instance the aforementioned Nicetas of Remesiana in the 5th century, were Daco-Romans⁵⁸. The fact that the name itself is Greek seems not to bother Mircea Păcurariu. We encounter the same arguments when Păcurariu introduces the »Daco-Romans« John Cassian and Dionysus Exiguus⁵⁹. He concludes that the activity of Cassian and Exiguus are »the Daco-Romans', the fathers of the Romanians', first manifestations and cultural achievements on a continental level«⁶⁰. (Ironically, on page 151 of his more elaborate *Church History* for theological faculties, Păcurariu argues that the John Cassian was of *scythica natio*, which means »Daco-Roman« from Scythia Minor. Only eight pages later, when analysing Chris-

tian epigraphy from Scythia Minor in the 4th and 5th centuries, he mentions an inscription speaking of »Simplicius, the son of Cassian, of Syrian nation« [p. 159])⁶¹. For instance, he has no hesitation in giving one of his chapters the absurd title »Archaeological proofs of the antiquity of Romanian Christianity«, when speaking of fourth-century Christian history⁶².

Byzantium as protector: In the introductory chapter of his *History of Romanian Orthodox Church* for theological faculties, Mircea Păcurariu enumerates the auxiliary disciplines called on to help write the history of the Romanian Church. The first and most important is Byzantine studies⁶³, which testifies to the importance Romanian Church historiography ascribes to Byzantium for the religious past of the Romanians. The Eastern Roman Empire or the Byzantine Empire – Mircea Păcurariu's terminology is fluid – Christianized the Romanians' ancestors and kept them from falling under the papacy's jurisdiction. »The proto-Romanian Church never stood under Rome's jurisdiction, as some scholars have tendentiously declared. [...] In the sixth century – along with the administrative organization of the Eastern Roman Empire –, all bishoprics of the Danube or Oriental Romanity came under the jurisdiction of Constantinople«⁶⁴.

Romanians and Orthodoxy: The natural alliance, forged by Roman-ness and the Orthodox faith, between Eastern Roman Empire and the old inhabitants of the Danube region manifested itself in the protective policy of the Empire in this area. The consequence was the preservation of a pure Orthodox Christianity in contrast to many newcomers who were heretics or of Latin faith. In this context, one of Mircea Păcurariu's favourite expressions when referring to the Danube Christians is that they were a »bastion«, an outpost of Orthodoxy in these parts of the continent. To give an example, the regional Synod of Sardica in 343 against the Arian heresy was one of the major moments in the history of the Christian dogma. Although there is no such information in the sources, Mircea Păcurariu cannot help but speculate that this Synod was of central importance for the Christians north of the Danube and that those Romanized populations rejected the heresy with few exceptions⁶⁵.

There is a broad discussion of the Ecumenical Councils in Mircea Păcurariu's textbook, although they are connected only distantly and indirectly with Christian history north of the Danube. Nevertheless, he discusses them meticulously, always emphasising their major influence on Danube Orthodoxy or, conversely, the important role Danube bishops played in the Ecumenical Councils – the bishop of Tomis being the favourite⁶⁶. The terminology used by Mircea Păcurariu in discussing

50 Păcurariu, IBOR theological faculties 1, 18. Compare to Păcurariu, IBOR seminaries, 58.

51 Păcurariu, IBOR seminaries 19. 25. 29, and passim.

52 Ibidem 21-24.

53 Ibidem 20.

54 Ibidem 19-21.

55 Ibidem 24-30.

56 Ibidem 30.

57 Ibidem 58.

58 Ibidem 42f.

59 Ibidem 49-51.

60 Ibidem 51.

61 See Păcurariu, IBOR theological faculties 1, 151. 159.

62 Păcurariu, IBOR seminaries 30.

63 Păcurariu, IBOR theological faculties 1, 21.

64 Păcurariu, IBOR seminaries 56.

65 Ibidem 41.

66 Ibidem 46-49.

the Christian cultures of the Danube area supports the intrinsic link between Romanians and the Orthodox faith. Păcurariu adopts Rămureanu's narrative about the positive role of the Romanians in universal Christian history (see above) and concludes one of his chapters: »It has to be noted that the Orthodox Romanians are, after the Greeks, the oldest Christian people in Eastern Europe. The inclusion of the Daco-Roman bishoprics under Constantinople's jurisdiction preserved the Orthodox rite. Therefore, the Romanian people is to this day the only one of Roman origin and Orthodox faith, or to put it another way: a people linked to Rome by its language and to Constantinople by its faith«⁶⁷.

Conclusions

The stereotypical narratives regarding Byzantium in the Romanian manuals for the instruction of priests-in-training in Church history show, on the one hand, how important the analysis of such media of reception is; unlike the scholarly products of scientific elites, textbooks mediate images of Byzantium to the common people. Discussion of Byzantium's reception is, on the other hand, important not only for the reconstruction of historiographical traditions, but also for insights into mechanism of opinion formation by influential actors like the Church. Such mechanisms are efficient, firstly, by *simplifying complexity* and, secondly, using *reception as a pretext for the creation* of socio-political narratives.

The terms for the Byzantine Empire used in Romanian textbooks are complex and ever changing. Ioan Rămureanu uses, for instance, »Roman Empire«, »Eastern Roman Empire«, »Byzantine Empire«, the »Greeks« and so on, without concern for historical periods (Old, Middle, or Late Byzantium), as is usual in modern accounts, although »Greeks« is used only for the Empire after the 7th century, when it »was Hellenised«, as Rămureanu emphasises⁶⁸.

The Romanian textbooks need the ethnogenesis narrative in order to create the image of the »historical marvel«⁶⁹ they attribute to the Romanian people: the mixture between Romance language and Orthodox faith. Their Roman origins link the Romanians with the »Oriental *latinitas*«, as Ioan Rămureanu called it, and hence with Byzantium, the Eastern Roman Empire. The common Roman-ness of Romanians and the Byzantine *Romaioi* is the central justification of the religious option of the Danube regions for Constantinople's Orthodoxy.

Another method for elevating the international role of the »proto-Romanians« in the Christian oecumene is to refer to significant events abroad, outside the lower Danube region,

like the Ecumenical Councils or the union councils of Lyon and Ferrara-Florence, in which »Romanians« also participated and to which they made major contributions. Mircea Păcurariu – to give an example – points to the part »Romanians« played in establishing Christian dogma against heresies: »Therefore, the bishopric of Tomis – the oldest diocese on Romanian soil – fulfilled a central function in the Christian Church from the 4th to the 6th century, when major Christological disputes took place. The bishops of Tomis made significant contributions to the first five Ecumenical Councils, where they fought for the true faith and for the Church's unity. At the same time, they protected their flock from heretical doctrines, keeping the true faith as proclaimed by the Ecumenical Councils. We should note that many of the Tomitan hierarchs were renowned scholars of their times, who wrote theological treaties and cultivated contacts with the major personalities of the Orthodox community«⁷⁰.

The civilizing task of the Romanians as Eastern Empire's loyal allies applies to all major events across the history: from the Christianization of the Slavs in 7th century to that of the Magyars in the 10th century. This is a way of demonstrating the consistency of the Romanians' historical greatness, as well as sustaining their claim for nation-statehood in the Danube basin. Ultimately, this approach to history serves to underpin, bolster and implement the political goals of the modern Romanian state. The manuals for religious instruction followed the secular textbooks for historical instruction that had already appeared in the 19th century. Secular textbooks openly served the national narrative of the modern Romanian state and were ready to sacrifice the historical truth to the higher purpose of Romanian national consciousness⁷¹. On their publication, the theological textbooks took on the same goal and made no secret of their mission in the service of Romanian nationalism.

It is remarkable that national policy and discourses in Romania display such continuity across the caesura marked by the year 1945. The theological education system – which enjoyed a high status before 1945, then lost its privileges to regain them after 1989 – continued to feed and entertain classical national narratives throughout the history of the modern Romanian state with little regard for political regimes⁷².

It is clear that the disciplines of Romanian Orthodox Church History and Byzantine Studies originate in the older History of Universal Church. Because the latter, in 19th century, emerged as a history of Romanian Christianity in an international perspective. The general history of Christianity only framed the religious history of the Romanians, as the striking similarities between the two textbooks discussed in

67 Păcurariu, IBOR seminaries 58.

68 Rămureanu IBU 231.

69 The Romanian historian Gheorghe I. Brătianu used this concept for the first time in 1940; see Brătianu, Miracol. It made a great career in Romania's nationalist historiography until today.

70 Păcurariu, IBOR seminaries 51.

71 Lutiș, Literatura didactică 293.

72 This is why I used the 2009 edition of Păcurariu's *Church History* as an example of how nationalist discourses survived unaltered in Romania after dictatorship had ended (Ibidem 102).

this paper show. Of course, the modern disciplines of history of the Romanian Orthodox Church and Byzantine studies now each have their own identity and deal in depth with specific historical phenomena. However, when dealing with the

topic of Byzantium, they still contribute to the History of the Universal Church, and together, all three serve the Romanian national narrative.

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Summary / Zusammenfassung

Byzantium for Priests. Image of Byzantium in Romanian Theological Textbooks of the Late 20th Century

The chapter approaches Romanian textbooks used in the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century in the instruction of future priests at high school and university levels. The case study focuses on the image of Byzantium mediated through this kind of literature and aims to show how this image is put to use in the national narrative of the modern Romanian state. The chapter reveals the close entanglement of discourses between scholarly research, mediation strategies, opinion formation, politics and power in Romanian society, where, through its clergy, the Romanian Orthodox Church is one of the most influential institutions.

Byzanz für Priester. Das Byzanzbild in rumänischen theologischen Lehrbüchern des späten 20. Jahrhunderts

Anhand des Byzanzbildes in Schulbüchern für Allgemeine Kirchengeschichte (Istorie bisericească universală) und Geschichte der Rumänisch-Orthodoxen Kirche (Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române) des 20. Jahrhunderts für Priesterseminare und theologische Fakultäten untersucht der Beitrag, wie religiöse Motive Nationsnarrative unterfüttern und somit zu Instrumenten der rumänischen Nationsbildung werden, wenn man sie unter ihrer hauptsächlichen Funktion der Pflege eines nationalen Wertigkeitsgefühls betrachtet. Der Aufsatz möchte somit u. a. zu der noch untererforschten Frage des Schulbuchs als religiöses Medium und seiner soziopolitischen Funktion in Modernisierungsprozessen nationaler Erweckung im 20. Jahrhundert beitragen.