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**THE CHURCH AND THE STATE IN
THE FIFTH CENTURY
(430-518)
(SUMMARY)**

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Key words:

The relationship between the State and the Church, the Theodosian Code, the Theodosian dynasty, church legislation, Ecumenical Synods.

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Introduction

The relationship between the Church and the State has not been the topic of a synthesis writing so far. There is not a single study in the specialised Romanian literature which approaches the subject of the religious policy of the byzantine emperors from the fifth century and the relationships between the spiritual power (the Church) and the temporal one (the State).

The purpose of our paper is to evoke the relationships between the Church and the State during the reigns of the emperors Theodosius II (408-450), Marcian (450-457), Leo I (457-474), Zeno (474-475; 476-491) and Anastasius I (492-518).

The research methods we used in order to write this paper were the structuralist, the comparative analytical and the theological ones.

Current status of the field research

The complex subject of the relationships between the Church and the State during the 5th century was addressed by the Roman Catholic and Protestant historians as early as the end of the XIXth century. Firstly, we have to mention the remarkable byzantine history synthesis of J. B. Bury (1861-1927); to this we may add the books dealing with the byzantine history written by the Russian scholars in the first half of the XXth century, among which we can distinguish those of Iulian Koulakovski, T. Ouspensky, the chief of the Russian Byzantinology Institute and A. A. Vasiliev. Another synthesis writing which deals with, among other things, the relationships between the Church and the State belongs to Charles Diehl, the founder of the French Byzantinology School and Georges Marçais. We have to mention, also, the monumental synthesis writing of Georgije Ostrogorski, which represents the starting point of any research in the field of the byzantine history.

As early as the first decade of the XXth century, the historians of the Roman Catholic Church approached the subject of the relationships between the Church and the

State in the general history books of the Church. Among the church history synthesis writings which deal with the Church history from the 5th century and, implicitly with the relationship between the sacerdocy and the Empire, there is the book of the abbot Louis Duchesne and the 4th book of the general church history *Histoire de l'Église depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours*, coordinated by Auguste Fliche and Victor Martin. Also, it is worth mentioning the monumental work of Erich Caspar about the Roman pontiffs which appeared at Tübingen in 1933. Another reference book for our topic is Hugo Rahner's *L'Église et l'État dans le christianisme primitif*, published in Paris in 1964. The general characteristic of the above mentioned books – whose authors are Roman Catholic historians and theologians– is the subjectivity in dealing with the relationship between the Church and the State. They attribute the successive crises the Eastern Church was confronting with to *caesaropapism*, crises generated by the nestorian and monophysite heresies which caused the Eastern Episcopate to fall apart and destroyed the unity of the Eastern Church. As a viable alternative to the imperial caesaropapism, they suggest the *papal primacy* stating that the bishops of Rome have constantly opposed to the emperors' attempts of controlling the Church.

Starting with the first half of the XXth century the bibliography referring to the evolution of the relationships between the Church and the State in the 4th and the 5th century has considerably enriched. A relatively recent book written by J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz addresses the subject of the reign of Arcadius (*Barbarians and Bischof. Army, Church and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991). The religious policy of the emperor Theodosius II has been the subject of a several monographs and studies. This subject was addressed by Colm Luibheid¹ and Fergus Millar². The book called *Empire chrétien et Église aux IV^e et V^e: intégration ou «concordat»? Le témoignage du Code Théodosien*, published in 2008, represents a new contribution to the study of the relationships between the Church and the State in the 4th and the 5th century. The authors of the articles from this volume base their arguments on Jean Gaudemet's hypotheses, a huge authority in the history of law, who emphasised the necessity that the historians question themselves regarding the political tendencies

¹ Colm Luibheid, *The Religious Policies of Theodosius II*, Princetown, New York, 1961; Idem, *Theodosius II and Heresy*, „Journal of Ecclesiastical History” 16, 1965, pp. 13-38.

² Fergus Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II (408-450)*, Berkely, University of California Press, 2006.

expressed in the *Theodosian Code*. Among the important authors who wrote about the 3rd Ecumenical Synod (431) we mention Charles Joseph Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles d'après les documents originaux*, Tome II/1, Ed. Letouzey et Ané, Paris, 1908.

A series of recent books have addressed the topic of the religious policy of the emperors Leo I, Zeno and Basiliscus, as well as that of their relationships with the Church. Among these we mention the book of the orthodox theologian Jean Meyendorff (*Unité de l'Empire et divisions des Chrétiens. L'Église de 450 à 680*, Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1993, pp. 177-231) and the monograph of Rafal Kosinski, (*The Emperor Zeno, Religion and Politics*, Cracow 2010). The historian Philippe Blaudeau wrote two very interesting monographs about the church history from the 4th and the 5th century which describe the relationships between the Holy See and the East between 448 and 536 (*Le Siège de Rome et l'Orient (448-536). Étude géo-ecclésiologique*, Rome, 2012) and respectively, the fight for authority and influence within the Church between the Holy See of Constantinople and that from Alexandria (*Alexandrie et Constantinople (451-491) : de l'histoire à la géo-ecclésiologie*, Rome, 2006). Recently, the German historian Mischa Meier has written a monograph about the emperor Anastasius I (*Anastasios I. Die Entstehung des Byzantinischen Reiches*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 2009). The Romanian bibliography which addresses the topic of the relationships between the Church and the State is very scarce. The only books in this domain which deserve being mentioned are those of Ph.D. The Reverend Father Adrian Gabor, (*The church and the state in the first four centuries*, Bucharest, 2012; *The church and the state during the reign of Theodosius the Great*, Ed. Bizantină, Bucharest, 2004) that limit themselves to the mere presentation of the relationships between the Church and the State during the first four Christian centuries and, respectively, during the reign of Theodosius I.

Chapter I: The Church and the State at the end of the 4th century and the first half of the 5th century

Upon the death of Jovian (363-364) the imperial throne was assumed by Valentinian I (364-375), who became the master of the West and the Illyricum. This emperor appointed his brother Valens (364-378) to be co-emperor giving him the title of *Augustus* and assigning him to rule the Eastern part of the Empire. Beginning with the reigns of Valentinian I and Valens, the Empire had been engaged in a continuous battle on two

fronts: on one hand against the big empires from the Orient, on the other hand against the migratory populations who appeared at the Western, Northern and Eastern borders of the empire. The hun invasion in Europe (375) was the starting point of the great migrations era, whose first stage took place between 376 and 602. On a religious level, Valentinian I remained neuter. He did not intervene in the disputes between the Christians and was impartial towards the doctrinary controversies within the Church. Right from the beginning of his reign, Valentinian I was the follower of the nicene creed, while in the East, the emperor Valens assumed, besides his imperial obligations, theologian prerogatives. He declared himself a follower of the arian creed.

After the death of Valentinian I, in 17th of November 375, his son Gratian (375-383) succeeded to the throne. Like his father did, he appointed his minor half-brother Valentinian II (375-392) to be co-emperor. Emperor Gratian supported the nicene orthodoxy. After Valens' death, during the battle of Adrianople with the goths (9th of August 378), Gratian appointed the Spanish general Theodosius I *Augustus* (379-395) and assigned him to rule the Eastern Roman Empire. The new emperor was forced to sign a treaty with the visigoths (382) according to which these were recognized as *foederati* and quartered in Moesia. In 394, Theodosius I defeated the usurper Eugenius (392-294) who had taken over the West after the murder of Valentinian II (392). After this victory, Theodosius I remained the only emperor of the Roman Empire.

The emperor Theodosius received the name „the Great” for his internal work. Since his coming to the imperial throne, Theodosius has supported the nicene orthodoxy declaring himself an enemy of the arianism. In 381, the emperor summoned the Second Ecumenical Synod of Constantinople which condemned for good every form of arianism and the apollinarianism. The third canon issued at this Synod established the honorific priority of the bishop of Constantinople after the bishop of Rome. In other words, the bishop of Constantinople is ranked the second in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Empire after that of Rome.

The emperor Theodosius I took a series of measures against the pagans which reached the highest point when he prohibited the performance of any pagan rituals throughout the Empire (391/392). The emperor had also given up his title as *pontifex maximus* and refused to wear the blue robe with stars, the symbol of the pagan pontificacy. The two decisions of Theodosius I show a clear delimitation from the paganism. Thus, the

traditional religion loses any legal right of expressing itself and the entire Empire becomes officially Christian. Theodosius I considered Christianity as a state religion. Therefore, during the last quarter of the 4th century, the historical reality of the Late Roman Empire showed a double unity: on the one hand, *a political unity* of an Empire fully restored beginning with the reforms of Diocletianus and continuing with those of Constantine the Great and on the other hand, *a unity in faith* of an Empire which had officially become Christian.

The 4th century represented a decisive stage for accomplishing the alliance between the Church and the State. Between the political power and the sacerdotal one developed close but unequal relationships, the former having a dominant position over the latter, which was still confused. The abolishment of paganism during the reign of Theodosius I marked the peak point of this alliance between the Church and the State. The ascendancy of the State – represented by the emperor – over the Church is based on the political imperial theology of Eusebius of Caesarea. According to „the father of the Christian history” the emperor is the image of *Logos* and the representative of Christ on earth. His appearance in history is part of the divine economy. A unique God corresponds to a single emperor. The empire represents the terrestrial projection of the celestial kingdom so, it can not be anything else besides unique and universal. Thus, the two kingdoms, the celestial and the earthly one, coincide and the limits of the Christian Church are those of the Empire itself. A divided Church would be synonymous with a divided Empire. From this moment on, any trouble caused to the Church appeared inevitably as a betrayal of the Empire. The Roman emperor could no longer take care of the Empire without taking care of the good order in the Church and of its unity. The way *the Logos* rules the celestial kingdom under the authority of God The Father, the same way the emperor rules on earth under the protection of God.

At the end of the 4th century some voices raised against the emperor's right of intervening in the affairs of the Church. The bishop Ambrose of Milan (339-397) opposed to the imperial power. When Valentinian II (375-392) wanted to allow the Arian Goths to use a Church from Milan, Ambrose vehemently opposed. He contested the right of the emperor to decide for the Church as he pleased. The bishop of Milan stated that: *the divine things are not subjected to imperial power... The palaces are the concern of the emperor and the churches are the concern of the bishop* (Ambrose, *Epistle*, I, 20, 19). In

the conflict with the emperor Theodosius I, the bishop Ambrose of Milan (339-397) stated that: „*Imperator intra ecclesiam non supra ecclesiam est*” (“The emperor is part of the Church, he is not above it”). Through this famous quote he defined the independence of the Church from the State. The emperor is dependent on God: he is a mere member of the Church, a believer just any other. The emperor has to protect and respect the Church. Even though it is legitimate and derives from the divine authority, the laic power is temporary and relative. It is useful, but it can not be in conflict with the religious values which have to come first and influence the institutions of the State. Ambrose asks for a full autonomy for the Church. The laic power and the religious power are solidary, but different. In one word the emperor plays the part „of the secular arm of the Church” , of a protector and defender of the Orthodox faith.

The events from the reign of Theodosius I showed clearly the interdependence between the destinies of a terrestrial Empire and those of a Church which states that its kingdom is not from this world. This interdependence between the State and the Church represents in fact a „constant” in the history of Byzantium. The threat coming from the barbarians outside the borders and the existence within the Empire of the rebellious pagan groups, of some heresies and schisms specific to the Church, causes the apparition of a certain patriotic reflex, of a stronger ideology which seem to bring up for discussion the Christian universality. In the face of the dangers which affect the political and religious integrity of the Empire, the ideal of the Christian mission narrows down to human dimensions. The free and voluntary gathering of the people around Jesus Christ tends to transform itself into an ”enrolment” of the entire society in which the State and the religion blend together.

The unity between the Church and the Empire, called in the Latin texts *Romania* – which defines the Roman Empire and his civilisation as a whole as opposed to the territory occupied by the barbarians (*Barbaricum*) – was dominated by a collective patriotic feeling, maybe even popular at the origin, of defending the political, moral and religious values which made the greatness of Rome. Right after the conquest of Rome in 410, Orosius openly recognised the protection offered to the Christians by the Empire. So, The Roman Empire has been created as a structure of Christianity outside which, those who believe in Jesus Christ, can not live. During the 4th and the 5th centuries, the Church manifested its ecumenical vocation. It felt the need to expand its missionary activity beyond

the borders of *Romania* and to carry its spiritual message into the barbarian lands. Saint Ambrose of Milan proclaimed, in theory, this religious universality of Church: „*Your brother – preaches he to 385 – is in the first place anyone with the same religious faith and only then anyone belonging to the Roman people*” (*De Tobia* 51). For Ambrose, the Christian society should ignore any racial privilege. The Church of Christ, he wrote, gathers the believers from every nation and the quality of being a Christian transcends any affiliation to any nation on earth. (*Ennarationes in psalmis*).

We can, therefore, see that in the end, the Roman emperors used the Christianity to integrate the land of the barbarians into the Empire and to pacify them. In this case, the Church was an effective tool in the service of the Empire; it helped the Roman emperors to reach their political goals.

Upon his death (17th of January 395), the emperor Theodosius I left the territory of the Empire to his sons: Arcadius (395-408), under the guardianship of Rufinus and Honorius (395-423), under the guardianship of Stilicho. Arcadius received the East, while his brother, Honorius, took over the West. In this way, the destruction of the political unity of the Roman Empire was made *de facto* and this contributed to the increase of the rivalry between the two important episcopates of the Christian world, Rome and Constantinople. The political and religious conflicts between the „Old Rome” and the „New Rome” have foretold the great schism of the Church from 1054.

During the reign of Theodosius’ sons, there was a permanent rivalry between the Eastern regents who came one after the other to the throne of the Eastern Roman Empire on behalf of Arcadius and Stilicho, who reigned more than ten years on behalf of Honorius. Between 395 and 396, the visigoths, ruled by their king Alaric, rebelled against the Empire and plundered the entire Balkanic Peninsula to the walls of Constantinople and the most southern part of Greece. Moreover, the visigoth party of Constantinople became all-powerful during the reign of the incompetent Arcadius. Under the influence of this party led by the goth Gainas, Alaric received the title of *magister militum per Illyricum* and the visigoths were colonised in the praetorian prefecture of Illyricum (396). The goth Gainas obtained the position of *magister militum praesentalis*. He entered in Constantinople leading his troops and becoming the master of the imperial capital city (399/400). Only the revolt of the Roman population from Constantinople freed the emperor Arcadius from the guardianship of the goths. The gothic troops were removed from the

capital city and Gainas was forced to seek refuge at the North of Danube where he was killed by the Huns, the allies of the Empire (400). Without the support of the Gothic party of Constantinople, Alaric pointed his attention to Italy which he invaded but was defeated by the general Stilicho and forced to return to Illyricum (402/403). But after the assassination of Stilicho, with the complicity of Constantinople, Alaric invaded Italy again and conquered Rome in the end (24th of August 410). The Visigoth danger was permanently removed from the New Rome after Alaric and his descendants put the basis of the Visigothic kingdom in Spain.

Against the difficulties caused by the Goths, the prominent personality of the bishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostom (397-407), could be distinguished. In 397, Saint John Chrysostom became the bishop of Constantinople with the aid of Eutropius, the influential eunuch of the emperor Arcadius. The Byzantine dignitary made this choice due not to the special qualities of Saint John, but mostly for political reasons. John was a true monk with no political experience, a modest and quiet person considered by Eutropius a potential political *puppet*. The eunuch who was already ruling the Empire, taking advantage of Arcadius' weaknesses, wanted to obtain by means of the new bishop a strong influence inside the Church. Indeed, Saint John Chrysostom has never involved himself into the political games, nor had he accepted the abuses of the imperial power. In the first place, he protested against the emperor's intervention into the internal affairs of the Church and in the Church administration, although he did not consider the monarchy as an illegitimate institution. Following into the footsteps of Ambrose of Milan, Saint John Chrysostom showed heartily his gratitude towards the benefactions and the providential character of the *Roman peace (pax romana)*. He formally proclaimed the superiority of the ecclesiastical power over the political power. The ecclesiastical power and the political one do not exclude each other. They can coexist as long as their boundaries are respected. There is place for both the earthly leaders and the spiritual ones in society. The problems appear when the rulers of the State exceed the role given to them by God and try to solve the problems of the Church using methods specific to the political world.

Saint John Chrysostom was a fierce adversary of the excessive luxury and a steady defender of the teachings of the Nicene faith. His intransigent character caused a conflict between him and the empress Eudoxia, who adored the luxury and the pleasure and whom he severely criticised in his sermons. In the same time, he made a lot of enemies

among the clergy. The bishops from the Synod of the Oak condemned (August 403) Saint John Chrysostom on behalf of the emperor Arcadius. The interventions of Pope Innocentius I (402-417) and those of the emperor Honorius to Arcadius to free Saint John Chrysostom lead to no result. Honorius sent a letter to his brother Arcadius in which he asked him not to interfere with the affairs of the Church. He stated that bishops should explain the revelation of God and the emperors should show their allegiance to the church regarding the religious matters.

After the premature death of Arcadius, the throne of the Eastern Roman Empire was assumed by his son Theodosius (408-450). His reign was dominated by his favourites from the imperial court and by the women around him: Anthemius, praetorian prefect (408-414), Helion, *magister officiorum* (414-427), Hrisafi (440-450), quaestor of the Sacred Palace, as well as his sister Pulcheria and his wife Eudocia. The most important accomplishments of the reign of Theodosius II were the founding of the University of Constantinople (425) and the publishing of the famous code of laws (*Theodosian Code*) in 438, which was countersigned also by his colleague from the West, the emperor Valentinian III (425-455).

The Theodosian Code includes the imperial decrees promulgated between 312 and 437. The laws included into Theodosius' code regulated the relationships between the Church and the State. The Theodosian legislation recognised the official statute of the Church within the Empire. In the same time, it also made a clear distinction between mere believers and members of the Christian clergy. The Church is recognised as a legal entity entitled to own properties and to receive donations and inheritances. The bishops receive judicial powers which contribute to the increase of their prestige and power. So, the emperors gave up a part of the judicial competencies which belonged to the State in favour of the Church. The imperial legislation outlawed the pagan cults. But it continued to offer a limited protection to the Jews. All laws promulgated in favour of Christianity stated that the imperial favours were meant exclusively for Christianity and for the universal Church, while the severe interdictions attacked numerous groups of heretics and schismatics. No other religion has had such a coherent and well structured *corpus* of laws before, meant to facilitate its expansion and unity.

The Church benefited from the support of the legislative and administrative body of the Empire against all religious dissidents. In 392, Saint Ambrose of Milan

opposed to the reintroduction of the Altar of Victory in the Senate of Rome. Violent conflicts between the Christians and the pagans broke out in Alexandria when the bishop Theophil decided to transform Dionysos' temple into a Church and demolished the famous temple of Seraphion (in 389 or 391), being the first one to hit the monumental statue of the God Seraphicus. All these examples prove the fact that the Christian clergy has voluntarily participated to the establishment of a new social order, mainly Christian, wanted by the emperors.

Chapter II: Church and State during the Third Ecumenical Synod of Ephesus (431)

A new stage in the relations between Church and State began with the imperial enthronement of Theodosius II. The new emperor intervened in the church affairs. Following the model imposed by Constantine the Great, Theodosius II controlled Church. In 427, the emperor appointed bishop of Constantinople Nestorius, a priest of Antioch.

The fifth century is the century of Christological disputes. If in the fourth century, theological debates revolve around the Persons of the Holy Trinity and the relationships between them, in the fifth century, the main issue that will be discussed is the issue of Christology. Theological debates focused around the person of Jesus Christ, aiming to study the natures of Christ and of how they unite in his Person. It has also been addressed the soteriological problem. These debates had as protagonists the representatives of the two schools of theology in the East: School of Alexandria and School of Antioch. The Alexandrian Christology fundamental scheme (represented by Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers for the fourth century and Cyril of Alexandria in the fifth century) is Logos-sarx, while the School of Antioch scheme (represented by Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, John Chrysostom in the fourth century and Theodoret of Cyr in the fifth century) is Logos-anthropos. The first scheme is *descendent*, taking into account the time *the Logos incarnates, acquiring a complete humanity*. Alexandrians mystical doctrine professed a Man-God in who united the human and divine nature. The privileged scriptural reference is John, 1, 14. By contrast to this conception of mysticism, was the Antiochian School rationalist doctrine, according to which Christ juxtaposed in his Person has two distinct natures: deity has chosen as vessel the Man-Christ, born of Mary - hence the claim that She should be called the mother of Christ (Hristotokos) and not the mother of God (Theotokos). The Antioch School Scheme - Logos-anthropos - is ascendant, meaning

that it believes that *the man Jesus is taken (assumed) by the Word of God* and examines in his being the perfect God and the perfect Man. Its preferential scriptural references are mostly those in the Synoptic Gospels.

Soon after his installation as the Bishop of Constantinople, Nestorius promoted his heretical teachings promoted, known as *Nestorianism or Dioprosopism*. The heresy of Nestorius reached the monks of Egypt, being fought vigorously by the Bishop Cyril of Alexandria (412-444).

In the new theological conflict that opposed the Churches of Alexandria, Rome and Antioch, Theodosius II played the role of arbiter and Supreme Court. The representatives of the three churches in conflict have addressed the emperor and the imperial family members their memoirs in which they exposed their Christological doctrine. Bishop Cyril of Alexandria wrote three memoirs with dogmatic content on the teachings of Orthodox faith, which he addressed to Theodosius II, empresses Eudocia, Theodosius' wife and Pulcheria, the king's sister. He warned the imperial court in Constantinople of the seriousness of Nestorius' heresy. In turn, the heresiarch informed Cyril that the king entirely agreed with his teaching. Cyril also informed Pope Celestine (422-432) about Nestorius' heresy. The latter condemns it as heresy during a Synod convened in Rome (August 11, 430).

In these circumstances, even before the convictions from Pope Celestine and St. Cyril, Nestorius asked the king to convene an Ecumenical Council. The reason for convening the Synod is that religious and political affairs are closely related, which shows the interplay between Church and State in the first half of the fifth century. Theodosius II issued an imperial decree by which he ordered the reunion of the bishops of the whole Empire at Ephesus, for celebrating the Pentecost in 431. Moreover, the king, as a patron of the Church, addressed Cyril of Alexandria a very sober letter. The bishop's dogmatic intransigence is qualified here as „inclination toward strife and disorder.” This was also the attitude of Constantine the Great to the Arian heresy that he considered as a mere quarrel between two clergymen. In the letter addressed to Cyril, the king also stressed that the Church and the State form a whole. In a letter sent to the delegate assigned to represent him at the Council of Ephesus, Pope Celestine reminded to Theodosius II that the State care to the Church should be a priority for the king. Church unity was not therefore just a religious requirement but, at the same time, a condition for maintaining social peace.

Theodosius II entrusted Candidian, the commander of the imperial guard, the task for ensuring the smooth running of the works of the Synod. However, the king commanded Candidian not to interfere in the problems and controversies concerning the tenets of faith, as it is not desirable that someone who is not a bishop to interfere in church matters and discussions. Synodals condemned the Nestorianism. They decided the dismissal of Nestorius of the dignity of bishop and his excommunication (June 22, 431). Thus, the Council of Ephesus sanctioned the victory of St. Cyril of Alexandria, both theologically and politically. Cyril triumphed over the capital's bishop and the imperial power that supported him. He emerged as the leader of the Eastern Church, managing to mobilize the Egyptian monks against the local representatives of the king.

Beyond the theological aspect of the conflict between Nestorius and Cyril of Alexandria, we must keep in mind that the dispute between the bishop of Constantinople and the one of Alexandria, which foreshadowed the Third Ecumenical Synod of Ephesus and continued even after its termination, had political connotations. The Episcopal throne of Alexandria enjoyed immense prestige in the East. The bishops of Alexandria claimed ownership of religious hegemony in the East and were apprehensive of the primacy of honor bestowed to Constantinople by the second Ecumenical Synod. The appointment of John Chrysostom on Constantinople's imperial seat (398) accounted for Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria, a double threat: on the one hand, Saint John was an active promoter of the Episcopal see of Constantinople; on the other hand, an alliance between Constantinople and Antioch could marginalize Alexandria. Historical and religious circumstances allowed the bishop Theophilus to oust St. John Chrysostom from the Episcopal see of Constantinople. When Theodosius II appointed as Bishop of Constantinople Nestorius of Antioch, history seemed to repeat: an Antiochian established at Constantinople enjoyed the support of Bishop John of Antioch. Bishop Cyril of Alexandria, Bishop Theophilus' grandson obtained from Theodosius II Nestorius' banishment. The orthodox zeal of St. Cyril against Nestorius is explained largely by the desire of the bishop of Alexandria to acquire religious hegemony over the entire East to the detriment of Constantinople. So, during the pastorate of St. Cyril, the Church of Alexandria reached height of its power.

Interested in restoring the unity of the Eastern episcopate, destroyed after the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, Theodosius II summoned to Nicomedia in the year 433 St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Bishop John of Antioch. The purpose of this meeting was to

restore communion between Alexandria and Antioch. Although the meeting did not take place, through an intense correspondence, was finally reached the peace, and that due to the pressures of the king. On April 12, 433, the two hierarchs signed union formula, thus being rebuilt the communion between the Churches of Alexandria and Antioch.

Chapter III: Church and State between 431-457. The fourth Ecumenical Synod of Chalcedon (451)

The peace restored in 433 between the Church of Alexandria and the Church of Antioch lasted until the death of the two protagonists, John of Antioch in 442 and Cyril of Alexandria in 444. Soon, a new religious crisis broke out in the Eastern Church. It was triggered by Eutyches, an extremist supporter of St. Cyril of Alexandria, who was very influential in the imperial court in Constantinople. Archimandrite Eutyches was the representative of the „Alexandrian party” at Constantinople. He combated the heresy of Nestorius. On this occasion, Constantinople’s Episcopal see and Rome's pontifical chair will coalesce against the Episcopal see of Alexandria, headed by the elected bishop Dioscorus (444-451), in his turn, a faithful disciple of Saint Cyril and a staunch supporter of Eutyches.

Eutyches pushed to the extreme the Alexandrian school teaching on the union of the two natures in the person of the Saviour, supported by Cyril of Alexandria. Unlike Nestorius, who was pushing so much the distinction of natures, divine and human in the Person of Christ, that came to admit that in Christ there are two people - *dioprosopism*, or that the Father has two Sons, Eutyches exaggerated so much the union of the two natures (divine and human) in the person of the Savior that came to say that after His Incarnation from Virgin Mary, Christ had only one nature - miaphysis – the divine nature, because the human nature was absorbed by his divine nature and completely disappeared, as a drop of water is lost in the immensity of the sea. Therefore, the reaction of Eutyches against Nestorianism contributed to the birth of the Monophysite heresy. Eutyches exposed his doctrine in a local council opened in Constantinople on November 12, 448. The synod excommunicated Eutyches and deposed him from the priesthood. His conviction was considered by the Alexandrians as a return to Nestorianism. Unhappy with the decision of the Synodals, Eutyches appealed to Pope Leo I of Rome (440-461) and bishop Dioscorus of Alexandria.

By good concocted plots, Bishop Dioscorus of Alexandria was able to inflame the Emperor Theodosius II against Flavian, the Orthodox Bishop of Constantinople. At the counsel of Dioscorus of Alexandria, Theodosius II convoked an Ecumenical Council at Ephesus (August 8 449) which aimed to examine the orthodoxy of Flavian of Constantinople, accused of Nestorianism and to rehabilitate Eutyches, being condemned the decisions of the local synod of Constantinople of 448. The presidency of the Council was granted to Dioscorus. This Council was called by Pope Leo I, *the Robber Synod*, because some bishops, refusing to sign the deposition of Bishop Flavian, were obliged to do it under the pressure of Dioscorus who called the military guard outside the Church and together with it, in the church entered a lot of very violent Alexandrian monks. The soldiers intimidated the Synodals, who did not take the floor anymore.

At the insistence of Dioscorus, the Council condemned Diophysism and approved the heretical doctrine of Eutyches. Also, Bishop Flavian was deposed from his chair and died on the road to exile. Eusebius of Dorylaeum was also convicted. The same fate had Theodoret of Cyr, condemned as Nestorian. Domnus of Antioch was deposed from his chair. These decisions, confirmed by an edict issued by Theodosius II, were condemned by Pope Leo I who convened a synod in Rome (September 449) and condemned the Latronicium of Ephesus.

The facts reported above allow us to draw some conclusions on the relationship between the emperor Theodosius II and the Church. Among the rights of kings in religious matter, recognized by the Church are also those to convene ecumenical councils, to ratify their dogmatic and disciplinary decisions. In his quality of "secular arm of the Church," defender and protector of "orthodoxy", the king watched to ensure the strict compliance with the ecclesiastical canons. He also was concerned about the "orthodoxy" of the bishops, even intervening to resolve issues related to worship. The king had the right to appoint bishops. The king cared to ensure the unity of the Church and the condemnation of any heresy.

It is obvious that in religious matters, Theodosius II enjoyed all the powers mentioned above. In 427, he appointed bishop of Constantinople Nestorius. But in 431, the Emperor condemned the Nestorian heresy and supported Bishop Cyril of Alexandria against the heretic Nestorius, who was deposed and exiled. In 449, Emperor Theodosius II called the "Robber Synod" of Ephesus under the chairmanship of Bishop Dioscorus of

Alexandria. The latter obtained from the king the deposition of Bishop Flavian of Constantinople, the deposition of Domnus of Antioch and even the appointment of Anatoly, one of his friends, as bishop of Constantinople. In the synodal documents and the correspondence of popes with the kings are found not only the formal recognition of the right of kings to convene and lead the Church Councils, but also a series of more equivocal affirmations. For example, the Councils hail the title of basileus as king-priest. Pope Leo summed up by this title the obligation of the king to watch over the Church "with the soul of a bishop". In this case, the position of bishop assigned to the emperor should not be understood ad litteram, in the sacramental sense. It sends rather to the task of the king to watch over the citizens of the Empire and to his mission to convert non-Christians to Christianity.

The unexpected death of Theodosius II overturned the situation. His sister, Pulcheria returned to power and ordered the execution of Hrisafi, the protector of Eutyches. Pulcheria married Marcian who, like herself, was hostile to Eutyches and Dioscurus. The balance of power changed in favor of Chalcedonians. Bishop Anatolius of Constantinople convened a Synod on 21 October 450, that in the presence of the delegates of Pope Leo, anathematized Nestorius and Eutyches and accepted the Tome of Pope Leo. Very quickly, Marcian and Pulcheria decided to convene a new Ecumenical Council, which met on 8 October 451 in the Church St. Euphemia of Chalcedon. The Council of Chalcedon cancelled the decisions of the Robber Council of Ephesus of 449, promulgated a diplophysite creed and 30 canons very important for the life of the Church.

The fourth Ecumenical Synod of Chalcedon resulted in the destruction of Eastern Christian unity by building Monophysite or old Oriental churches called non-chalcedonian, which separated from the great Church of the East. Due to the refusal of the Monophysites to recognize the Christological dogma formulated at Chalcedon in 451 and their willingness to adopt the Monophysite formula, on the relationship between the two natures, divine and human, in the person of Jesus Christ, from the middle of the fifth century and over the next century, we are witnessing in East, the foundation of the three main non-chalcedonian churches: the Coptic Church in Egypt, the Syro-Jacobite Church (founded by Jacob Barad) and the Armenian Church. In contrast with non-chalcedonian Churches, the Orthodox Church approved the Chalcedonian dogma and recognized the authority of the Byzantine emperor, was called the Imperial Church.

The period of time between the Council of Chalcedon (451) and that to be held in Constantinople in 553, was a century of fierce theological disputes between Chalcedonians and Monophysites, caused by the different reception of Christological definition formulated at Chalcedon.

The religious conflicts broke out in Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch, caused by imposing the dogmatic decisions of the Council of Chalcedon, attained the character of a true national uprising, being crushed by the intervention of civil and military authorities. In reality, these religious disputes masked bitter ethnic contradictions and older aspirations of independence, especially in Syria and Egypt, where the local population came gradually to the conviction that they needed separation from Byzantium. In the eastern provinces of the Empire, Palestine, Syria and Egypt, most of the population was Monophysite. Monophysitism was embraced especially the two main eastern peoples of the Byzantine Empire, Syrians and Egyptians, „who opposed the centralizing tendency of Constantinople” and sought to separate by joining Monophysitism, from Greeks or Romans, „as they were called at Constantinople, beginning to gravitate in the Asian sphere of political influence.”

Despite the measures taken by the Emperor Marcian to confirm and defend the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon, the complaints were soon to appear. In memory of various religious factions of the Churches of the East, remained faithful to the theological language of St. Cyril of Alexandria, the Council of Chalcedon remained as „the cursed Council”.

At Marcian's death (457), the population of Alexandria chose as bishop Timothy Elur (457-460, 475-477) who took the place of the Chalcedonian bishop Proterius, on the Episcopal See of Alexandria. Soon, Timothy Elur became the undisputed leader of the Monophysites in the East.

Chapter IV: Church and State between 457-518

After the death of Marcian (457), the Imperial throne was occupied by Leo I (457-474). It was the first emperor to receive the imperial crown from the bishop of Constantinople, Anatolius. By Leon, all other kings received the crown from the hands of the supreme commander of the army or of a senior civil servant. This gesture shows the prestige enjoyed *by the Patriarch of Constantinople, especially after the Council of*

Chalcedon. From now on, all the Byzantine emperors are crowned by the Bishop of Constantinople, *and the crowning gains significance of religious consecration*; the Civil coronation with military nature is added an ecclesiastical ceremony that will become increasingly more important, and in the Middle Ages will represent the genuine act of coronation. However, the crowning of the king by the bishop emphasizes the superior status that acquired the Church against the State.

Since the beginning of his reign, Leo I created a favorable climate for non-Chalcedonians. The king was advised by Chalcedonians rigorous as the bishop of Constantinople, Anatolius, and after his death (458) his successor Gennady.

At the death of Leo I (474), his nephew Leon II, of only 7 years, son of Zeno and Ariadne (daughter of Leo I), became king and the emperor Zeno was appointed associate emperor of his son. After the death of Leo II in the autumn of 474, his father Zeno, will lead the Empire alone. Zeno reigned in a first stage to January 475, when he was removed from the throne by Basiliscus, brother in law of Leo I.

In his short reign, Basiliskos promoted the anti-Chalcedonian policy. He decided to earn the support of the Monophysites. In the year 475, Basiliscus issued an *Encyclical* that addressed to the Bishop, Timothy Elura, exiled to Crimea (Crimea) by Leon I. This encyclical was followed in 476 by an *Antiencyclical* with orthodox content. In this encyclical, the king condemned the faith formulated by the Council of Chalcedon. He said that true faith was sufficiently expressed in the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Ephesus (431). The Encyclical approved the Cyrillian Christology on the union of the two natures, condemning the dogmatic epistle of Pope Leo I by Flavian of Constantinople and the dogmatic decisions of the Council of Chalcedon.

In 476, Zeno returned to the throne and reigned until 491. Zenon faced, in religious matter, the disputes between Chalcedonians and Monophysites. At this stage of the crisis, none of the groups challenged, deliberately, the Empire's role in maintaining Christian unity. The age in which the monophysitism will become a symbol of ethnic, cultural or political identity for Syrians had not yet come for the Copts in Egypt or the Armenians. In fact, all the great figures of the Church of Egypt, including St. Cyril of Alexandria, the Monophysite bishops, Dioscorus and Timothy Elura were willing to accept the imperial system and take advantage of it whenever the latter's policy coincided with theirs.

Emperor Zeno understood that the Monophysites were a religious and political decision factor in the Empire. With the intention to restrain the centrifugal tendencies of the Eastern provinces of the Empire (Syria, Palestine and Egypt) and to ensure peace between Chalcedonians and Monophysites, in October 482, Zeno promulgated an edict of union (Henotikon), which remained until 518 the enactment for the relations between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians. In all likelihood, Henotikon was the work of Bishop Acacius of Constantinople and read with good intentions, seemed to have an Orthodox content. However, the Henotikon split the Orthodox and anti-Chalcedonians and broke the communion of the Church of the East and the West, by the known Acacian schism (484-519).

During full Acacian schism, Pope Gelasius (492-496) in a letter to Emperor Anastasius I, dated in the year 491, expressed the theory of the two powers: the sacerdotal power represented by the clergy and the temporal power represented by the kings. The sacerdotal power deserves greater consideration because the dignity of religious life is superior to the temporal one. So, at the end of the fifth century, Pope Gelasius condemned the emperor's mix in the religious matters, while supporting the superiority of priesthood in relation to the political power. The church urged that the power of those who run it to be recognized by those who hold the temporal power not only as a reality of fact, but as an expression of God's will, with the consequence of accepting their own incompetence in the religious matters. So, the temporal power must realize that religious issues are the responsibility of the ecclesiastical authority.

At the end of the fifth century there was a chance to restore the religious unity of the Byzantine Empire, by reconciling Chalcedonians and Monophysites, but was not taken advantage of it. Brute force was used to defend either unacceptable choices, or for a doctrinal compromise policy that resulted in deepening and widening the schisms. The kings who reigned during this period will usher in a new way to exercise their authority in the Church through the publication of dogmatic statements that claim to express a consensus, but that actually impose the imperial policy by force; was the case of the Encyclical (475) and Anti-Encyclical (476) issued by Emperor Basiliscus, followed by the Henotikon of the the Emperor Zeno (482). It should be noted that these edicts were not considered doctrinal definitions that rivaled those issued by the Ecumenical Councils. In general, these edicts took the form of letters to the king of a certain church. Officially, by

these edicts, the emperors did not claim to define the Church's doctrine, but only to give authoritative interpretations of the teachings of faith established in the previous Synods. However, this distinction was more theoretical and the kings' attempts were clearly Caesaropapists. It is worth noting the fact that none of these edicts - having been issued either by the orthodox kings or by the heretics- was accepted by the Church as an authorized expression of the teaching of the Orthodox faith.

After the death of Zeno, on the throne of the Empire will be elected an official from the court named Anastasius (492-518). Knowing the opposition to the Council of Chalcedon, Anastasius I stayed faithful to the Henotikon, inclining however to support the anti-Chalcedonians. In Egypt, the king claimed the occupation of the Episcopal see of Alexandria by all the bishops who opposed the synod IV. However, Emperor Anastasius I never got to restore unity between churches. The Episcopal sees of Constantinople and Jerusalem remained favorable to the Synod IV, while the Church of Antioch in the time of Severus remained divided. The death of the king in July 518 marks the end of his attempt to unite the churches.

The kings' trial, from the fifth century, to use the Church as an amount of negotiation to achieve their political goals failed. Fortunately, the Church resisted all the compromises, and the failure of the project of creating a theocratic empire was obvious.

The implication of political power in the life of the Church brought also good things for it. During the fifth century, the Church strengthened its position in relation to other denominations and faiths, especially in relation to pagan cults and Judaism. The state giving the Church with numerous privileges made it a powerful institution that it failed to enslave. On the other hand, the Church was able to exploit the position obtained and expanded its influence in all the sectors of Byzantine life. Law, politics, ceremonies of any kind, worldviews and issues agitating the byzantine man of the fifth century bears the imprint of the Church's teaching.

Generalizing, we can say that Church and State are two forms of the divine will, two expressions of human life. The relations between them are necessary. State educates people as citizens, in political freedom, but does not address issues relating to religious life. The state itself needs the religiosity of the citizen. We believe that the relationship between Church and State should be one of mutual recognition. Spiritual and secular kingdom should be in harmony because there is no political development without religious unity and no religious unity without political development.