

SUMMARY

The 19th century represented an extremely interesting and important period in the history of the Romanian Orthodox Church. In the first half, the Romanian Orthodox people lived scattered in three different empires. Practically, the Romanian territories were situated at the confluence of three civilization areas – the Western one, the Ottoman-Islamic one and the Russian-Orthodox one. Regarding the Orthodox Church, there have been similarities but also significant differences about the relation with the State authorities.

On the other hand, there was resemblance between the situation of the Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire and the one in the Habsburg Empire, mainly that in both empires the Orthodox constituted a pluri-ethnic confessional entity: the *rum-millet* in the Balkans and the *Illyric nations* in the Habsburg Hungary. On the other hand, concerning the church constitution, a similarity could be observed between the Habsburg Orthodox world and the Russian one, as they both imposed the consistorial system through which the authority of the Court (Habsburg and Tsarist) was in control of the internal church life (through the *Royal Commissioner*, in the Karlowitz Mitropoly and the *oberprosecutor* in Russia). In the two Christian empires there was a continuous rivalry on account of the expansion in the Balkans. The Habsburgs annexed the Bucovina and Russia managed to repeatedly occupy the Romanian principalities and to temporarily annex the Romanian Orthodoxy. Eventually, it is only Bessarabia that was integrated from a political and ecclesiastical point of view into Russia. In what remained of the Moldavian and Wallachian Principality, the “protective” Russian authority imposed Organic Regulations that damaged the traditional furrow of the trans-Carpathian Romanian Orthodoxy. Instead of the Byzantine symphony, the Russian ecclesiastical system was enforced, primarily on the control over the church estate.

Nevertheless, in the entire period, there was a relatively ignored Orthodoxy of the Transylvanian Romanians. Despite it having been merely tolerated and utterly ignored by the political authorities of the Transylvanian Principality, it succeeded in surviving. On the very eve of the 1848 revolution, the heavenly providence led to the appointment of Andrei Șaguna at the head of the unfortunate eparchy in Sibiu. Permeated by the spirit of the times and the mission entrusted to him, the future metropolitan bishop Andrei completely changed the juridical status of his Church and of its believers. He achieved this only for the transformation of the Church in a genuine people’s Church. The method employed was the constitutional renewal of the Orthodoxy, the changing of the Church-State relation on a different position. Șaguna really knew the theological reflections of his times, understood the wishes of the ecclesiastic communities in Central Europe to free themselves from the straps of the state authority. He imposed these desires in Transylvania. At the same time, Șaguna was able to interpret all the movements for ecclesiastic autonomy and constitutional reform deployed in the heterodox Church of his epoch in accordance with the canons of the Orthodox Church.

The present paper, brought forward as a habilitation thesis, thoroughly presents the theological reflections that constituted the basis of the elaboration of the Organic Status, namely the ecclesiastic constitution through which the Orthodox Mitropoly of the Romanians in Transylvania and Hungary truly became a live ecclesiastic community. Moreover, the paper presents the impact of the Șaguna reform on the other Churches in the Romanian space. The work of Șaguna was so noteworthy that even those who ruled the Orthodoxy in the neighbouring countries were compelled to report to it. In Bucovina, the Șaguna organization sought by the clergy and the believers was vigorously rejected

by the decision-making bodies in the Ministry of the Cults in Vienna. In Bucharest, the Minister of the Cults and Public Education, and at the same time the reformer of the Romanian education, Spiru Haret, wanted to accomplish Şaguna's reform in the Orthodox Church of the Romanian Kingdom. The politically oriented intrigues impeded him. In Bessarabia, then under the ruling of the Russian Orthodox Church Synod, the constitutional reform was only partial involving only the inferior clergy not the laypeople, and this contributed to the mass misery of the Russian society.

Finally, the 1917-1918 Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church accepted the majority of the synodal principles (just as they had been implemented by the Metropolitan Bishop Şaguna in Transylvania). Because of the new Bolshevik regime, they could not bloom. In the Romanian Orthodox Church, unified during the Great Romania, the principles of Şaguna's organization remained alive and continued to be considered as a foundation for the following church statuses.