

THE CONTRIBUTION OF REV. PROF. DR. DUMITRU STĂNILOAE AND REV. PROF. DR. ILIE MOLDOVANO TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE FIRST EUROPEAN CHRISTIANS

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Abstract: The Stăniloae-Moldovan theological conception could – as long as it is deepened and proven with satisfying arguments by the later research – reconcile the egos of the exponents of some older or newer cultures and civilizations, which restlessly fight for their primacy within the actual Christianity, forgetting about the kindness and piety of the heart, to which are pushed all those who authentically wear the Yoke of Christ: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Mathew 11, 28-29).

Keywords: Stăniloae-Moldovan conception, European Christians, Orthodox Church, ethnicity, Romanian spirituality.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the conception of Fr. Prof Stăniloae and Moldovan on the origins and identity of the first European Christians. I specified “the conception” and not “the conceptions” because the ideas supported by the two Romanian literates complete each other in one fundamental thesis. I want to mention from the very beginning that those ideas either never got the attention deserved from the academics, or have been considered “political utopias” and “exaggerations” which should be treated with tolerance because they represent, more than anything, a patriotic, romantic and transfiguring testament of an “*honorable nonagenarian theologian*”¹. Rev. Prof. Fr. Stăniloae’s views are harmoniously continued in the studies of Rev. Prof. Dr. Moldovan, thus entailing a true consistency of the research started by “*the High Priest of the Romanian Orthodoxy*”². Father Moldovan makes a thorough exegesis of Father Stăniloae’s ethno-theological studies, and this is the basis that will later help him in deepening certain aspects of the orthodox thinking about nation and ethnicity. What can easily be noticed, both in the reflexive and in the argumentative system of the Stăniloae-Moldovan conception, is the Eucharistic anchorage of the nation. More precisely, this red string of theology regarding the nation, developed by the two Romanian scholars can be summed up and explained from an orthodox perspective through the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. The main premises which represents the starting point for both of them, suggests that the ethnic identity (even if the people achieved the statehood ideal, becoming a nation, or not), from its very beginning, is meant to eternalize in God, and this holly calling is fully transposed in the practice of the Orthodox Liturgy.

¹Jürgen Henkel, *Îndumnezeire și etică a iubirii în opera părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae*, Ed.Deisis, Sibiu, 2006, transl. Diac.Ioan I.Ică jr., p. 385.

²This is the title of the first theme from the international session of scientific research “*Dumitru Stăniloae*”, with several studies published in *Caietele Universității "Sextil Pușcariu" Brașov*, year II, no.2, vol.3, Ed.Tipona, Brașov, 2002.

1. The most important principles of Stăniloae-Moldovan theological conception

The eternalizing of the people in and through Christ's Church is liturgically proven by the authentic presence of an endless unity between the Christian fighters and the Christian victors on the Holy Paten, next to the Holy Wafer, and then in the Holy Cup, united with the Body and Blood of God. Regarding this aspect, His All Holiness Bartholomew, Metropolitan of Cluj makes a special statement with reference to Father Stăniloae: "*From now on he is truly with us. He is part of those who never disappear: once he enters eternity he comes back with it in the Cup; working priesthood beyond eternity*"³. Beyond the poetic expression, this phrase contains the truth of the presence of the people on the Holy Paten, inside the Holy Cup, during the Holy Liturgy, according to the three customs expressed in the prayer for the deceased persons: "*Remember those who have gone to their rest: ...those from the same kinship and tribe and all those departed in the hope of rising again and achieving eternal life...*"⁴.

Thus, in conformity with this text inspired by the Holy Spirit, before the Great Liturgist our Lord Jesus Christ, there exist three relational circles, interconnected and related to God: the first and the smallest one is the kinship (people as family), the second one, the tribe (people as collectivity/nation) and the third, all those who have gone to rest and those who will go to rest in the hope of rising again and achieving eternal life (the Orthodox Church as God's nation/people).

As the three circles are permanent, not only as material, biological or institutional continuity but, above all, as eternal spiritual existence, modes of participation to the divine life, updated in the world through every Holy Liturgy, both Father Stăniloae and Father Moldovan established, as the final target of their philosophical conception, the inauguration of the theological exploratory path of the meaning and direction towards which they were created.

Father Moldovan systematically argues against the neo-pagan conceptions, thus eliminating – in consensus with Father Stăniloae's efforts – any suspicions that have surrounded the Orthodox concept about nation/people/ethnicity and the "soul" of the nation/people/ethnicity, whether from the philetist nationalism, the atheist national-communism or the contemporary "internationalist" skepticism⁵. Father Moldovan also had the courage to investigate the theological theory of Father Stăniloae regarding the first Christian Europeans and their connection with the Romanian people. The main idea of this theological perspective is that Romanians are the continuators of the "outside Romans" that is to say the proto-Latinity, identified with the great Thracian people, which were settled in Asia Minor and East Europe. But the Romanians do not exclusively mean the biological, logical and natural continuation of the oriental origins of Latinity, but more than that, it means: a new people, formed at the Pentecost, in the first ever seen Church. This fact is supported by the studies of some occidental researchers such as Jürgen Henkel⁶, Ernst Christoph Suttner⁷, Fairy von Lilienfeld⁸ or Friederich Heyer, the last one stating in an assertive manner the principle according to which the only Christian nation that has not had a pagan history is the Romanian people⁹. Thus, the original understanding of the genesis of the Romanian people, proposed by the Stăniloae-Moldovan conception, replaces, in a modern and creative manner, the old antagonist theories in which our faith still struggles: Latinism and Thracism.

³Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania, Archbishop of Cluj, *Apa cea vie a Ortodoxiei*, Ed.Renașterea, Cluj Napoca, 2002, p.33.

⁴*Liturghier*, Ed.IBMBOR, București, 2000, p.114

⁵Rev. Prof. Dr. Ilie Moldovan, *Actualitatea gândirii Părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae cu privire la etnic și etnicitate*, in *Caietele Universității "Sextil Pușcariu" Brașov*, year II, no.2, vol.3, Ed.Tipona, Brașov, 2002, pp.44-45.

⁶Jürgen Henkel, *Op.cit.*, p.391.

⁷Ernst Christoph Suttner, *Das religiöse Moment in seiner Bedeutung für Gesellschaft, Nationsbildung und Kultur Südösteuropas*, in vol.*Religion und Gesellschaft in Südösteuropas*, Ed.Hans-Dieter Döpman, München, 1997, pp.25-36.

⁸Fairy von Lilienfeld, *Einführung in den Gottesdienst der orthodoxen Kirche mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des eucharistischen Gottesdienstes (Göttliche Liturgie)*, in *Oikonomia*, Bd.2 - Heft C, Erlangen, 1979, pp.38-39. *Apud* Jürgen Henkel, *Op.cit.*, p.375.

⁹Jürgen Henkel, *Op.cit.*, p.391.

In my books, published in 2012 and 2013, as a concrete result of my doctoral thesis, I aimed on the one hand, the main ideas which form the Stăniloae-Moldovan theological theory, and on the other hand, I aimed at analyzing and verifying its hypothesis and conclusions, following two paths: the historic-linguistic direction and the theological direction, by relating the writings of the experts in this domain with the constitutive elements of Rev. Prof. Stăniloae and Rev. Prof. Moldovan's ideas about nation, ethnicity and people. After proceeding with these two directions, my conclusions are that, in light of Rev. Stăniloae and Rev. Moldovan's conception regarding the origin and identity of the first European Christians, we can make the following statements, supported both by historical and theological arguments:

a) Thracian Romanism, known as the "*Oriental Latinity*", the people from which Aeneas descends, together with the other Hellenic - Cretan component, represents the element from which the European Christianity descends.

b) *Lingua romana* is the "*Christian language*", formed throughout time as a special language within Oriental Latin (which was spoken by the "*outside Romans*", as the Eastern Latins are named in the *Acts of the Apostles*), starting with the Pentecost.

c) The Romanian people is the continuator of the Oriental Romans, transfigured through Baptism and Eucharist, from the beginnings up until today.

d) The Romanian language, the main argument of our identity, is at the same time the only heir of the Oriental Latin and the vivid expression of the "*Christian language*", continuator synthesis of the two terms: *lingua romana* and *lingua Christiana*.

2. Short analysis of the most important studies and/or criticisms concerning the Stăniloae-Moldovan Conception

The analysis (exposed more detailed in one of my books)¹⁰ aims at classifying a great variety of ideas referring to our subject, at commenting upon each of these conceptions and verifying the stated premises. The authors we have analyzed are: Jürgen Henkel, Radu Preda, Răzvan Codrescu, Constantin Schifirneț, and Fr. Prof. Dr. Ilie Moldovan.

According to Dr. Henkel, the main problems and questions raised by the rationale for the Romanian ethos within Orthodoxy, by Father Stăniloae, are: 1. "*Do they descend from the Orthodox faith and the existing negative social and political phenomena from the Romanian society and which Father Dumitru Stăniloae never mentions or discusses anywhere in his paper?*"¹¹ 2. "*A real deficiency, however, is represented by the absolute renunciation of any type of speculations upon the atheistic communist dictatorship which has dominated Romania for more than 50 years and which had strong effects, including upon Father Dumitru Stăniloae. Regarding this matter, the paper*¹² *also lacks the awareness of such a problem.*"¹³ 3. "*Even the cruel politic and economic reality of the transformation process after 1989 is omitted*"¹⁴. 4. "*...We can however ask ourselves to what extent can the national action, noticeable from an historic point of view, be considered culpable. Denying the culpability of the nation as a spiritual corpus becomes a contradiction when Father Dumitru Stăniloae, at the same time, vehemently states that the nation is the carrier of a Christian (Orthodox) spirituality. The nations would otherwise be realities based on creational fundamentals, but ultimately subtracted from the sphere of domination and from the vindication of God*"¹⁵.

¹⁰ Rev. Dr. Mircea Cristian Pricop, *Tezaurul identitar românesc*, Ed. Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului, Constanța, 2013, pp. 77-126.

¹¹ Jürgen Henkel, *Op.cit.*, p.385

¹² Reference to the work of Pr.Prof.Dr.Dumitru Stăniloae, *Reflecții despre spiritualitatea poporului român*, Ed.Elion, București, 2001.

¹³ Jürgen Henkel, *op.cit.*, p.386.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p.391.

Dr. Henkel makes two major errors in his attempt to understand Father Stăniloae's theological ideas about the people: 1. He interprets the two papers situated in totally opposite phases of Father Stăniloae's scientific career (*Ortodoxie și românism, 1939* and *Reflexii asupra spiritualității poporului român, 1992*) by connecting them to the epochs in which they were written. Thus, it appears that the first paper is the result of the political and social ideology following the Great Unity¹⁶, and the second one is a release of the frustrations accumulated during the Bolshevik time¹⁷. 2. Although he stated that the protestant theologians “are methodically indebted to the principle of the Scripture and herald preaching as a central nucleus of the evangelical life”¹⁸, Jürgen Henkel stops at commenting Father Stăniloae's theories in his own personal style, without giving any kind of biblical explanations, and this is the reason why – in our opinion – he cannot reach to the real meaning of those theological theories about national identity.

The answers to the German theologian's questions are the following: 1. The presence of the evil, even among the most venerable society, is not excluded, just like the presence of Judas Iscariot was not excluded from among the Holy Apostles. We cannot state that the faith of the Apostles in the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ is responsible for Judas' betrayal, just like we cannot blame Orthodoxy for the sins of a certain individual or group of individuals from within a mostly Orthodox society or from within a mostly Orthodox country. There is a clear difference between people, state and society, noticed by Father Stăniloae himself. The society is not the people, but it is a system of historically, concretely, time delimited connections, based on the relations between the members of that society or between them and the members of other societies. Although Orthodoxy always communicated with the society and the state, it can never be confused with either of them¹⁹. The life of the people is part and parcel of the Church. The Church never tried – like other confessional systems did²⁰ – to suppress our people's souls, but on the contrary, it gave it warmth throughout its existence, in good times and in bad, blessing it with the grace of the Holy Spirit²¹. 2. With regard to “the absolute renunciation of any type of speculations upon the atheistic communist dictatorship”, which probably amazed the occidental reader; we can only say that the Father's silence towards this subject says more than a library full of books would say. Personally, I consider that the lack of a reflexive position of Father Stăniloae regarding the subject analyzed in *Reflections...* shows that the danger represented by atheism – whether communist-dictatorial or of any other nature – is not yet gone, but it still hovers over all of us²². Therefore, what Jürgen Henkel considers being “a real deficiency”, in another context it may appear as a **real warning**. Why should Father Stăniloae have taken into consideration the cruel politic and economic reality after 1989 in *Reflections...*? I have already explained why a political analysis has nothing to do with a research on the spirituality of the Romanian people²³. The political aspects are a reflection of the society, and

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 364.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 364, 368-369.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

¹⁹ Prof. Dr. Georgios Mantzaridis, *Morala Creștină*, II, Ed. Bizantină, București, 2006, transl. Diac. Drd. Cornel Constantin Coman, p.343.

²⁰ Fr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Rolul Ortodoxiei în formarea și păstrarea ființei poporului român și a unității naționale*, in *Ortodoxia*, no.4, 1978, pp.584-603; *Idem*, *Între Ortodoxie și Catholicism*, in *Telegraful Român*, no.88, 1930, pp.1-2; *Idem*, *Între Românism și Catholicism*, in *Telegraful Român*, no.86, 1930, pp.1-2; *Idem*, *Reîntregirea Bisericii strămoșești*, in *GB*, no.6, 1950, pp.27-33; *Idem*, *Uniatismul din Transilvania, opera unei întregite silnicii*, from *GB*, no.5-8, 1996, pp.126-134.

²¹ *Idem*, *Liturghia și unitatea religioasă a poporului român*, in *BOR*, no.5-8, 1970, pp.730-742.

²² The proof of these facts consists in the fact that Fr. Stăniloae never hesitated to talk, from the very beginning, about the communist dictatorship and its devastating effects: Fr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Prigonirea Bisericii ortodoxe strămoșești sub comunism*, in *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei Românești*, 1990, no.1-2, pp.47-49; *Ibidem*, in *Ortodoxia*, no.1, 1990, pp.197-200; *Unitatea spirituală a neamului nostru și libertatea*, in *BOR*, no.1-2, 1990, pp.47-49; *Ibidem*, in *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei Românești*, 1990, no.3, p.1; *Idem*, *Neamul românesc și-a luminat istoria pentru el însuși și pentru lumea întreagă, prin jertfele tinereții sale, pentru Hristos!*, in *România Liberă*, no.43, 1990, pp.1, 3.

²³ Before 1945 and after 1989, Rev. Stăniloae kept a specific decency and equidistance towards the temptations of the political sphere, while bravely publishing the articles of social and political analysis of the situation: *Regimul sovietic și*

spirituality, this precise reflection of Orthodoxy in our people, which Father Stăniloae talks about²⁴, is not necessarily connected with the society, but it belongs exclusively to the Romanian people, in the past, the present, and – with God’s Help – in the future. 4. The representative characteristic of the western mentality is reflected in the last question raised by Dr. Henkel. The supposed contradiction noticed in his book, between Rev. Stăniloae’s denial of the culpability of the nation as a spiritual corpus and the statement that the nation is the carrier of a Christian (Orthodox) spirituality, is not valid, unless Dr. Henkel confuses the two terms which are essential for the theological interpretation of a national identity developed by Rev. Stăniloae: nation and national ethos (character, usual way of living, specificity)²⁵. Father Stăniloae never claimed the infallibility of the nation, clearly admitting that it can sometimes fail: “*The nation, in the stage of sin, acts in a sinful way, because human nature is generally sinful, in all its diversity*”²⁶. It is true that a “national action”, noticed from an historical perspective, can be culpable when it is directed against the Creator and His laws, thus, against the people itself. The issue regarding fascism and communism are indisputably part of this chapter.

A research somehow similar to the one belonging to Jürgen Henkel is the research of the theologian Radu Preda, which focuses upon *the actuality and limits of an ideal. A perusal of Crăinicism (referring to Nichifor Crainic)*²⁷. We can notice the fact that this study does not approach directly the theology developed by Father Stăniloae, rather preferring to analyze the ideas of Nichifor Crainic. However, some aspects are also addressed to the concepts of Stăniloae, and this is why this point of view is worth commenting.

Radu Preda identifies in Rev. Stăniloae’s writings about ethnicity “*the unambiguous evidence of the way in which theology has been driven into an ideological edifice that has nothing to do with its purpose*”²⁸. It remains to be seen whether there really exists a serious scientific argumentation regarding the classification of Stăniloae’s papers as an incontestable evidence of the connection between the concept of national theology and the political doctrine of the legionaries, to which Radu Preda refers, without explicitly nominating it. Naturally, my question is: Did Father Stăniloae’s works somehow contribute to the promotion of racism, xenophobia or anti-Semitism, which are – without any doubt – characteristics of a certain part of the Legionary Movement? During the period of full swing of the legionaries, Rev. Stăniloae had the courage to condemn the absolute criticism and the spiritual deformation which had determined the assassination of the prime-minister Armand Călinescu²⁹, on 21st September, 1939³⁰: “*The spirit wretched by the*

Biserica, in *Telegraful Român*, no.41, p.3; *Idem*, *Rusia și problema religioasă*, in *Telegraful Român*, no.9, 1944, p.4; *Idem*, *Dreptul neamurilor mici*, în *Telegraful Român*, nr.5, 1944, p.1; *Idem*, *Partidele politice și Biserica*, în *Telegraful Român*, no.80, 1944, p.1; *Idem*, *Biserica în Uniunea Sovietică*. După mărturiile din *Biserica rusească*, in *Telegraful Român*, no.24-25, 1945, pp.1-3; After 1989, Fr. Stăniloae’s voice could be heard in numerous situations – articles and interviews regarding the lacks and the errors of the democratic system: *Pentru învățământul religios în școli*, in *Lumină din Lumină*, no.4, 1990, pp.1-2; *Idem*, *Pentru introducerea învățământul religios în școli*, in *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei Românești*, no.7-8, 1990, p.14. *Idem*, *Republica contra Bisericii*, in *Cotidianul*, supplement *Alfa și Omega*, no.5, 1994, p.8; *Idem*, *Întrebare tulburătoare: Biserica Ortodoxă Română - încotro?...*, in *Curierul Național*, no.681, 1993, pp.1,7. For a more precise view upon Fr Stăniloae’s ideas expressed in different Romanian publications, one may analyze the complete biography published in: Gheorghe Anghelescu, Cristian Untea, *Părintele Dumitru Stăniloae, un urmaș vrednic al patristicii clasice (bio-bibliografie)*, Ed.Mitropoliei Olteniei, Craiova, 2008, pp.52-104.

²⁴ Fr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Reflecții...*, *Op.cit.*, pp.16-17 ș.a.

²⁵ Francis E.Peters, *Termenii filozofiei grecești*, Ed.Humanitas, București, 2007, transl.Dragan Stoianovici, p.107.

²⁶ Fr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Scurtă interpretare teologică a națiunii*, in vol. *"Fiecare în rândul cetei sale"- pentru o Teologie a neamului*, Ed.Christiana, București, 2003, p.118.

²⁷ Radu Preda, *Actualitatea și limitele unui ideal. O lectură a Crăinicismului*, in Răzvan Codrescu (ed.), *"Fiecare în rândul cetei sale"- pentru o Teologie a neamului*, Ed.Christiana, București, 2003, pp.211-234.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 211.

²⁹ Armand Calinescu, at the orders of the dictator king Carol II, directed the assassination of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and the leaders of the Legion on the night of Saint Andrew of 1938, as well as the arrest of thousands of legionaries and supporters of the Movement.

*exaggerated and exclusive criticism was a calamity. For many, nothing of what the leaders were doing was right. Driven towards a negative criticism, they would make everything appear somber: everything was so bad. The entire people was suffering and feeling strained, without having any more hope or reason to believe*³¹.

Referring to the legionary theoreticians he mentions: *"It was a spiritual disaster to listen to those people for a quarter hour. Each time you would feel discouraged, with a feeling of fatal crepuscule, and of incapacity to continue with your life. They would pretend to be thoroughly informed about everything, and their confidence would disorient you, even if you sensed more than once that their information is little built by themselves or by those they got it from. Afterwards, you would need a great effort, an extremely calm judgment and the strongest optimism in order to banish the evil that has been cast upon your soul"*³².

Valid even today – in the context of the mineriads, the growing discontentment and the political ambitions – Father Stăniloae's words demonstrate their power of answer after more than half a century: *"What we need today, more than anything else, is love, love, love for our brothers of nation. If we need a national preach today, it is the preaching of love between us. It is a good thing that faith and work for the country and the king are highly preached these days. But their basis is the love for nation. This should be included in our slogans, in the education of the young, in our daily dialogues and actions. A concrete love, towards every Romanian with which I coexist and share common beliefs. It is not an abstract love which supports the love for nation but at the same time hates the brothers of the same blood and hurts them. I am part and parcel of my brother. By hating and exterminating him, I would only exterminate myself, at least to a certain extent. One cannot build anything through hate, and especially a national unity and power"*³³.

And if there was such a thing as a piece of writing belonging to Rev. Stăniloae, which would include the three aspects of extremism (racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism), just like some of Crainic's articles do, every researcher has the duty to bend in front of the evidence. Until such evidence will be published – although we doubt there is any other piece of writing or publication of Father Stăniloae that has not been analyzed up until now – it is our duty to give the presumption of innocence to an inimitable work which Father Stăniloae has offered both to the Church and to the people.

The third analysis we are going to make, concerns the papers of another researcher of the conception about nation in Father Stăniloae's view, and that is the coordinator of the doctoral school of Communication Sciences from within the National School of Political and Administrative Studies, Constantin Schifirneț³⁴. The information is thoroughly organized in order to introduce the contemporary reader to the problems analyzed in Father Stăniloae's papers about nation: *"The great*

³⁰ One day after Călinescu's death, King Carol II triggers, as retaliation, a massacre of unprecedented proportions. On his orders, in the night of 21-22 September 1939, the royal secret service, the so called Siguranța Statului (the future odious Securitate), together with the Police and the Gendarmerie, proceeded to hundreds of murders without trial, at least three in each county, most of them intellectuals (priests, lawyers, engineers, theologians, poets, doctors) who supported or sympathized with the Legionary Movement. Victims include minors and women. The absurdity of these criminal measures, of unimaginable cruelty, ordered by an irresponsible king against his own people, in the name of "defending democracy" and "capitalism", inaugurates the long line of horrors that will pave the failure of democracy in Romania in the twentieth century. The bodies of those executed have been exposed in public squares for several days, and the population has been urged to profane them.

³¹ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Solidaritate națională*, in *Telegraful Român*, no.40, 1939, p.1.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Solidaritate națională..op.cit.*, p.2.

³⁴ Constantin Schifirneț, *Dumitru Stăniloae despre fundamentul creștin al națiunii*, introductory study to the vol. Fr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Națiune și Creștinism*, Ed.Elion, București, 2004, pp.V-XXII; Idem, *O concepție antropologică creștin-ortodoxă despre națiune* introductory study to the vol. *Ortodoxie și Româanism*, Ed.Albatros, București, 1998, pp.V-XXXVI.

theologian makes a true exegesis of the nation, and that is why we consider him to be one of the most important authors in the field of the studies about nation”³⁵.

The Romanian savant sets as a premises of his studies the fact that Father Stăniloae, through his theological approach of nation, crosses the limits of the period in which he manifested himself: “*Father Stăniloae belongs to the Gândirism through the analysis of the connection between Româanism and Orthodoxy, but we believe that his ideas go beyond this cultural trend, with more rigor and depth in the study of the Orthodox fundament of the Romanian nation, adding to its balance and clarity in the approach of some crucial problems regarding the Christian doctrine*”³⁶. What we are interested in, from this paper’s perspective, apart from the aspects mentioned above, is the stringent actuality of Father Stăniloae’s opinion regarding the contribution of the Romanian Orthodoxy to the concept of nation and united Europe³⁷, which can offer legitimacy to “*the recognition of Christianity as fundament for the national and European identity, in the Constitution of the united Europe*”³⁸.

The fourth direction of our paper consists in comparing two studies belonging to Răzvan Codrescu³⁹. After a thorough research it appears that the author proves a deep understanding of Rev. Stăniloae’s ethno-theology, trying even to develop it from certain points of view. The concept of “*messianic elite*” of the people, “*capable of justifying it in front of God*”⁴⁰ distances, however, Răzvan Codrescu from the national concept of Father Stăniloae, according to which the elite of the people, the spiritual aristocracy, is mainly formed of the priesthood of the people’s Church⁴¹, the only one capable, both in the past and the present⁴², of improving the moral status of the people it shepherds, and by extension, the spiritual aristocracy of our people is represented by the holy and righteous of the people, in other words, the members of the victorious Church.

Răzvan Codrescu avoids giving a definition of the term *justification*, and this is why one might understand a possible identification of his idea with the catholic theology; a moral messianic elite, capable of justifying the people in front of God, is proven to be a dangerous concept.

Some statements, regardless of the truthfulness we express towards Răzvan Codrescu’s intellectual capacity, seem to be shallowly verified, or totally groundless. For example, legitimizing nationalism as an ideological weapon in the context of political aggressions directed against “*the organic structure of the ethnic community life*”, through the exemplification of the nationalist authoritarian regimes of Franco, Salazar and Pinochet⁴³, or the exaggerated emphasis of certain personal political affinities (“*an interesting example is the one of Varujan Vosganian, who, beyond the many qualities he has, is a better Romanian than at least three quarters of our own present “political class”*”⁴⁴), become less honorable aspects, compared to the general quality of Răzvan Codrescu’s writing.

An important aspect worth mentioning is the fact that, in his second study, the author correctly defines father Stăniloae’s research on the national identity seen as a *strictly theological*

³⁵ *Idem, Dumitru Stăniloae despre... Op.cit., p. VII*

³⁶ *Ibidem, p. VII.*

³⁷ *Ibidem, pp. XII-XV.*

³⁸ *Ibidem, p. XV.*

³⁹ Răzvan Codrescu, *Neamul în Biserică*, in “*Fiecare în rândul cetei sale*”...vol.cit. pp.175-187; *Idem, Ipostaze ale naționalismului românesc*, in “*Fiecare în rândul cetei sale*”...vol.cit., pp.188-198.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem, p. 184.*

⁴¹ See the relevant article of Fr.Prof.Dr.Dumitru Stăniloae, *Aristocrație sufletească*, in *Telegraful Român*, no.85-86, 1931, pp.1-2.

⁴² Although many would want the role of spiritual elite of the Orthodox priesthood to be associated more with the discouraging past, like a beautiful, yet useless piece of art in a museum. Representing an excuse for some people and an ideal for others, this wish conforms itself with the chronic sin which has become an “*altera natura*”. Fortunately, the Orthodox Church has the necessary force to overcome this evil challenge, remaining the same bright and vivid presence of our people.

⁴³ Răzvan Codrescu, *Ipostaze ale naționalismului românesc*, in “*Fiecare în rândul cetei sale*”...vol.cit., p.197.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, note 5, pp. 193-194.

*synthesis*⁴⁵ and in the same context he connects it with the inter-war communion between the eminescian nationalism and the Orthodox Christianity⁴⁶. Attaching Stăniloae's theological synthesis to a historical cultural-political trend, even if we are talking about the "right-wing"⁴⁷, means attaching the author himself to the historical period in which he published his work, and as we already know, such a statement is not valid in the case of Fr. Stăniloae.

Conclusions

The actuality of Rev. Moldovan's research is fueled from Rev. Stăniloae's continuous flow of ideas, which states the same basic principle: *"This is why we consider that all the slogans which demand either that we live according to our Dacian element or to the Roman, or to promote either the Dacian substratum or the Roman superstructure are naive. The logical thinking and the common sense as well as the demands of the reality determine us to live according to the law of our national individuality, thus in a Romanian manner. Not the Romanism, nor the Dacism, but the Romanianism and all that it entails, represents the ultimate law through which we conserve and accomplish our mission. Roughly speaking, our ideal coincides with the ideal of any other entity: to maintain and fully develop the characteristics of our Romanianism, and not of our Romanism"*⁴⁸. As we can notice, the two Romanian researchers develop a system of arguments in order to support their conception, which is worth our full attention, especially as this new theory gives eloquent answers to some extremely important questions related to both Latinism and Thracism.

Regarding the value of this conception, to the extent that it will be able to assert itself, as a authentic input to the further development of Christianity in Europe, we can state the following:

a) In order to find the fundament of the European Christianity, its origins and means of spreading must first be identified by everyone, and this can only happen through the Descent of the Holy Spirit and through the foundation of the Holy Church, which embraced, as far back as Jerusalem, the Thrace-Roman and Hellene European component: the "outside Romans" (*οι επιδημουντες Ρωμαιοι*) and the Cretans (*Facts of the Apostles 2, 10*)⁴⁹.

b) In order to understand the original European Christianity, it is necessary to make a thorough research of the spirituality of the Romanian people in which the authentic, eminently Eucharistic Christian live has been preserved.

c) The Stăniloae-Moldovan conception could – as long as it is deepened and proven with satisfying arguments by the later research – reconcile the egos of the exponents of some older or

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 193.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ Although in Fr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae's research, *Naționalismul în cadrul spiritualității creștine*, in *Telegraful Român*, no.36, 1936, p.1, or *Idem, Spre statul român creștin*, in *Telegraful Român*, no.18, 1936, pp.1-2, the Romanian theologian stands by the idea of a Romanian Christian national state, or the Church's support of a Christian nationalist movement, seen more like a controversy of the Romanian Orthodoxy against the communist, materialist and leveler atheism which was about to enter Romania, his view remains completely detached from the political intemperance. The direction of Fr. Stăniloae's "nationalism" coincides with the one of his people's Church and nothing more. Obviously, from a Christian point of view, the political ideal is, and will forever be, the Constantinian state, which never received any reproaches even from the most bitter pagans, and nationalism, perceived as love for the people and country, has nothing to do with the political factor, as it is more of a moral duty of every Christian. According to Metropolitan Dr. Nicolae Mladin and collective, *Teologia Morală Ortodoxă*, vol.II, Ed.IBMBOR, București, 1980, pp.304-311; Archdeacon Prof. Dr. Ioan Zăgrean, *Morală Creștină*, Ed.Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, pp.292-297. See also Prof. Dr. Georgios Mantzaridis, *op. cit.*, pp.337-350. Another aspect worth mentioning is the principle of national state, by which are guided, with a favourable result, countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Poland, Hungary, Greece and many others. Therefore, no accusation can be attributable to Father Stăniloae and to the Romanian Orthodox Church for the support of the idea of nation-state and its values. As a matter of fact the Romanian Constitution itself states, in its first article that *"Romania is a national, sovereign, independent, unitary and indivisible state"* [art.1, align.(1)].

⁴⁸ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Idealul național permanent*, in *Națiune și Creștinism...Op.cit.*, pp.103-104.

⁴⁹ Rev. Dr. Mircea Cristian Pricop, *Ortodoxie, etnicitate, identitate europeană*, Ed. Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului, Constanța, 2012, pp. 40-44.

newer cultures and civilizations, which restlessly fight for their primacy within the actual Christianity, forgetting about the kindness and piety of the heart, to which are pushed all those who authentically wear the Yoke of Christ: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Mathew 11, 28-29).

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