

SOCIAL DYNAMICS AND ECCLESIOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS: REFORMATION AND ITS CENTRAL-EAST-EUROPEAN PRELIMINARIES

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Abstract The developments which generated the downfall of the unity of Roman Christianity and the building of protestant churches are considered a turning point in the history of civilisation. The historical writing continues to debate on their meanings and consequences, and their dialogues with social sciences and with theology stimulates the genesis of new concepts and theories. The history of the first phases of the Reformation is equally the history of various confessional and political experiences involving the nations and churches from East-Central Europe and their importance for the general dynamics of religious pluralism are illustrated by three issues: the Hussite revolution, the genesis of a strategy regarding the Orthodox communities from Transylvania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and a possible Orthodox Reformation.

Keywords: church, piety, Reformation, heresy, identity.

The events which generated the downfall of the unity of Christianity in the Western world and the building of Protestant dissidences¹ have incorporated decisive consequences for the evolution of the European civilisation. Through their connection to phenomena of their own economical dynamics and through the mobility of individuals and communities, they soon received a global dimension. Their significations are not circumscribed to the analysis of a single domain of the knowledge, the historical effort to reconstruct the past and to interpret the facts is complementary and it may sometimes compete with sociological approaches, with

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¹ For a detailed chronology of these events, related to the analysis of the dynamic of the Reformation in the Anglo-Saxon space, see Peter Marshall, *Heretics and Believers: a History of English Reformation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017), 9–57.

the philosophical speculation and with various points of view discussed by the theologians. Like the Renaissance, where they register some chronological tangencies, but also due to some subjective circumstances such as the use of new techniques to spread the written culture by means of printing or by means of the economic success known by communities that adhered to the new faiths, the Protestant Reformation benefited from a positive reception in the republic of the European letters, and this tendency has reached the climax together with the unanimous adhesion to Max Weber's theses, who identified in the ethical norms specific for the Protestant faiths, the source of the spiritual paradigms of Capitalism, consisting in the appreciation of their work and of the individual success,² placed under the same auspices of the unlimited confidence in the discernment and individual capacities, the positivist historiography privileged the image of the Reformation as a starting point of modern civilisation,³ opposed to the Middle Ages of ideological and moral immobility, in which the economic self-sufficiency assures the primacy of the communitarian options in relation to the individual freedom.⁴ The question concerning the premises with which Positivism and its liberal and Marxist successors have operated, and also the profound study of the texts printed by the promoters and the opponents of the Reformation in the context of religious and historiographical controversies, favoured some analyses applied to the historical reality and the recognition of the caesura that separates the Middle Age from the modernity and the accompanying tendency⁵ from the necessary clarifications of concepts. The research made in the last ten years, the epoch of religious values⁶ takes over the specificity given by the phenomenon of the profound Christendom of the Premodern Europe. This was the result of the long efforts of the modern church to assure the equilibrium of the society by the diffusion and the imposition of some generally accepted ethical norms, but the major source of the support for change consists in the modifications that interfered in the public piety at the end of the Middle Ages, in the sense of an internalisation of the religious feeling and the aspiration towards a moral ideal closer to the Evangelical principles. In relation to this approach, more

² Peter Ghosh, *Max Weber and the Protestant Ethics: Twin Histories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 7–23.

³ For a summary of these interpretations in the perspective of the Romanian historiography, see Maria Crăciun, "Centre or Periphery: Reformation in Romanian and Hungarian Historiography," in *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* (1948–2008), 100, 2009, 175–191. See also Andrei Oțetea, *Renașterea și Reforma*, (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1964), 31–34.

⁴ For the analysis of these factors that inhibit the national solidarities and religious freedom, see Ernest Gellner, *Nations et nationalismes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 34–38.

⁵ Concerning the significations of the medieval precedents in the structure of the paradigms of the Renaissance and the Reformation, see Johan Huizinga, "Nationalism in the Middle Ages," in *Nationalism in the Middle Ages*, ed. C. Leon Tipton (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston), 1972, 9–17.

⁶ Norman Houssley, "Ideology, Careerism and Civic Consciousness: Crusade against Basel (1482–1485)", in *English Historical Review* 130 (2014): 1392–1405.

applied to the social and moral realities which generated, finally, the support for the theses of the Reformation, the historiography has destroyed the stereotypes that identified the success of Protestantism with the beginnings of tolerance and the good-living coexistence with the ethnical and confessional alterity⁷ theses which were denied by the confrontations provoked by the religious differences of the first pluralist experiences and by the attempts to transpose in reality the principle of *Cujus regio, eius religio*. In the conditions in which the writing was partially assumed in the identity-giving liturgical discourse at the mid-19th century, the image of East-Central Europe which experimented religious tolerance in Transylvania⁸ and of the Polish-Lithuanian union was counterposed to that of the Occident devastated by religious wars and affected by exclusivist politics. The validity of this approach does not resist the confrontation with the ethical and institutional paradigms of that time, the acceptance of confessional faiths in the series of political values of modern society being the result of the tragic experiences of the conflicts generated by the institutionalisation of Protestant experiments. From the methodological perspective, the historical writing has operated an extension of the thematic and chronological horizon, in the sense of accepting the concept of Catholic Reformation, including the series of transformations at the level of the discipline, of clergy formation and the organization of the mission that the Roman Church knew after the Council from Trent⁹ and for which the counter-reformer dimension overlooks only the competition with the Protestant options. Such an approach justifies the re-evaluation of the conclusions regarding the Orthodox Church's evolution and the eventual development compatibilities and differences in relation to the religious realities of its Western proximity. In contradiction to the interpretations that explain the differences that appeared in the development of Central-Oriental and North-Western Europe by identifying a series of downfalls in their institutional, economic and confessional evolution,¹⁰ the history of the first initiatives included in the process of religious reformation is the history of some profound compatibilities between the communities found under the authority of the two apostolic-educated forums of the Middle Ages, the Holy See and the Ecumenical Patriarchy from Constantinople. Before the discussion of the adhesion regarding the legitimacy of the ex-competitors for medieval political and primacy, namely the Papacy and the Empire, both

⁷ David C. Loades, "Sense of National Identity among the Marian Exiles (1553-1558)," Introduction, in *Faith and Identity. Christian Political Experience*, Eds. David C. Loades and Katherine Walsh (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 99–109.

⁸ Henryck Litvin, "Catholicisation of Ruthenian Nobility and the Assimilation Process in Ukraine," in *Acta Poloniae Historica* LV (1987): 64–70.

⁹ Jean Delumeau, *Catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire* (Paris: Presse Universitaire de France, 1971), 26–41.

¹⁰ For details, see the appreciations formulated by Guy Hermet, *Istoria națiunilor și naționalismelor în Europa*, trans. Silvia Dram (Iași: Institutul European, 1997), 4–6.

forces felt the effects of the impact and accommodation with similar challenges appeared at the Eastern boundaries of Christianity, and the type of reaction, from repressive temptations in the spirit of medieval legitimacy to a flexible strategy, including efforts to reconcile and the search of a *Modus Vivendi* (way of living) start the behaviour of the institutional actors during the establishment of Protestant churches. This Reformation before the Reformation, adapting the formula used by François Furet for a later historical reality,¹¹ can be documented by means of appealing to three aspects found in the attention of the specialist historical writing: the institutionalization of the theological alternative initiated by the disciples of Jan Hus, formulating a coherent attitude towards the Orthodox inhabitants of the territories from the end of the 14th century under the authority of apostolic kingdoms of Central-Eastern-Europe and the reformer initiatives manifested in the Orthodox Church from the states that survived the fall of Constantinople (1453).

The Hussite movement is considered by the historians from the end of the Middle Age as being a product of the Bohemian kingdom's realities,¹² but the circumstances which generated it incorporate similarities with general European or regional evolutions.¹³ The criticisms formulated by Jan Hus did not take into consideration the essence of the Catholic doctrine, but it proposed the restructuration of the rite according to the general exigencies of the theological speculation where exponents of the academic environment and of the parochial clergy from the entire world attend, but developing John Wyclif's theses,¹⁴ its contestation brought one of the arguments according to which the Catholic ecclesiology legitimized the moral and political primacy of the Holy See, the infallibility of the Supreme Pontiff's position inspired from his position of Jesus' successor. The political extension meant to legitimate the king's power, placed under the censorship of the behaviour according to the Christian moral. Its social diffusion presupposed the incorporation of the restoring message of the new belief in the identity-giving discourse,¹⁵ a common phenomenon for the majority of

¹¹ František Smahel considers the Hussite Revolution a historical abnormality, because of his anticipative character in relation to the paradigms of the Medieval Czech societies. See František Smahel, *La révolution Hussite: une anomalie historique*, (Paris: Presse Universitaire de France, 1986), 96–115.

¹² Johan Huizinga considers the ethno-confessional conflict between Czechs and Germans an eloquent expression of medieval nationalism. For details, see Johan Huizinga, *Men and Ideas. History, Middle Ages, Renaissance. Essays* (London, New York, Evanston: Princeton University Press, 1970), 114.

¹³ For a documented description concerning the interferences with the European theological speculation, see Howard Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 24–47.

¹⁴ For Wyclif's opinion concerning the Papal authority, see Steven Edmund Lahey, "Wyclif on Rights," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58 (January 1997): 5–9.

¹⁵ A manifestation diffused in Prague, in 1428, invoked Jesus as *invictissimus bellator Pragensis*. For details, see S. Bylina, "Le mouvement Hussite devant le problème nationale," in *Faith and Identity*.

the European nations. Another direction in which the Czech reformers, moderated and radical, operated some innovations which anticipated the options of the Protestant dissidents overlooked the clergy's position in relation to all the Christian communities. Beginning with the critique of the moral downfall of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and of precarious position of the secular clergy¹⁶ Czech reformers propose the simplification of the parochial organization and the increasing number of laics who take some decisions concerning the Church's activity, but also the return to the austerity of the first centuries of the Christian Church's history. The new relation between the community and its spiritual tutors has its origins in the specific development of the Church in Central Europe, the extension of presbyteries and their economic condition needing the protection of those who own the territorial power, fact mentioned in the medieval jurisprudence through the so-called *Jus Patronatus*, in the precedents created by the first sermons preached by Jan Hus in a chapel founded by a trader from Prague. From the perspective of the ideological dynamics that the Roman Church had known after the Great Schism, the participation of the laics constituted the concretization of the idea of reconciliation by an empirical application of the Synod. From the perspective of social forces involved in the Hussite revolution, the phenomenon was translated by a more profound interference between the clergy and laics, the former giving, in an equal measure, governors of military campaigns from Bohemia, from the Empire and from Hungary, and exponents of the gentry and of the commercial elite, attending to the elaboration of some viewpoints with a major impact in the theological and political debates.¹⁷ The apogee of this taking-over of the spiritual agenda in the State's patrimony intervenes at the same time as the second generation of Czech reformers and is materialized in the well-known project of re-establishing peace proposed by King George of Podiebrad (1458–1471) and known due to the narration of a French emissary who worked for King Louis XI. The initiative is considered to be one of the preliminary projects of European political unification,¹⁸ but its importance for the dynamics of confessional relations consists in the purpose of the future confederation of the states, the initiation of a crusade aimed to liberate Constantinople, recently conquered by the Sultan. According to the pragmatic Utraquist sovereign, the state took the position of guarantee of the spiritual freedom of his subjects, one of the instruments which had assured

Christian Political Experience, eds. David Loades and Katherine Walsh (Oxford: Boydell and Brewer, 1990), 53.

¹⁶ For the study of the mechanisms which governed the relation between the Holy See and the monastic order, see Melanie Bruner, "Disorder, Debts and Excommunication: Pope John XXII and the Reform of Grandmont's Order," *Journal of Medieval History* 38/4(December 2010): 412–419.

¹⁷ For a description of the political projects of the moderates and the radical Taborites, see Mihail P. Dan, *Sub flamura Taborului* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1964), 47–73.

¹⁸ For details, see Bernard Voyenne, *Histoire de l'Idée Européenne* (Paris: Payot, 1964), 11–14.

the success of the ecclesiastical politics to establish the control over the Christian society.¹⁹ The events which give substance to this invasion of the societies in areas reserved for the instructed elite of the Middle Ages also prove their proactive character from the perspective of the reaction that they generated from the legal forums of Christianity, the position of which evaluated from the disproof of the innovation as heresy by means of traditional ways that the Church possessed, the excommunication and the proclamation of the Crusade, attempts to negotiate with the moderate factions in a counselling manner and the adoption of a behaviour that alternates the acceptance of cohabitation with competition. If the influence of Hussite ideas in the neighbouring territories assures the resources of the historical reflection, their great impact took into consideration Poland, found at the end of the reconstruction in the confederative manner of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth²⁰ and employed in the competition with the order of Teutonic Knights and his confederates from the Empire. If the active participation of the Polish nation to the restoration of the State assured the victory on the battle field from Grunwald,²¹ the spiritual confrontation took place in the ambiance of the Counsel from Konstanz, where a memoire elaborated by the Polish archbishopsrics blamed the behaviour of German crusaders in relation to the mission of converting the Baltic populations and counterposed the successful example of the Polish Church, a mission which privileged the persuasion and political negotiations, which had proved its efficiency when Lithuanians were converted. This context created the favourable ambiance for the reception of Hussite theses which also get the political corollary of the project according to which a representative of the Jagiello dynasty would be elected king, a soldier with episodic participation to Czech campaigns. Between the participants to these expeditions was also the knyaz called Feodor Ostrogski,²² the founder of the family known for the protection of the Orthodoxy of the Ruthenians in Poland-Lithuania, having an unconditioned loyalty for the state which was due to save the authority of the great duke in White Russia.²³ The contact with the ideological Hussite innovations and the constitutional specificity of the Polish-Lithuanian union inspired the appearance of a faction which pleaded for the limitation of the Catholic Church's role in the

¹⁹ For the beginnings of the affirmation of the Medieval State as a pole of the loyalty of the subjects, see C. W. Jordan, "Anti-Corruption Campaigns in Thirteenth-Century Europe," *Journal of Medieval History* 35/2 (2009): 7–11.

²⁰ For details concerning the social and confessional evolutions during the last Polish piasts, see W. P. Knoll, *The Rise of Poland: Piast Poland in East-Central Europe* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), 112–117.

²¹ Urszula Borkowska, "The Merging of Religious Elements with National Consciousness in the Historical Works of Jan Dlugosz", in *Faith and Identity. Christian Political Experience*, eds. David Loades and Katherine Walsh (Oxford: Boydell and Brewer, 1990), 67–70.

²² Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine. A History* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2000), 79–83.

²³ A. Rambaud, *Histoire de la Russie* (Paris, 1929), 112.

economic and political life and for a better representation of the gentry in the representative institutions. The insurgency of the latter could be annihilated due to the activation of the mobilization potential of the Catholic Church found under the reign of Cardinal Zbikniek Olesnicki soon after the defeat of Spitko de Melesztin's confederation in Grotnicki,²⁴ but the political Polish-Czech Entente generated Bohemia's pacification by electing Vladislav Jagiello as a king and by recognizing the religious freedom of his Utraquist subjects. The Polish Catholic prelates exploited the difficulties found in their own church in order to legitimize their hesitant behaviour during the confrontations between the Papacy and the adepts of the Counselling movement reunited at Basel, and for a long period, Poland's image found between heretic and schismatic adepts become the source of the Catholic identity that the Polish nation assumed in the context of the success of the counter-reformation.

The situation of apostolic kingdoms occupies a central place on the Holy See's agenda after the Great Schism, in relation to its temptation to re-establish its moral primacy in Christianity by restoring the unity of the Church by means of an agreement with the Orthodox Church. Political rations imposed the abandon of the rigorist attitude affirmed at the first Lateran Council (1215) in the sense of incorporating the Orthodox Dioceses in the Roman Catholic ecclesiastic structures in favour of an approach that privileged some negotiations with the political governors of Orthodox communities,²⁵ whose benevolence could be more easily gained in the context of the general climax of insecurity after the Mongol invasion and the revulsion of the Islamic threats in South-Eastern Europe. The privilege of the political arguments in relation to the theological ones assured the Holy See's support for a series of political and integrationist projects involving the Central-European kingdoms, as well as the personal union of Hungary and Poland under King Vladislav II Jagiello's reign²⁶ or the attempt to integrate the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Lithuania under Rome's order through the Great Duke Svidrigaila, the initiator of a tentative to annul the union with Poland and to fund a Russian-Lithuanian state, continuator of the confederative traditions of Kiev.²⁷ The victory of the adepts of the partnership with Poland was only possible in the conditions of the loyalty of the Orthodox elite by guaranteeing the juridical immunity and by the freedom of the religious

²⁴ David Stones, "The Polish-Lithuanian State," in *History of East-Central Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 472.

²⁵ For an analysis of the evolutions from the 14th century, see Flavius Solomon, *Politică și confesiune în Moldova, secolele XIV-XVI* (Iași: Polirom, 2002), 7.

²⁶ This initiative of Cardinal Olesnicki also incorporated an internal political bet, in the sense of counteracting an eventual Polish-Hussite union. See Veniamin Ciobanu, *Țările Române și Polonia în secolele XIV-XVI*, (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, , 1983), 39–42.

²⁷ The attempt of a religious union has partially failed, when the Mytropolit Gherasimos, burnt on the bonfire as a heretic, by order of Duke Svidrigaila. For details see Oskar Halecki, *From Florence to Brest, 1439-1596*, (New York: Portham University Press, 1958), 11.

faith, by means of the privilege in 1434,²⁸ periodically reconfirmed by the representative assemblies of the Republic. The decision inspired by the state ration assured to the Orthodox hierarchy the support of the Ruthenian secular elite, kept in the conditions of the ethnical and confessional assimilation of the big family, descendant of Rurik and Gediminas dynasty, in the conditions of an increasing number of the gentry and of the appearance of some intermediate categories such as the groups of Volhynian merchants and artisans and of Cossack communities. The pontifical strategy ignored, in the beginning, the importance of the local factors, registering apparent successes soon after the Council from Basel-Ferrara-Florence was invoked, and the solemn proclamation of the union with the Orthodox Church, union confirmed by the publication of the Papal bull *Laetentur Caeli*.²⁹ The four points recorded the communion between the Greek and Roman Church by recognizing the Supreme Pontiff's authority and by accepting the Catholic doctrine, the double procession of the Holy Spirit, the communion bread and the Purgatory, the only concessions made for the united clergy consisting in the acceptance of priests' marriage and the maintenance of a distinct hierarchy. The primacy of the mundane arguments in relation to the confessional sensibilities decisively marked the evolution of the ethnic communities from East-Central-Europe, for which the confessional identity becomes the unique source of institutional legitimacy, in the context of the absence of the State or of the civil society. The effects of the decision of the ecumenical council were not directed so much towards the Greek Church, which entered, after 1453, under the sultan's authority, who would restore the patriarchy governed by Ghenadios Scolarios³⁰, but brought some immediate political and juridical effects for the Christians from the states implied in the sustenance of the papal initiative. *Decretum Ruthenorum*, published at Buda in March 1442, implemented the juridical equality of the Orthodox and Catholic Clergy and opened perspectives of affirmation for the ecclesiastic and social elite of the Orthodox nations, a process which is also accentuated by the indispensability of their military contribution for the anti-Ottoman fight. The new ecclesiastical politics were translated by changing of attitude of the pontifical emissaries regarding the Orthodox implied in the defence of Hungary³¹ and by possible successes of the union among the Romanian gentry from Hașeg

²⁸ Vassili Kliucevski, *History of Russia*, vol. I (London, 1911), 87–89.

²⁹ For an exact narration of these events, see Josef Gill, *Histoire de Concile de Florence*, (Paris: Collin, 1966), 39–52.

³⁰ For the religious disputes from Constantinople, see Steven Runciman, *Fall of Constantinople, 1453* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 49–57.

³¹ John of Capistrano pleaded in favour of a benevolent attitude towards the schismatic Christians involved in the defence of Belgrade, see Ioan Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească în 1440-1514* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 2000), 53.

and Banat³², but the absence of some established political interlocutors and the rapid success of the Lutheran and Calvinist Reformation in Hungary and, at the beginning, in Poland-Lithuania, did not offer the Holy See the necessary support for the transposition into reality of the foresights of the acts from the mid-14th century. Their significance consists in the paradigmatic value that they acquired in the context of the Post-Tridentine Catholic Reformation, together with the articulation of the new pontifical strategy of realizing the local unions, preceded by the proposals of Jesuits Piotr Skarga and Antonio Posevino³³.

The most spectacular evolutions in the case of the confessional dynamics, but less exploited by the historical writing, are developments that the Orthodox Church knows, from the Eastern limits of the Christian world, which can be included in an Orthodox Reformation by the evolution of the public and private piety, by the similitude of ideas that give substance to the theological debates and by its social and identity-giving effects.³⁴ The best documented case from this point of view is the Russian Church, found in a privileged position due to the political establishment known by Veliko-Rossia in the same time when the authority of the big country of Moscow was consolidated in relation to the old power centres, successors of Kiev, and also by taking over the military primacy possessed by the Golden Horde. The national enthusiasm activated by the success of the external politics of the knyaz Ivan the Third (1462-1505),³⁵ the controversies between the adepts of the old medieval freedom and the promoters of public politics in the benefit of the centralized state activated some interrogations inside the society and the Russian elite, expressed by means of ecclesiastic institutions, the only institutions that had assured the stability of the moral norms during the crisis of the secular authorities.³⁶ The church was found, in its turn, in a redefinition process of the position in relation to the State and the Christian community, and the quality of the hierarchy had a significant improvement by the revival of individual piety within the social elite and by the vital solutions offered by the ecclesiastical career to the members of some factions exposed to the power's consequences. As in the case of its Western competitor, the ambiance of debates concerning the behaviour and the mission of the Church were the general or territorial synods

³² For arguments in favour of this theory, see Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara* (Satu-Mare: Editura Muzeului Sătmărean, 1999), 63–67.

³³ Borys A. Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform: the Kyivan Metropolitanat, the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Genesis of the Union of Brest* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 69.

³⁴ For a careful view on Russian Orthodoxy, see Vladimir Soloviev, *Rusia și biserica Universală*, ed. C. Bleses (London, 1948), 21–25.

³⁵ Janeth Martin, *History of Medieval Russia, 980-1598* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 98–112.

³⁶ For the signification of the Church in the medieval history of Kievan Rus', see Iulia Mihailovna, David. C. Prestel, "Cross Kissing and Keeping One's Word in Thirteenth Century Rus," *Slavic Review* 70/1 (Spring 2011): 4–19.,

and the writings of some exponents of monarchism, sanctified by the Russian Church in the 17th century. The main source of controversies referred to the right of the monasteries to possess land-properties and their liaison with the state power. Saint Joseph Volotsky (1440-1516) pleads for a traditional approach of the primacy of monastic centres in relation to the episcopate's authority, justified by their importance in assuring the believers' spiritual needs. Their patrimony is considered to be the main source for the charitable actions of the monarchs. In conformity with the importance accorded to the missionary action of the regular clergy, the followers of Joseph Volotsky insist on the standardization and enforcement of the monastic behaviour and on the strict observation of the discipline, demanding energetic measures from the secular power to avoid heresies.³⁷ From a political point of view, Volotsky's followers evolve from defending the rights of some possessors of monasteries to support the great Knyaz' power as a defender of the Russian faith, a quasi-theocratic power. In relation to the identity-giving specificity, they evolve in the 16th century to xenophobic positions, hostile to any innovation that is subject to alter the ecclesiastic Russian tradition. On the contrary, the so-called non-possessors governed by Saint Nil Sorski, the abbot of Kirilo-Belozersk propose to abnegate the land-properties for a more austere mission, guided by the ideal of the Evangelical misery and by the individual's need to evolve towards an internalization of faith and of ritual practice. The non-possessors initiate, in the regions from beyond the Volga, a reformation of the monasteries, in the sense of their fragmentation in individual lodgings, more favourable for introspection and prayer. As for the attitude concerning heretic communities, they insist on persuasive politics against the coercive measures, invoking the absence of scriptural arguments in the sustenance of torture. The opinions of the non-possessors have initially benefited from a favourable reception of the state power, interested in the liquidation of the immunity of estates. This fact was confirmed by the decisions of the synod in 1503 regarding the attitude towards heretic communities and by the re-organization of the monasteries. Their position was consolidated in the next decade under the administration of a more combative cleric, Vassian Patrikeev. Descendant of a princely family, this ex-partisan of Knyaz Dmitri Ivanovici inspired the religious politics of the great Knyaz Vasili III, (1505-1533) during the leadership of Metropolitan Varlaam, taking into the consideration the clergy's formation and tolerant attitudes towards the Judaic heretic communities. Beginning from 1518, the Russian reformer initiates the revision of hagiographic traditions and of the canonical legislation³⁸ by means of some Greek clerics invited in Russia, but the opposition of some of the Russian clerics to the divorce of the Great Knyaz determined changes in the State power's position for Volotsky's

³⁷ For the contemporaneous descriptions related to the fight against heresies at Novgorod, see T. Al. Smith, "Josef of Volokolamsk and Serapion of Novgorod in conflict," *Russian Review* 38/2 (April 2017): 7–12.

³⁸ Michael C. Paul, "Continuity and Change in Novgorodian Episcopality 1471–1598," *Christian Orientalia Periodica* V/2 (2009): 273–291.

faction. Under the leadership of Metropolitan Macarius, this orientation inspired the politics of the new Czar Ivan IV The Terrible (1533-1584), but the preoccupations for the reorganization of the Church in the paradigms of the official Orthodoxy register some notable successes at the same time as the Synod from 1551, at the end of which the 100 chapters are published,³⁹ aimed to offer the Church a unitary canonical legislation. The public piety fuels the national enthusiasm, manifested on the occasion of the crusade organized against Kazan in 1552. The territorial extension also presupposes conversions of Tartars from Volga and of Hebrew from the Lithuanian regions occupied during the Livonian war.

Although more difficult to study, due to the precarious source, the confessional evolutions in the Romanian space register the same dynamics of change, in the sense of the preoccupation for the internalization of the message and of the first expressions of confessional identity. Recent studies on the behaviour of the elite reveals the importance that the Boyar families gave the building of religious lodgings and the material support given to some Orthodox monastic centres from the Romanian Principalities, from Transylvania or from the Byzantine world found in the Ottoman captivity. The terse notations of the Moldavian-Russian chronicle concerning the Romanian's parentage with Romans and Vlahata, possessors of the old Christian faith⁴⁰ and Ivan Peresvetov's observations concerning the impact of Moscow's successes in Petru Rareș's Moldavia illustrate Moldavia's interest to define a confessional identity in relation with the Ottoman, Catholic and Protestant proximity. Moldavia's identification with the Orthodox cause also inspired transnational solidarities, an attitude illustrated by the fact that, after the defeat at Obertin (1531), Polish authorities that returned to Pocutia initiate the punishment of some Ruthenian gentry which joined Petru Rareș's forces⁴¹, who initiated, during his second reign (1541-1546), diplomatic contacts with the great country of Moscow, motivated by the solidarity of faith.

The review of the preliminaries of the Reformation in Central and Eastern Europe demonstrate the need to avoid the stereotypes concerning the peripheral nature of this region in relation to the trend of the new religious sensibilities and the efficiency of the reforming process that the Christian Church knew in the two traditional rites, capable of providing resources for subsuming solidarities of faith in the affinities of a specific identity..

³⁹ Paul Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 49–62.

⁴⁰ For the corroboration of these sources with Polish-Lithuanian witnesses, see Adolf Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor: istoria unei idei*, (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1990), 39–42.

⁴¹ Maria Crăciun, *Protestantism și ortodoxie în Moldova secolului al XVI-lea* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1996), 51.