Christine Chaillot (Ed.)

L'Église orthodoxe en Europe occidentale au XXe siècle

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Foreword by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware of Diokleia
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The history of the Orthodox Church in the XXth century is indeed very complicated, and even sometimes confusing, especially due to constantly changing borders and simultaneous events. Much was determined by nationalism, developed in the XIXth century, which led to the appearance of new independent states at the turn of the XIXth-XXth centuries and to the emergence of new autocephalous Churches, and was marked by two tragic events: the Bolchevic Revolution of 1917, and the Treatise of Lausanne of 1923, which resulted in the exchange of population in Asia Minor. These events had an impact not only on the life and on the organisation of the Orthodox Church in the countries of Eastern Europe, which had been traditionally mainly Orthodox by confession, but also in the rest of the world, since they generated a massive emigration of Orthodox

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faithful. Unfortunately, until now, very few books dealt with the history of the Orthodox Church in the XXth century. Therefore, it was a history to be written. The merit of Christine Chaillot is to have gathered 18 authors to write it. Among them, well-known scholars, such as: Mikhail Chkarovski (Saint-Petersburg), Todor Sabev (Sofia) and Sophia Senyk (Rome), and distinguished hierarchs, such as: Archbishop Anastasios (Yanoulatos), Primate of the Orthodox Church in Albania, and Metropolitan Christofor (Pulec), Primate of the Orthodox Church in the Czech lands and Slovakia.

The book is a collection of 16 articles, reflecting the history of 19 contemporary European countries: Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Turkey and Ukraine. Thus, we can immediately see the value of this book: one can learn about the history of the Church in some countries about which very little was been known until now within the large public at large. Among the significant events that this book describes, we can mention: the schism of the Turkish Orthodox Church lead by Papa Eftim in 1922; the impact of lay brotherhoods "Zoe" and "Soter" in Greece (1907-1967) and the complicated distribution of the Greek eparchies between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece; the nomination of the Primate of the Orthodox Church on Cyprus as President of the new Cypriote Republic in 1960; the amazing history of the Orthodox Church in Albania and its massive suppression between 1967 and 1990; the adventures of the Orthodox Church in Moldavia whose borders were disputed between Romania and USSR; the unfamiliar history of the Church in Hungary, torn between the Churches of Serbia, Romania, Constantinople and Moscow, "a study to be pursued" according to the author, E. Kiss, who has carried out significant research in national archives; the fascinating links in Czechoslovakia, between the Hussites, the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church; the establishment of autonomous Churches in the Baltic States (1923-1936); the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Poland granted in 1924 by Constantinople, the massive destruction of its churches in 1938 and the displacement action of Orthodox population "Wisla" in 1947; the three attempts of autocephaly of the Ukrainian Church (1918, 1941 and 1989) and the absorption of the Uniates by the Patriarchate of Moscow at the Synod of Lviv of 1946; the autocephaly of the Church in Bessarabia in 1918; the restoration, in 1917, of the autocephaly of the ancient Orthodox Church of Georgia, which was abolished by Moscow in 1811...

In all these fascinating stories, one can notice the weight of geopolitics. The (re-)birth of independent states at the turn of the XIXth-XXth centuries led to the auto-proclamations of autocephaly, which was not immediately

recognised by the official Orthodox Church: Greece in 1833, Bulgaria in 1860, Serbia in 1878, Romania in 1885, Ukraine in 1917, Georgia in 1917, Bessarabia in 1918, Albania in 1936, Belarus in 1942, Macedonia in 1967. Some of them (like the cases of Macedonia and Ukraine) are still not recognised and thus causing trouble within the Orthodox Church in the XXIst century. In some cases, the Churches have received the status of autonomy, either from Constantinople (Hungary in 1884, Estonia in 1923, Latvia in 1936), or from Moscow (Ukraine in 1918, Lithuania in 1928). The very detailed study by M. Chkarovski on the Orthodox Church in Russia shows how the Church was a servant of communist propaganda in USSR in the international politics. As an example, in order to oppose to the Nazi invaders presenting themselves as the liberators of Christians, the Soviets attempted to show themselves as the protectors of Christendom. This led to their radical change of attitude towards the Church, turning away from bloodthirsty persecution towards shaping the Patriarchate of Moscow as an Orthodox "Vatican". Thus, there was a attempt by the Moscow Patriarchate in 1947 to organise a pan-orthodox council and to take over the title of "Ecumenical Patriarchate".

The book depicts also the tireless efforts of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople for pan-orthodox unity by convening a pan-orthodox conference in Rhodes in 1923 and pre-conciliar meetings since 1961. It mentions also the different attempts to introduce the "new calendar" (Gregorian, "Meletian", or "Julian-reformed") into the Orthodox Church (Constantinople in 1923, Moldavia in 1924, Poland in 1924, Georgia in 1928 –without any success, and Bulgaria in 1969), as well as the vernacular languages either for the translation of the Holy Scriptures or liturgical texts (for instance, the Bulgarian translation of the Bible in 1909, the Serbian translation of the New Testament in 1847, the Polish translation after 1924). It describes the active and leading participation of the Orthodox Church within the Ecumenical movement, since the decisive encyclic of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of 1902, and the membership of different Orthodox Churches into the World Council of Churches.

In order to be objective, a historian ought to have hindsight. This is, perhaps, the most difficult task for the historian dealing with the modern period of history. Asking people to write about their own country and their own Church might give us some insight into material which is almost inaccessible to strangers because they do not know the language of the country, nor do they have access to the local sources and archives. However, on the other hand, this could be misleading due to potentially subjective positions. Without questioning the objectivity of the remarkable studies collected into the present book, one could nevertheless regret some partial positions or the "politically correct" language of some

authors. For example, not much is said about the Macedonian schism, which has existed since 1958 until now: only 8 lines on pp. 124-125 appear in the article devoted to the Serbian Orthodox Church. Perhaps, the reader would like to know more about it. The same thing could be said about the "Apostolic Orthodox Church of Estonia", whose autonomy was restored in 1993 by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which led to the rupture of communion between Moscow and Constantinople in 1995-1996. We know that until today, two parallel canonical ecclesiastical jurisdictions exist in Estonia. Although the authors mention both, there appears to be a reluctance to speak about the autonomous Church of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. We could take as another example, the desire of the new Polish State established in 1918 to have an Orthodox Church independent from Moscow, as well as the introduction of the new calendar in Poland, about which we read on p. 280 in the article about the Orthodox Church in Belarus; however, very little is said about this in the article on the Orthodox Church in Poland. As well, in the article about the Orthodox Church in Ukraine – perhaps one of the best article on this period to our knowledge – the author does not stress enough that the so-called restoration of autocephaly in 1941 was made with the blessing of the Polish Orthodox Church during the German occupation of Ukrainian lands. The statement by the author on p. 311, that the "self-ordained" clergy of 1921 was not re-ordained by the newly established hierarchy of 1941, which would have had married bishops as well, is actually being refuted by some scholars (like the late T. Minenko). Indeed, since the decision of the council of Pinsk of 1942 to accept the "self-ordained" clergy "in their order" (that is a bishop as a bishop, a priest as priest, a deacon as a deacon) does not exclude the necessity of a (secret) re-ordination. This could be proved by the case of Archbishop Mstyslav (Skrypnyk) of the 1941 hierarchy, who in 1949 in the U.S.A. required the re-ordination of Archbishop Ioan (Teodorovych) of the 1921 hierarchy. The same author does not mention at all the artificial famine (Holodomor) in Ukraine in 1932-1933 as an attempt by the Soviet atheist state to destroy the majority of believers remaining in Central and Eastern Ukraine who were mostly living in rural settlements.

Technically speaking, the unification of the orthography and of the transliteration of proper nouns would have been appreciated since it might be confusing at times. For instance, a non-initiated person could not always guess that "Cernauti" corresponds to "Tchernivtsi", that "Mukacevo" is the equivalent to "Mukatchevo", that "Chisinau" is sometimes written "Kishinev", and that "Galicia", "Halych" and "Halich" are the same. For common names, one would prefer the common orthography instead of a heavy transliteration that is to say in English: "Cyril" instead of

"Kyrillos", "Barnabas" instead of "Varnavas", "Paul" instead of "Pavel", etc. This could also be confusing sometimes when different authors use different orthography to speak about the same person. Therefore, an index would have also been very useful in order to link the different articles together, as well as detailed geographical maps.

Finally, we have found a few mistakes. The Holy Spirit Monastery of Vilnius (which received a Stavropegic status from the Ecumenical Patriarch) was founded at the turn of XVI-XVIIth c., and not in the XVIIIth c. as stated on p. 250. One should read that the Gregorian (and not "Julian") calendar was introduced in the Bulgarian Church in 1969 on p. 101, and that the first Romanian church outside Romania was built in Regina, Saskatchewan, in Canada (and not in "Regina Sask" as printed on p. 157).

Having taught a course in Church History in an Orthodox Theological Institute, I always hoped that a textbook on modern Orthodox Church History would be published one day. Today, my dream has become a reality and it fits perfectly in the prestigious collection "Histoire religieuse de l'Europe contemporaine" (Religious History of Contemporary Europe) published by the "Editions du Cerf". It is my hope now that this book may be translated into other modern languages and be widely used by theological Faculties.