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Romanian Orthodox Academic Theology and the Discovering of the Philokalia during the Interwar Period

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Abstract

The present research attempts to analyse the context of the interest in the texts of the Philokalia and how this collection of ascetic and mystical writings contributed, through the research of Romanian theologians, to the development of a neo-patristic synthesis in Romania during the Interwar period. I devoted the first part of the research to the neo-patristic synthesis proposed by Fr Georges Florovsky at the Theological Congress of Athens 1936. The second part emphasizes the development of patristic studies in Romanian Orthodox theology, based on the neo-patristic synthesis. In the next part of the paper, I have analysed how the academic theology in Romania discovered the Philokalia and how it was translated by Fr Dumitru Stăniloae. This translation of the Philokalia led to a revival of Romanian Orthodox academic theology.

Keywords:

Neo-Patristic Synthesis, Philokalia, Dumitru Stăniloae, Nichifor Crainic, Romanian Theology, Inter-War period

I. Orthodox Academic Theology and the rediscovering of the Patristic Tradition during the Interwar Period

At the first Orthodox Theological Congress, held in Athens in 1936, Fr Georges Florovsky announced the urgent need to “return to the Holy Fathers” and to liberate the Orthodox Theology from the “Babylonian captivity” of Western theology in terms of language, concepts, methodology, and theological approach. In this sense, Fr Florovsky has referred to this captivity by using the term “pseudo-morphosis”, to describe the long process of Latinization and Westernization of Russian Orthodox Theology, an idea already addressed, as Florovsky mentioned, by the Metropolitan of Karlowitz, Antonius Chrapovicki¹. The concept synthesized by Fr Florovsky² was to be found in the works of most 20th-century Orthodox theologians. It was defined as a current of theological revival and a return to the “true” dimension of the spiritual tradition of the Orthodox Church, or the “Neo-Patristic synthesis”. His appeal was quickly adopted and shared by numerous theologians of the Russian diaspora, and it also gathered fervent supporters in Orthodox countries such as Greece, Serbia, and Romania.

This theological movement of “returning to the Fathers of the Church” became the dominant paradigm of Orthodox theology for the 20th century, and for various theologians its main and only purpose. The theory of Fr

¹ Georges FLOROVSKY, “Westliche Einflüsse in der russischen Theologie”, in: Hamilcar S. ALIVISATOS (ed.), *Procès-Verbaux du Premier Congrès de Théologie Orthodoxe à Athènes, 29 novembre-6 décembre 1936*, Pyrsos, Atena, 1939, pp. 212-231. For a critique of the theory of Fr G. Florovsky, see Dorothea WENDEBOURG, “«Pseudomorphosis»: A Theological Judgement as an Axiom for Research in the History of Church and Theology”, in: *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 42 (1997), pp. 321-42; Sergey HORUZHYY, “Neo-Patristic Synthesis and Russian Philosophy”, in: *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 3-4 (2000), pp. 309-328; Pantelis KALAITZIDIS, “From the «Return to the Fathers» to the Need for a Modern Orthodox Theology”, in: *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 1 (2010), pp. 5-36; Brandon GALLAHER, “«Waiting for the Barbarians»: Identity and Polemicism in the Neo-Patristic Synthesis of Georges Florovsky”, in: *Modern Theology*, 27 (2011), pp. 659-691.

² Brandon GALLAHER, “«Waiting for the Barbarians»...”, pp. 659-691; Paul L. GAVRILYUK, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, p. 202.

Florovsky had strong roots in the Theological approach of the Russian School of Religious Revival³. The Neo-Patristic synthesis encompasses Orthodox theologians who reject the involvement of Western rationalism in Orthodox theology, often turning this theology into a spiritual or spiritualistic perspective. These authors perceive Orthodox spirituality and theology, on one part, and the canonical discipline of the Church⁴ on the other, as totally opposite to the perception and tradition of Western Theology⁵. They postulated a theological revival and a return to the

³ For a comparison between the two, see Kallistos WARE, "Orthodox Theology Today: Trends and Tasks", in: *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 12 (2012), pp. 105-121.

⁴ Examples of such approaches can be found in Nicolas AFANASIEV, "Les canons et la conscience canonique", in: *Contacts*, 21 (1959), pp. 112-27; Nicolas AFANASIEV, "The Canons of the Church: Changeable or Unchangeable", in: *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 11 (1967), pp. 54-68; Vladimir LOSSKY, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, J. Clarke & Company, London, 1957, pp. 175-176; Paul EVDOKIMOV, *L'orthodoxie*, Neuchâtel, 1959, pp. 185-187; John MEYENDORFF, "Contemporary Problems of Orthodox Canon Law", in: *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 17 (1972), pp. 41-50; A. SCHMEMMANN, "The Orthodox World, Past and Present", in: *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West*, Crestwood, New York, 1979, pp. 33-34, 58-61; John MEYENDORFF, "One Bishop in One City", in: *Catholicity and the Church*, Crestwood, New York, 1983, pp. 111-120; J. H. ERICKSON, *The Challenge of Our Past. Studies in Orthodox Canon Law and Church History*, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991, pp. 9-21; Christos YANNARAS, "The Church Canons and the Limits Set to Life", in: *The Freedom of Morality*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, 1984, pp. 173-193; L. PATSAVOS, *Spiritual Dimensions of the Holy Canons*, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, 2003.

⁵ The Orthodox Romanian Theologian Ioan Ică jr. explains the difference between the Catholic and Orthodox perspectives as follows: "For the Latins, divine truth (dogma) is perfectly converted into divine law, based on their common rationality, and then it fully embodies in law (jus), according to the hylomorphic model of efficient causality. Canon law becomes the historical definition of natural and positive divine law since a total identity is postulated between theological and juridical truth (as seen in the dogma of infallibility and papal jurisdiction). That is why the Roman Catholic West has always tried to define the binding value of doctrinal truth through the operative concreteness of the norms of a legal system. The Easterners have never accepted the possibility of a rigorous translation and correspondence between dogma (which is part of an apophatic mystery of the Church that is manifested iconically and spiritually) and law, or between eternal and eschatological revealed truth and the historical juridical order created here, not of a proper juridical system, but of a set of positive norms contained in canons." Ioan I. ICĂ JR., *Canonul Ortodoxiei. Canonul apostolic al primelor veacuri* [*Canon of Orthodoxy. The Apostolic Canon of the Early Ages*], Volume I, Deisis, Sibiu, 2008, p. 117.

true Orthodox tradition, uninfluenced and uncontaminated by Western rationalism, neither Catholic nor Protestant. What the promoters of this patristic revival denounced was precisely the excessive rationalization and legalisation of theology, the departure from the spiritual life and spirit of the Fathers, from the “mind of the Fathers”, and their replacement by Catholic and Protestant modern categories of thinking.

Therefore, the 20th century can be considered for Orthodox Academic Theology a period for the revival of patristic, canonical, liturgical, mystical, and dogmatic texts and a return to the “mind of the Fathers”, by reconnecting the intellectual academic research with the spiritual life of the Church. At the urging of Fr Florovsky, “let us be more Greek, to be more Catholic, to be truly Orthodox”⁶, the focus was exclusively on the Greek-speaking Fathers and Church writers. Florovsky advocated for a Hellenization of Orthodox theology to make it genuine again⁷. The project

⁶ G. FLOROVSKY, “Patristics and Modern Theology”, in: Amilkas S. ALIVIZATOS (ed.), *Procès-verbaux du premier Congrès de théologie orthodoxe*, p. 242. Unfortunately, this exhortation of Father Florovsky for the Hellenization of Orthodox theology has often been misunderstood by some Orthodox theologians. According to his view, this Hellenistic version of the theological approach represented a concept of universalism, beyond national particularities, in: order to combat theological localism, tribalism, or ethnophyletism. However, his theological approach did not lead to the revitalization of Orthodox theology from many perspectives. The imposition of a sacred language, be it ancient Greek or Church Slavonic, in: the liturgical service remained an impediment to this revival, because it was an application of cultural and linguistic phyletism in the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Churches of Greek and Russian tradition have imposed a certain dogmatization of the sacred language in ecclesial worship, contrary to this spiritual and liturgical revival. Also, often the national identity in sacred art, church music, architecture, liturgical vestments, and even local theological ethos, were suppressed in order to impose the Hellenistic-Byzantine influence or, on the other hand, the Slavonic tradition as the “true” Orthodox Tradition. This trend is also specific to Romania, where only Byzantine music of Phanariot-Byzantine origin is considered “truly” Orthodox. The expression of church music in Transylvanian or Banat is still considered an alienation from the genuine tradition. The Orthodox architectural style is only the Byzantine one, and the vestments are all the more Orthodox because they follow Greek models. However, any encapsulation of the Church in the exclusivity of a Byzantine vision of a Greek “genos” does nothing but transform the Greek “genos” into the only possible “ethnos”. In this way, this vision becomes a bad version of ethnophyletism.

⁷ For an overview of the full context of the debate, see Cristinel IOJA, *O istorie a Dogmaticii în Teologia Ortodoxă Română de la începuturile învățământului teologic seminarial în limba română la instaurarea comunismului* [A History of Dogmatic

was accepted by the majority of the Orthodox Churches and was imposed as a theological programme for the restoration of the purely Orthodox vision of Theology, not only in the field of Patristic studies but also in other theological disciplines⁸.

II. Romanian Orthodox Academic Theology and the Patristic Revival during the Interwar Period

The theological approach of Fr Florovsky influenced the Romanian Orthodox academic theology as well. The Faculties of Orthodox Theology

in Romanian Orthodox Theology from the Beginnings of Seminary Theological Education in Romanian to the Establishment of Communism], Vol. II, ProUniversitaria, Bucharest, 2013.

⁸ It is worth noting that this conference did not only call for a revival of Patristic Theology, but also for all theological studies. For Patristic studies, see the papers published in the Acts of the Congress as follows: CHRYSOSTOM OF ATHENS, "Die äusseren Einflüsse auf die Orthodoxe Theologie, im XVI und XVII, Jahrhundert", pp. 193-208; K. DYVOUNOTIS "Die äusseren Einflüsse auf die orthodoxe Theologie, besonders seit der Eroberung Konstantinopels", pp. 209-211; G. FLOROVSKY, "Westliche Einflüsse in der russischen Theologie", pp. 212-231; BALANOS, "Die neuere Orthodoxe Theologie in ihren Verhältnis zur patristischen Theologie und zu den neueren theologischen Auffassungen und Methoden", pp. 232-238; G. FLOROVSKY, "Patristics and Modern Theology", pp. 238-242. For the relationship between science and theology, see: P. BRATSIOTIS "Die Grundprinzipien und Hauptmerkmale der orthodoxen Kirche", pp. 115-127; S. BULGAKOFF "Thesen über die Kirche", pp. 127-134; For Biblical studies, see B. VELLAS, "Bibelkritik und Kirchliche Autorität", pp. 135-143; E. ATONIADIS, "Die orthodoxen hermeneutischen Grundprinzipien und Methoden der Auslegung des Neuen Testaments und ihre theologischen Voraussetzungen", pp. 143-174; KARTASCHOFF, "Die Freiheit der theologisch-wissenschaftlichen Forschung und die kirchliche Autorität", pp. 175-185; Cassien BESOBRAȘOF, "Introduction spéciale au Nouveau Testament", pp. 185-193. For Canon Law, see: Hamikar S. ALIVISATOS, "Die Kodifizierung der Kanones und ihre Bedeutung", pp. 308-310; Valerian ȘESAN, "Revision der Kanones und anderer kirchlicher Nonnen, sowie deren Kodifizierung", pp. 310-323. For Orthodox Liturgical studies, see: GOSCHEFF, "Die Revision der liturgischen Texte und die heutige liturgische Gesetzgebung der orthodoxen Kirche", pp. 324-328. For Orthodox Missiology, see: H. ALIVISATOS, "Die Frage der äusseren und inneren Mission der orthodoxen Kirche", pp. 328-332; MORAITIS, "Aus der inneren Mission der Orthodoxen Kirche Griechenlands (Predigt und Katechese)", pp. 332-339; P. ISPIR, "La mission dans l'Eglise Orthodoxe", pp. 339-342). For Orthodox Social Ethics, see H. ALIVISATOS, "Die biblische und historisch-dogmatische Begründung der sozialetischen Aufgabe der Kirche vom Orthodoxen Standpunkt", pp. 427-435.

from Chernivtsi⁹, Sibiu and Bucharest joined this project, as current research shows. The program of the Athens Congress was prepared at a theological meeting that took place in Bucharest between 16-18 January 1936¹⁰.

However, we can find two main trends in Romanian Orthodox academic theology during the 20th century. On the one hand, some Romanian theologians, such as Liviu Stan¹¹, Iustin Moisesescu, Ene Braniște, Nicolae Bălan, or Petru Rezuș, emphasized the relationship between priest-

⁹ As for the participation of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the Athens Congress, although some Romanian authors emphasized the Romanian contribution to this conference, it is very important to mention that on November 7, 1936, a few weeks before the beginning of the first Congress of Orthodox Theology the Romanian Faculty of Theology in Chernivtsi informed the Faculty of Theology in Athens and other Faculties of Theology of the impossibility of participating in this Conference. The reason given by Nicolae Cotos, Dean of the Faculty in Chernivtsi, was “the death of a colleague”, i.e. Domitian Spănu, professor at the Department of Moral Theology, who died on September 16, 1936, at the age of 44. See the obituary written by Nicolae COTOS, “Domitian Spănu”, in: *Candela. Jurnalul bisericescu-literar*, No. 1-12 (1936), pp. 1-2). For this reason, the Faculty of Theology of Chernivtsi is absent from the First Congress of Orthodox Theology, but sent the papers to be read in the plenary session. Nicolae COTOS, “Întâiul Congres de Teologie ortodox [The first Congress of Orthodox Theology]”, in: *Candela. Jurnalul bisericescu-literar*, No. 1-12 (1936), pp. 215-216.

¹⁰ For the program of this preparatory conference, see Cristinel IOJA, *O istorie a dogmaticii în teologia Ortodoxă Română [A History of Dogmatic in Romanian Orthodox Theology]*, pp. 147-148.

¹¹ On the work of Fr Liviu Stan, see: R. PERȘA, *Natura canoanelor și principiile de interpretare a lor în Dreptul canonic ortodox al secolelor XIX-XX [The Nature of the Canons and the Principles of their Interpretation in the Orthodox Canon Law of the 19th and 20th Centuries]*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2021, pp. 71-97; Sorin JOANTĂ, *Contribuția Pr. Prof. Dr. Liviu Stan la dezvoltarea dreptului bisericesc*, “Lucian Blaga” University Press, Sibiu, 2002; Florin DOBREI (ed.), *Dreptul canonic în viața Bisericii: în memoriam preot profesor dr. Liviu Stan (1910-1973) simpozion național, Deva, 7-8 martie 2013*, Reîntregirea Publishing House of the Diocese of Deva and Hunedoara, Alba Iulia, Deva, 2013; Emilian-Iustinian ROMAN, “The Contribution of Professor Liviu Stan to the Promotion of the Inter-Orthodox, Inter-Christian and Interreligious Dialogue”, in: *Analele Științifice ale Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași. Teologie Ortodoxă*, 2 (2013), pp. 163-176; Irimie MARGA, “The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodoxy According to Rev. Prof. Liviu Stan”, in: *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai Theologia Orthodoxa*, 62, 1 (27 June 2017), pp. 73-82.

parish-society¹², focusing on the problems that the Church faced in society. Their approach can be considered an example of contextual Theology. In some cases, this approach was too contextual because of the ideological influences of nationalistic ideas during the interwar period¹³.

On the other hand, another group of Romanian theologians (such as Nichifor Cranic, Dumitru Stăniloae¹⁴, Dumitru Popescu, Teodor Popescu and others) emphasized the importance of spiritual life and spiritual development according to the forgotten Philokalic tradition of the Church. They pointed out that “the *Pidalion* is not the priest’s only guide, the *Philokalia* is essential”¹⁵. Their theological works emphasize the Orthodox spiritual heritage and the need to combat the theological intellectualization of Romanian theology. The polarisation of these two Romanian theological approaches was therefore inevitable.

Immediately after the Theological Conference in Athens, on 16 February 1937, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Miron Cristea, made an appeal to all the professors of the Theological Academies in Romania, regarding an extensive translation of all Patristic texts to recover the spiritual tradition of the Orthodox Church¹⁶. In this regard, the

¹² See Fr Ion BRIA, *Hermeneutica teologică. Dinamica ei în structurarea Tradiției* [Theological hermeneutics. Its dynamics in structuring the Tradition], Andreiana, Sibiu, 2009, pp. 39-40.

¹³ See, for example, the racist interpretation found in the works of Fr Liviu STAN, “Rasism față de țigani [Racism against Gypsies]”, in: *Cuvântul. Ziar Legionar* 18 (18 January 1941), pp. 1-2; Liviu STAN, *Rasă și religie* [Race and Religion], Tiparul Tipografiei Arhiecezane, Sibiu, 1942, p. 144; Gheorghe RACOVEANU, “Între ecumenicitate și rațiune de stat”, in: *Însemnări sociologice* IV, nr. 1 (1 September 1940), pp. 20-21.

¹⁴ For the contribution of Fr Dumitru Stăniloae to the Neo-Patristic synthesis, see Adrian AGACHI, *The Neo-Palamite Synthesis of Father Dumitru Stăniloae*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013.

¹⁵ Ion BRIA, *Hermeneutica teologică. Dinamica ei în structurarea Tradiției*, p. 39.

¹⁶ Archives of the Romanian Orthodox Theological Academy of Cluj, File 1937, Document dated February 16, 1937: “Appeal. The Romanian Patriarchate - wishing to have the entire patristic literature in Romanian - appeals to all most reverend Priests and esteemed laymen, sons of Our Church, who have the proper training and full knowledge both of the teachings of the Church and of the original language of the works, as well as the desire to take part in this beautiful work of great significance for Our Church, to inform the Ecclesial Central Council of the Church of the work or patristic work which they translate or wish to translate. The book must be translated from the original language in which the author wrote it, and other translations may

Ecclesial Central Council of the Romanian Orthodox Church¹⁷ asked the professors of theology and philologists to send the titles of the works they wish to translate from classical languages, and to be included in this large project of the Romanian Patriarchate. According to this editorial plan, the Romanian Orthodox Church became the first autocephalous Church to implement a project of patristic translations for the revival of Orthodox theology after the Theological Conference in Athens.

III. Romanian Orthodox Academic Theology and the rediscovering of Philokalia during Interwar Period

Some theologians will consider the rediscovery of the Philokalia in Romania as an eminently spiritual event, linked with the monastic life, separated from academic research, as postulated by some critics even in 1938¹⁸. However, according to the context of its (re)appearance, the Philokalia translated into Romanian undoubtedly represents the synthesis between

be used - at most - as a guide by the translator. The translations will be printed in chronological order, starting with early Christian apologists. The works presented to the Ecclesial Central Council and submitted for printing will be reviewed by a commission set up specifically for this purpose under the chairmanship of Patriarchal Vicar Irineu Târgovișteanu, as a delegate of the Holy Synod. Editing will be carried out by the «Biblical Institute» of the Romanian Patriarchate and the Publishing house of Church books. Remuneration for the printed translations will be 20% of the income, after covering printing and publishing expenses. I address my prayer to all the good sons and daughters of My Church, and, of course, to other clerics of Our Church, that they may contribute, as much as they can, also to the fulfilment of this old thought of mine. I send to all those who will contribute to this work our Patriarchal blessings and wish them every success in their work. Bucharest, 16 February 1937. Miron. Patriarch of Romania.”

¹⁷ Archives of the Romanian Orthodox Theological Academy of Cluj, File 1937, Document No. No. 3319 of 26 March 1937: “Dear Father Rector, we have the honour to enclose herewith the appeal of His Holiness, Father Patriarch, concerning the translation of patristic literature from the original language into Romanian, asking you to kindly bring it to the attention of the Professors of the Academy under your direction, so that all the professors who wish to take part in this beautiful work may notify the Ecclesial Central Council, Antim Street 29, Bucharest. With our most holy blessings. Irineu Târgovișteanu”.

¹⁸ George RACOVEANU, “Dumineca [Sunday]”, in: *Cuvântul*, year XV, No. 3186, Monday (28 March 1938), p. 1.

academic research and the need for a revival of Orthodox spirituality, a true Neo-Patristic synthesis. This project will link the spiritual foundation of Orthodox theology with the academic conceptual expression, or the return of academic theological and philosophical debate to spirituality¹⁹.

As we saw, the 3rd decade of the 20th century was marked by a desire among theologians and scholars in theological academies to rediscover the Orthodox heritage by returning to the Byzantine roots of Orthodoxy. The same theological revival can be observed in Romanian theology, especially through the rediscovery of mystical and Philokalic writings in academic research. What is really important for our debate is that this revival in the Romanian academic theological research was prior to the patristic call of Fr Georges Florovsky.

The Romanian Philokalic revival is linked, in the first instance, to the name of Nichifor Crainic, about whom, in the course of history, many positive things have been said²⁰, but he was also reviled because of his interwar political activity and his collaboration with the interwar totalitarian regimes, and during the Second World War, and also because of his collaboration with the communist regime in the 60s²¹. Beyond these

¹⁹ The scholars of the Neo-Patristic synthesis advocated the fact that the Orthodox academic research must not turn into theological philology, whereby the theologian limits himself to the form of the text, but neither does the emphasis on the spiritual life exclude knowledge of classical languages, philosophy, science, history or theological hermeneutics. This position is emphasized by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware: „Inaccurate references in footnotes are not a gift of the Holy Spirit”. Kallistos WARE, “Orthodox Theology Today: Trends and Tasks”, in: *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, Vol.12 (2) (2012), p. 109.

²⁰ See, for example, the eulogies published by various interwar Romanian intellectuals in the issue of the journal *Gândirea* from April 1940 dedicated to Nichifor Crainic. Of particular interest for the present research is the article published by Dumitru STĂNILOAE, “Opera teologică a lui Nichifor Crainic [The theological work of Nichifor Crainic]”, in: *Gândirea*, Year XIX, No. 4 (April 1940), pp. 264-276.

²¹ Regarding the biography of Nichifor Crainic and the literature dealing with aspects of his life see Ioan ICĂ JR., “Studiu introductiv [Introductory study]”, in: Nichifor Crainic, *Cursurile de mistică. I. Teologie mistică. II. Mistică germană [Courses in Mysticism. I. Mystical Theology. II. German Mysticism]*, Deisis, 2010, pp. 9-23. On his work and collaboration during communism, I have consulted his five volumes from CNSAS archives (Archives of The National Council for the Securitate Archives), Fond SIE (Foreign Intelligence Service), File 0003722, volumes 1-5. It is not the purpose of this research to take a position on the content of this information or to contextualize

moral failures in his life, his name is linked to the revival of Orthodox mystical theology in the academic debate in Romania²².

A first step for rediscovering the Philokalia was made by Nichifor Crainic in his lectures from the academic year 1926-1927, at the newly established Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Chișinău, which opened its doors on November 8, 1926²³. His course was entitled “Modern Religious Literature”²⁴. From the academic year 1932-1933, Nichifor Crainic was a professor at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest²⁵, teaching Mystical Theology. In this course, Crainic also discussed the texts of the Philokalia and its importance for the spiritual life of the Orthodox Church²⁶. At that time the content of the Philokalia was unknown to academic research and even the monastic world, with few exceptions, a fact noted even by the author:

it, but I will use from these five volumes the information that can better explain the emergence and reception of the Philokalia in Romanian Orthodox Theology.

²² Ioan Ică Jr., “Studiu introductiv [Introductory study]”, pp. 34-39.

²³ For the history of the Faculty of Theology in Chișinău see the extensive study of Constantin CIOBANU, “Rolul facultății de teologie din Chișinău în redresarea vieții spirituale și a educației teologice în Basarabia [The Role of the Faculty of Theology from Chisinau in the Recovery of Spiritual Life and Theological Education in Bessarabia]”, in: *Buletin Științific. Revista de Etnografie, Științele Naturii și Muzeologie*, No. 7 (2007), pp. 131-169.

²⁴ By Royal Decree no. 1137 of 21 April 1926, published in the Official Gazette, no. 91 of 28 April 1926, the establishment of a Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bessarabia was approved. In September 1926, Minister Ioan Petrovici signed the decree for the opening of the faculty. The first two articles of the decree regulated the structure and the administration of the new Faculty of Orthodox Theology: “Art. 1. The Faculty of Theology of the University of Iași, provided for in the Law of Higher Education of 1910, is hereby established. Art. 2. This Faculty, as an integrating part of the University of Iași, with all the consequences that this situation entails, will have its seat in Chișinău and will function in the premises of the Theological Seminary, which will be repaired and put entirely at the disposal of the faculty”. Article 7, paragraph (11) provided for the establishment of the Department of “Modern Religious Literature”. The professors were to be appointed as substitutes and were to be tenured in their posts from the academic year 1927-1928. For a description of these moments, see the memoirs of Nichifor CRAINIC, *Memorii. Vol. 1: Zile albe, zile negre [Memoirs. Volume 1: White Days, Dark Days]*, edited by Nedici LEMNARU, Casa Editorială “Gândirea”, Bucharest, 1991, pp. 198–201.

²⁵ Ioan Ică Jr., “Studiu introductiv [Introductory study]”, p. 34.

²⁶ Nichifor CRAINIC, *Cursurile de mistică [Courses in Mysticism]*, p. 206.

“The Philokalia, which, of course, dates from later times and is so often mentioned by Russian and Western authors when speaking of Orthodox spirituality, is a vast anthology of patristic and hagiographical writings with dogmatic, moral, and spiritual content. We don’t even know if some parts of it can be found in our monasteries.”²⁷

In this context, Nichifor Crainic’s contribution to the development of greater interest in Philokalia was quickly received. On June 20, 1937, Father Dumitru Stăniloae dedicated an extensive article in the Romanian journal “Telegraful Român” to Nichifor Crainic to emphasize his contribution to Orthodox theology and its revival, and to defend him against accusations of nationalism. In this regard, Father Stăniloae underlines the fact that:

“Nichifor Crainic has not yet given all that his genius mind and his heart of fervent worshipper of Orthodoxy and Romanianism can give. His course on Orthodox mysticism, given to students at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, will shortly, through his publication, throw a new wave of light, much stronger than those of the past, on the values of Orthodox spirituality, specifying once again and fully to what heights the true living in the Orthodox Christian spirit can lead. This work will also be a milestone for the orientation and religious awakening of our priesthood, for the life of the Church, and for Romanian theology, an unfailing source of great religious power and inspiration in the most authentic riverbed of Orthodoxy. It will definitively consecrate Nichifor Crainic as a creator of a new, life-giving current in the life and culture of the Church, as a theologian who discovered the Spirit and wrote for the witness of the Spirit, putting an end to the writing of pedantic, confused and empty scholastic formulas.”²⁸

²⁷ Nichifor CRAINIC, *Cursurile de mistică [Courses in Mysticism]*, p. 206.

²⁸ Dumitru STĂNILOAE, “Nichifor Crainic”, in: *Telegraful Român*, Year LXXXV, No. 25 (20 June 1937), p. 1.

In these words, Father Stăniloae characterized Nichifor Crainic as a true theologian of a new theological synthesis based on patristic writings. In the same year, Nichifor Crainic discovered that the Philokalia was circulating in Romanian monasteries and there was a great interest in these texts of Orthodox spirituality and mysticism. In a letter of 17 September 1937, Nichifor Crainic informed his friend Lucian Blaga, the great Romanian philosopher, that he had discovered a translation of the Philokalia into Romanian²⁹.

Also, in 1938, the Philokalia appeared in the focus of research of Romanian theologians and scholars, who called for a renewal of Orthodox Patristic Theology. In this regard, on May 28, 1938, George Racoveanu, Romanian far-right political journalist, publicist, Orthodox theologian, and a disciple of Nae Ionescu, published in the Legionary newspaper “Cuvântul (The Word)” a short article on the importance of the Philokalia in the life of the Orthodox Church³⁰. The article signed by Racoveanu

²⁹ “Dear Lulu, it was with surprise and even greater joy that I received the book about the abbots you sent me. I have leafed through it and find that it will serve me quite well in preparing my lectures as thoroughly as possible. This summer I came across a real treasure: I discovered that the famous mystical collection of Orthodoxy, the Philokalia, has been translated into Romanian 150 years ago! It was not printed, however, but remained in Cyrillic manuscripts for the use of spiritually thin monks. A very simple monk, I don’t know how, came up with the idea of following in its footsteps, collecting manuscript after manuscript from old papers, transcribing them, and rebuilding the collection. He put five volumes of 300 or 400 compact pages in my hands! You can understand my frantic joy: it’s just what I was looking for to document my course in Orthodox Mystical Theology. All summer I read it and took notes, so that the new edition of the course, which I was determined to prepare this summer, was postponed until winter. One difficulty is that these old translations get visibly bogged down on the pages where contemplation in the philosophical language is involved. Our translators knew Greek but had no intellectual terms in Romanian. Our lovers of archaisms, who enthuse about old translations, don’t know what they are saying. Apart from those of a narrative nature, no old translation is worth updating. For they are all incomplete, regarding the language, when they face the noble Greek way of thinking. And the Philokalia in particular includes authors of unsuspected philosophical and linguistic subtlety. Our theology so far has only known “the navel of Hesychasm”, nourished by the Philokalia.” Nichifor CRAINIC, “Scrisoare din 17 septembrie 1937”, in: *Manuscriptum*, Year XXVI, no. 1-4 (1995), pp. 140-141.

³⁰ George RACOVEANU, “Dumineca [Sunday]”, p. 1: “The Philokalia, i.e. “The Love of Spiritual Beauty”, is the book of Orthodox way of life. Others, being more covetous

begins with the need for a Romanian translation of the Philokalia, used in most Orthodox countries and even in the Catholic Church. Further on, the author shows the low interest that this book has in Romanian Orthodox academic theology³¹. He gives, in his short article, some details about the work done by individuals or collectively in the 1930s for the translation of the Philokalia into Romanian, attacking Nichifor Crainic in his article.

In May 1938, Nichifor Crainic published an extensive study on the “Jesus Prayer”³². In this study, the author considers the Philokalia as the full expression of the Orthodox spiritual life. To argue the importance of the Jesus Prayer, the author used several quotations from Philotheus of Sinai, Callistus and Ignatius Xantopol, Evagrius Ponticus, and Diadochos of Photiki, among others³³.

and more skilful than us, have long endeavoured to have, in: their own language, this treasure of the monks and great thinkers of God. The Greeks have had it since 1792, first printed in Venice in a large volume. The Russians and the Slavic nations (even the Bulgarians) have it in Slavonic and Russian translation, under the name of “Dobrotoliubia”. They completed the Greek “Philokalia” of Venice with prints and manuscripts, making up five large volumes of the writings of the Holy Fathers over eleven centuries. The Westerners themselves, through Bernard Schmidt, felt the need to guide themselves according to these teachings of the hermits. Migne gives them in the form of a book taken from the writings of Origen by St. Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian. And a critical edition of the text is given by J. A. ROBINSON, in: *The Philokalia of Origen*, Cambridge 1893.”

³¹ G. RACOVEANU, “Dumineca [Sunday]”, p. 1: “In Romania ‘The Love of Spiritual Beauty’ circulates in the world of ‘those pure in heart’, the humble monks. They alone read more. Our theology professors have no idea about it. When they hear of such ‘nonsense’, they laugh their heads off. And they leave it to the ‘navel-gazers’, who have no higher concerns and sit day and night with their eyes on their navels. The bishops have their own business: housekeeping and judging rebellious priests. But even the monks read only parts of the ‘Philokalia’, which often are not even ‘the Philokalia’ - as the mystical theologians think. The good parts are found in manuscripts.”

³² Nichifor CRAINIC, “Rugăciunea lui Iisus [Jesus Prayer]”, in: *Gândirea*, Year XVII, No. 5 (May 1938) pp. 217-224.

³³ Nichifor CRAINIC, “Rugăciunea lui Iisus [Jesus Prayer]”, p. 217: “When, in: 1782, the treatises on ‘practical and theoretical philosophy’, dedicated to this mode of contemplation and collected under the title of the Philokalia, were first printed by Nicodemus the Hagiorite in Venice, all the copies were brought to the East. This detail, which is merely the echo of a traditional discipline, indicates precisely the confessional awareness of an exclusive belonging. The prayer of Jesus is almost the same as the spiritual life of Orthodoxy.”

In a short article published by Nichifor Crainic in May 1938 in the journal “Gândirea”, as a response to Racoveanu, “an uneducated and scandalous publicist”, as Crainic calls him, he challenges George Racoveanu’s critical positions towards the reception of the Philokalia in the Romanian academic theology³⁴. Further on, the author described the Greek and Russian collections of the Philokalia, including the second Greek edition of 1893, that will be used for the Romanian translation. In this short article, Crainic announced that he will publish a Romanian translation of the Philokalia from a manuscript that belonged to the former bishop Gherasim Safirin:

“It is very interesting to know that all these writings were translated into Romanian especially in the time of Paisius Velichkovsky, by his disciples. It is also interesting that the ascetic works are printed, while those on Hesychasm mystical tradition are found only in old manuscripts. A new translation was given to us by the former Bishop Gherasim Safirin. It is based on the Greek edition of 1893 and contains only the first volume and not even this one is complete. Safirin’s version, without being literary and

³⁴ Nichifor CRAINIC, “Cronica mărunță”, in: *Gândirea*, Year XVII, No. 5 (May 1938,) p. 280: “The Philokalia is being questioned by an uneducated and scandalous publicist, who wants to hurl insults at professors of Theology and the Church’s hierarchs because professors are not aware of it and they have to learn from him about it. It is a mobile thing to teach others, but it requires that you know what you are talking about. The publicist in question, however, knows neither what the Philokalia is nor how to talk about it. The Philokalia is not a book, as he thinks, but a generic name, i.e. «The Love of Beauty», that is given to books of Orthodox spirituality, gathered together to serve the same purpose. To know what this is all about, let us first make the following distinction: there is a Philokalia known in the history of classical Christian literature and there is another Philokalia known only in the history of modern Orthodox literature. According to their content, they are two entirely different works, which the brave uneducated publicist unfortunately confuses. The first Philokalia, composed around 360 by Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus, is an Origenist anthology of texts. The Second Philokalia is something entirely different and has nothing to do with the former, except the name. It is not a book, but a collection of books, comprising various spiritual authors from the 4th to the 14th century. This Philokalia does not contain a single line of the writings of Origen, whom it detested many times for his doctrinal errors.”

entirely correct, is the best; the translations of the disciples of Paisius are unreadable, especially the philosophical passages of the treatises. Gherasim Safrin's manuscript is the property of the holy monastery of Frăsinei, where he worked on it. It is now in our possession, taken with written obligations to correct and print it for the benefit of the monastery.”³⁵

Therefore, in 1938, Nichifor Crainic undertook the publication of this manuscript from Frăsinei, which was nothing more than a copy of the Romanian translation of Philokalia from the Monastery Prodromos on the Mount Athos³⁶. Aware of this extensive effort, Nichifor Crainic asked the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church through the Ministry

³⁵ Nichifor CRAINIC, “Cronica mărunță”, p. 280.

³⁶ As is known from current research, there were several translations into Romanian of the Philokalia prior to the translation of Father Dumitru Stăniloae, many of which are preserved in manuscript in the Library of the Romanian Academy. One of the many translations was the so-called “The Philokalia from Prodromos”, a collection of translations into Romanian compiled by the monks of Prodromos Monastery on Mount Athos from 1911 onwards and sent to the Romania for publication in 1922. The texts were translated by several translators, such as Ilarion the Deacon, Theodosius, Ignatius from Transilvania of the Iviron Hermitage, who translated the texts from another translation into modern Greek made by the Aristotle the Monk, and the forword and biographies were translated by Cyril Lambrino. A copy of this collection was sent on 5 January 1922 to Gherasim Safrin, former bishop of Râmnic, retired to the Frăsinei monastery in Romania. This collection contains more texts than the Philokalia of St. Nicodemus Aghiorite. Virgil CÂNDEA, “Filocalia în literatura română veche [The Philokalia in Old Romanian Literature]”, in: *Filocalia. Versiunea în limba română a antologiei în limba greacă publicată la Veneția în 1782, de Sfântul Nicodim Aghioritul & Sfântul Macarie Mitropolitul Corintului la care s-au adăugat și alte texte*, Edited by Doina URICARIU, notes and afterword, introductory study by academician Virgil Căndea, Universalia, 2001, pp. 11-14; Dan ZAMFIRESCU, *Paisianismul: un moment românesc în istoria spiritualității europene volum alcătuit în întâmpinarea primului Congres Ecumenic Internațional „Paisie Velichkovski și mișcarea/moștenirea sa spirituală” [Paisianism: a Romanian moment in the history of European spirituality, volume compiled for the first International Ecumenical Congress “Paisius Velichkovsky and his spiritual movement/egacy” Italy, Magnano, 20-23 September 1995]*, Roza Vânturilor, București, 1996; Virgil CÂNDEA, “Din nou despre Filocalia de la Prodromu”, in: *Părintele Dumitru Stăniloae în conștiința contemporanilor – mărturii, evocări, amintiri*, Trinitas Publishing House, Iași, 2003, p. 75.

of Religious Denominations and Arts to publish the manuscript. At the synodal meeting of 28 June 1938, the project was presented to all synodal bishops of the Romanian Orthodox Church³⁷. Therefore, the Holy Synod decided:

“1. The Holy Synod notes with gratitude the decision of Professor Nichifor Crainic to print the Philokalia, and urges the most reverend Bishops, members of the Synod to support its dissemination after its publication. 2. The Holy Synod thanks His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae of Transylvania for his kindness in offering to print the Philokalia and assures him of all support for the spread of this book.”³⁸

Romanian newspapers and theological journals welcomed this decision of the Romanian Orthodox Church to publish the translation of the Philokalia into Romanian³⁹. Although the public was waiting for the

³⁷ “Proposal No. 1775/938. Professor Nichifor Crainic, of the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, intervenes through the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Arts with a request to be given the necessary support for the printing of The Philokalia. The matter is declared urgent and is debated. His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae of Transylvania states that, given the importance of this ascetic and mystical work, and appreciating the great spiritual benefit that will arise from its printing in Romanian translation, he undertakes to have it published in the Archdiocesan printing house in Sibiu.” *Biserica Ortodoxă Română. Revista Sfântului Sinod*, Supplement (1938), p. 56.

³⁸ *Biserica Ortodoxă Română. Revista Sfântului Sinod*, Supplement (1938), p. 56.

³⁹ The journal “Patria” joyfully announced the decision of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church: “The meeting of the Holy Synod opened yesterday at 9:30 a.m. under the chairmanship of His Eminence Metropolitan Bălan of Transylvania. The reports of the commissions were discussed and the current work was resolved. The request of professor Nichifor Crainic to support the printing of his work Philokalia was examined. His Eminence Metropolitan Bălan offered to print it at the metropolitan printing house in Sibiu”. “Fapte și știri [Facts and News]”, in: *Patria*, Year XX, No. 132 (30 June 1938), p. 4. Another newspaper, called “Romania”, announced: “The Holy Synod has approved the printing of the work Philokalia at the archdiocesan printing house in Sibiu, following the request of professor Nichifor Crainic.”: “Sf. Sinod a ținut a treia ședință [The Holy Synod held its third session]”, in: *România*, Year. 1, No. 15-29, (30 June 1938), p. 18. The newspaper “Curentul” announced: “The Holy Synod has approved the printing of the work Philokalia at the Archdiocesan printing house in Sibiu”, in: “Hotărârile de marți ale Sf. Sinod [Tuesday Decisions of

printing of this version of the Philokalia⁴⁰, it never took place, because of the historical context. On 3 November 1938, the so-called “Law for the rationalisation of higher education” was promulgated. According to this law, several theological courses from the university curriculum were suppressed⁴¹. Because of this decree, Nichifor Crainic’s courses in “Logic and Metaphysics” and “Mystical Theology” have been cancelled. In this context, Nichifor Crainic abandoned the project.

However, in 1938, after extensive research at universities abroad, Fr Dumitru Stăniloae published an extensive work on the life and teachings of St. Gregory Palamas⁴², a work that immediately came to the attention of the general public. In this regard, Jean Gouillard, the French historian of religion, had many words of praise for Dumitru Stăniloae’s book⁴³.

the Holy Synod]”, in: *Curentul*, year 11 (July 1938), p. 1.

⁴⁰ Iosu E. NAGHIU, “Cronică literară. Scrisul bisericesc în anul 1938”, in: *Viața ilustrată*, Year VI, No. 1-2 (January/February 1939), p. 24: “A translation of the Philokalia was also announced, but as far as we know, it has not yet been published.” The news can be found in the Journal of the Archdiocese of Sibiu: *Revista Teologică*, Year XXVIII, No. 7-8, (August 1938), p. 383.

⁴¹ There have been several statements against the abolition of certain theology departments in the Faculties of Orthodox Theology or in the Faculties of Law in Romania because of this decree. For this subject see Valerian ȘESAN, “Catedra de drept bisericesc la facultățile de drept [Departments of Canon Law at Faculties of Law]”, in: *Candela*, Year XLIX (1938), pp. 242-262; Grigore MARCU, “Pe marginea desființării catedrelor de Teologie Morală de la Academile Teologice și a celei de Drept Bisericesc de la Universitatea din Cluj [On the abolition of the departments of Moral Theology at the Theological Academies and of Canon Law at the University of Cluj]”, in: *Revista Teologică*, nr. 6 (1939), pp. 259-262; Lazăr IACOB, *Dreptul bisericesc la facultățile de drept* [Canon Law at Faculties of Law], Bucharest, 1939.

⁴² Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Viața și învățătura Sfântului Grigorie Palama*, Tiparul Tipografiei Arhiepiscopale, Sibiu, 1938.

⁴³ See the review by Jean Gouillard in the same year in the prestigious magazine *Échos d'Orient*: Jean GOUILLARD, “Autour du Palamisme”, in: *Échos d'Orient*, tome 37, n°191-192 (1938), p. 447: “This book, with its chronological details drawn from the best sources and its diligent analysis of unpublished works, marks a step forward and ranks among the few serious studies previously published on this subject”. The book review of Fr Stăniloae’s book is spread over 8 pages (pp. 447-455). At the end of this book review, the author states: “In conclusion, Stăniloae’s book is very useful because of the new texts added to the historical and doctrinal file of Palamism. It reveals good analytical skills but also a certain logical rigidity in interpreting the facts. On the whole, he can only make us wish for the publication of the numerous unpublished works of which he gives us a sort of promise. Researchers would find there the elements

With this work, Dumitru Stăniloae brought a new approach to Orthodox academic theology. The book was a result of his academic research and spiritual search over a period of 10 years (1928-1938), during his doctoral studies and his early years as a professor of Theology. In 1940, in his article addressed to the 20th anniversary of Nicolae Bălan's archbishopric, Nichifor Crainic placed the entire activity of the metropolitan under the meaning of the Philokalia, the love of beauty in art and asceticism.⁴⁴ Also in the same year Fr Dumitru Stăniloae dedicated another extensive article to the theological work of Nichifor Crainic⁴⁵, showing his important role in the revival of Romanian Orthodox theology of the debates around the Philokalia. During the Second World War interest in mystical writings increased in Romanian Orthodox theology. In 1942, Fr Stăniloae, in his response to Lucian Blaga's position on Christianity and Orthodoxy, pointed out that the Philokalia is the essence of Orthodox theology⁴⁶. Also, in 1942, on March 30, G. Lungulescu published an article "Yoga or Philokalia", in which he compares Oriental Hindu mysticism and Philokalic mysticism. Also, in 1942, Orthodox theologians such as Nicolae Mladin, at that time a deacon, stated that the centrality of Orthodox life is given by the prayer of

of a more objective and complete study of Palamism." J. GOUILLARD, "Autour du Palamisme," p. 455.

⁴⁴ Nichifor CRAINIC, "Mitropolitul Nicolae, Glasul Ortodoxiei noastre [Metropolitan Nicolae, the Voice of our Orthodoxy]", in: *Omagiu Înalt Prea Sfinției Sale Dr. Nicolae Bălan Mitropolitul Ardealului: la douăzeci de ani de arhipăstorire*, Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, Sibiu, 1940, p. 278; Nichifor CRAINIC, "Mitropolitul Nicolae, Glasul Ortodoxiei noastre", in: *Revista Teologică*, an. xxx, Nr. 5-8 (May-August 1940), pp. 453-464.

⁴⁵ Dumitru STĂNILOAE, "Opera teologică a lui Nichifor Crainic [The theological work of Nichifor Crainic]", in: *Gândirea*, Year XIX, No. 4 (April 1940), pp. 264-276.

⁴⁶ "If Mr. Lucian Blaga had taken the trouble to read the Philokalia, or to visit an Orthodox monastery where our traditions have been preserved, he would have seen how scrupulously and tenaciously the purification of the soul is pursued day after day and hour after hour, through attention to every impure thought, through the uprooting of all passions and desires, no matter how much they are disguised in noble appearances. Contemplation, the true understanding of life, the feeling of connection with God can only be acquired gradually, at the cost of this relentless and arduous moral ascent". D. STĂNILOAE, "Poziția dlui Lucian Blaga față de creștinism și ortodoxie. XI Ortodoxia românească și mitul dlui Blaga", in: *Telegraful Român*, Year XC, nr. 33 (16 August 1942), p. 1.

Jesus practiced according to the Philokalia⁴⁷. A more important step for the popularization of the Philokalic texts was taken in 1943 by some Orthodox newspapers, such as the newspaper “Oastea Domnului (Army of the Lord)” and “Lumina Satelor (The Light of the Villages)”. Small passages from Philokalic translations were published in 1943 in these newspapers.

IV. Father Dumitru Stăniloae and the Romanian translation of the Philokalia

As Andrew Louth points out in a study, there are two stages in the reception of the Philokalia. The first stage is given by how the Philokalic texts are translated, read, and received, which can be considered a *material reception* of the Philokalia, and the second stage is given by how this material reception led to an understanding of the nature of Christian life, Church and theology. This is called the *noetic reception* of the Philokalia⁴⁸. Material reception can easily be described from manuscripts, publications, and reviews. Noetic reception, as Andrew Louth argues, is a much more difficult process, and concerns how theology receives a Philokalic dimension or a Philokalic gnoseology.

In this regard, Fr Dumitru Stăniloae did not limit himself only to the material reception of the Philokalia, as translator and promoter of the texts⁴⁹,

⁴⁷ Nicolae MLADIN, “Catolicismul despre Ortodoxie”, in: *Telegraful Român*, An XC, nr. 49 (6 December 1942), p. 1: “The Christocentric character of Eastern holiness is fully emphasized in the ‘prayer of Jesus’ (according to the Philokalia), equally recommended to monks and laity (Confession of a Russian pilgrim). Hesychia is not the same as disturbance: it demands the activity of the whole man (physical and fasting).”

⁴⁸ Andrew LOUTH, “The Influence of the Philokalia in the Orthodox World”, in: Brock BINGAMAN, Bradley NASSIF (eds.), *The Philokalia: A Classic Text of Orthodox Spirituality*, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 50.

⁴⁹ For his translation, see Jürgen HENKEL, E. WONNER, “Die «Rumänische Philokalie» von Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993): Ansatz, Genese und Struktur eines epochalen Werkes der rumänischen orthodoxen Spiritualität”, in: *Orthodoxes Forum* 14 (2000), pp. 181-199; Jürgen HENKEL, *Dumitru Stăniloae: Leben – Werk – Theologie*, Verlag Herder GmbH, 2017, pp. 246-262; Maciej BIELAWSKI, “Dumitru Stăniloae and his *Philokalia*”, in: Lucian TURCESCU (ed.), *Dumitru Stăniloae: Tradition and Modernity in Theology*, Center for Romanian Studies, 2002, pp. 25-52.

but tried to understand Orthodox theology from a Philocalic perspective.

This great work of translation of the Philocalic texts into Romanian by Fr Dumitru Stăniloae is the second translation into a modern language of the famous work compiled by St. Nicodemus the Hagiorite and Macarius of Corinth and published in Venice in 1782. The first translation is attributed to Theophan the Recluse. The first volume was published in 1877⁵⁰.

The entire manuscript of the Romanian translation of the Philokalia (more than 3000 pages) is preserved at the Brâncoveanu Monastery, Sâmbăta de Sus, Romania. At the end of the manuscript there is a final statement of Fr Dumitru Stăniloae regarding the whole effort of translating the Philokalia, as follows:

“I finished the translation of the entire Philokalia with the help of the Almighty and good God, on 31 March 1945, working on it since May 1944 in time of bombardment and serious hazards. All the time my heart was also with poor Mioara, to whom it is getting harder and harder. Jesus have mercy on us!”⁵¹

According to this final statement of Fr Dumitru Stăniloae and the manuscripts of his work⁵², the two volumes of the Greek Philokalia of 1893

⁵⁰ Kallistos WARE, „Philocalie”, in: *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, ed. Marcel VILLER, F. CAVALLERA, A. SOLINAC, Vol. 12, Paris, 1984, coll. 1336-1352; Andre SCRIMA, “L’avènement philocalique dans l’orthodoxie roumaine – Un moine de l’Église orthodoxe de Roumanie”, in: *Istina*, 3, 1958, pp. 443-474; Arhim. Ciprian ZAHARIA, “Biserica Ortodoxă Română și traducerea patristică și filocalice în limbile moderne”, in: Dan ZAMFIRESCU, *Paisianismul. Un moment românesc în istoria spiritualității europene*, Editura Roza Vânturilor, București, 1996, pp. 46-47.

⁵¹ Archives of Brâncoveanu Monastery, Sâmbăta de Sus, Romania, „Filocalia”, Manuscript 20, “From the life of St. Gregory, Archbishop of Thessalonica”, f. 7.

⁵² Regarding the translation of Philokalia into Romanian by Fr Dumitru Stăniloae, see Răzvan PERȘA, “Părintele Dumitru Stăniloae și traducerea «Filocaliei românești». Precizări asupra manuscriselor [Father Dumitru Stăniloae and the translation of the «Romanian Philokalia». Details from the manuscripts]”, in: Daniel LEMENI (ed.), *Isihasm și spiritualitate filocalică în teologia românească [Hesychasm and Philocalic Spirituality in Romanian Theology]*, Astra Museum, Sibiu, 2019, pp. 55-78; Răzvan PERȘA, “Contribuția Părintelui Arsenie Boca la traducerea și apariția «Filocaliei Românești» [Father Arsenie Boca’s contribution to the translation and publication of the «Romanian Philokalia»]”, in: *Telegraful Român*, nr. 41-44 (November 1 and 15, 2020), pp. 4-5.

(volume 1, 394 pages; volume 2, 545 pages) were translated in only 11 months, during the bombing raids at the end of World War II, the difficult period that Romania went through at the end of the Second World War and the personal suffering caused by the serious illness of his daughter Mioara, who died a month after the translation of the *Philokalia* was completed. In addition to these texts, found in the Greek *Philokalia*, Fr Dumitru Stăniloae included several texts taken from the *Patrologia Graeca* and the works of Saint Maximus the Confessor.

For his entire work, Andrew Louth considers Fr Dumitru Stăniloae one of the greatest Orthodox theologians of the last century in the Orthodox Church.

“If one looks at the Greek Fathers who are central to Fr Dumitru, a familiar pattern emerges, for these are the Fathers usually invoked in connection with the neo-patristic synthesis of Fr Georges Florovsky and Vladimir Lossky. Fr Dumitru then emerges not as a marginal figure, not even simply a bridge between East and West, or between Russian and Greek Orthodoxy (roles Romanians have often adopted), but rather at the very centre of what can claim to have been the liveliest and most significant movement in modern Orthodox theology. Fr Dumitru’s endeavours, however, dwarf those of his contemporaries.”⁵³

V. Conclusion

The interwar period can be considered for Orthodox Academic Theology a period for the revival of patristic, canonical, liturgical, mystical, and dogmatic texts and a return to the “mind of the Fathers”, by reconnecting the intellectual academic research with the spiritual life of the Church. As it was emphasized in the paper, after the Theological Conference in Athens, on 16 February 1937, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Miron Cristea, made an appeal to all the professors of the Theological

⁵³ Andrew LOUTH, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers: From the Philokalia to the Present*, InterVarsity Press, 2015, p. 132-133.

Academies in Romania, regarding an extensive translation of Patristic texts to recover the spiritual tradition of the Orthodox Church. According to this editorial plan, the Romanian Orthodox Church became the first autocephalous Church to implement a project of patristic translations for the revival of Orthodox theology after the Theological Conference in Athens. In this context, Orthodox theologians discovered the mystical and ascetic texts from the Philokalia, but it needed a proper Romanian translation. The most important figure for such a project was Fr Dumitru Stăniloae. His Romanian translation of the Greek Philokalia remains one of the most important achievements of the academic Orthodox Theology in Romania on the basis of the Neo-Patristic synthesis.