

Since this year is dedicated to the elderly, we recall the words of one of his admirers, Mihail Wieder:

“...We need elders like these, to serve as examples and guides in all our lives. They have fulfilled their duty toward us; now we must fulfill our duty toward them. We must continue their work, honor them, venerate them as saints, follow their counsel, and enlighten ourselves with their thoughts... Only thus will we still have them among us” (p. 508).

Rightly appreciating this volume, we echo the words of Tudor Arghezi: “A beautiful book — honor to the one who wrote it!”

Rev. Prof. Dr. Sorin COSMA

Rev. Prof. Dr. George GRIGORIȚĂ (coord.), *Forme de organizare și funcționare ale monahismului ortodox: tradiție bimilenară și provocări contemporane. Actele simpozionului organizat de Patriarhia Română în zilele de 24–26 mai 2021 (Forms of Organization and Functioning of Orthodox Monasticism: Two-Millennia-Old Tradition and Contemporary Challenges. Proceedings of the Symposium organized by the Romanian Patriarchate on May 24–26, 2021)*, Basilica Publishing House, Bucharest, 2024, 952 pp.

In the *Studia Canonica* collection, initiated and coordinated since 2014 by Rev. Prof. Dr. George Grigoriță, Patriarchal Counselor at the Chancery of the Holy Synod, the sixth volume has recently been published. This volume contains the proceedings of the International Symposium organized by the Romanian Patriarchate, through the Faculty of Orthodox Theology “Justinian the Patriarch” in Bucharest (Department of Systematic Theology, Practical Theology, and Sacred Art) and the Exarchate Sector of the Archdiocese of Bucharest, which took place on May 24-26, 2021.

In the Romanian theological space and beyond, there was a need for the development of such a scientific volume, as monasticism and its organization, in all its aspects, have been and continue to be an important element of Church life. Moreover, a canonical analysis of the forms of organization of Orthodox monasticism in the first Christian millennium, as well as how these were applied in the Church during the second millennium, was necessary to address the challenges of contemporary society, which is not only profoundly secularized but also secularizing, imposing values that are often foreign to Christian life and, of course, monastic life. Understanding, practically applying, and respecting these regulations is a pastoral necessity for any monastic establishment.

This volume brings together the papers presented online during the symposium, which was attended by hierarchs, priests, professors, and Romanian monks, as well as guests from the Patriarchates of Antioch, Moscow, Serbia, Georgia, and the Greek Orthodox Church. Structurally, it is divided into three main parts: the first part, dedicated to the forms of organization and functioning of Orthodox monasticism in the first Christian millennium; the second part, which includes studies on the organization and functioning of Romanian monasticism; and finally, the third and last part, with papers from invited participants from sister Orthodox Churches about the monasticism in those Churches.

In the *Foreword* to this volume, His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, highlights the main historical moments that led to the crystallization of the canonical norms of organizing and functioning Romanian monasticism, culminating with the *Regulation for the organization of monastic life* (2003, still in effect today), blessing and congratulating the coordinators and participants of this symposium.

The first part of the volume is dedicated to the forms of organization and functioning of Orthodox monasticism in the first Christian millennium (pp. 13-352). Initially, Rev. Prof. Dr. George Grigoriță, the coordinator of the volume and holder of the Orthodox Canon Law course at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology “Justinian the Patriarch” in Bucharest, masterfully presents an exhaustive overview of the “Canonical and Nomocanonical

Provisions of the First Christian Millennium Regarding the Organization of Monastic Life” (pp. 13-155), concluding that “through the canonical and nomocanonical regulations, the Church outlined, starting in the 4th century, the general framework for organizing and functioning monastic life, offering each monastery the possibility to apply monastic rules in the style most suited and adapted to the pastoral-missionary needs of the time” (p. 154).

Next, Rev. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Iulian Mihai Constantinescu, professor at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Craiova, analyzes the canonical-disciplinary status of monks from the perspective of the monastic vows of obedience and chastity made by monks upon entering monastic life, based on the holy canons issued by the Ecumenical Councils of Chalcedon (451), Trullan (691-692), and Nicaea II (787), as well as their impact on monastic life (pp. 156-185). The canonical issue of celibacy and monasticism (pp. 186-209) is addressed by Rev. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Irimie Marga from Sibiu, who emphasizes that “celibacy and monasticism are two forms of Christian living, born from the evangelical counsels, which do not oppose family life, do not seek to replace the family, do not compete with it, but on the contrary, they support, strengthen, and defend Christian family life” (p. 186). Archpriest Dr. Eugen Maftai, lecturer at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest, compares the eremitical system with the cenobitic system, focusing on the principles, practices, and models of monastic organization (pp. 201-240). Later, Archimandrite Dr. Casian Rușeț, lecturer at the Faculty of Theology in Arad, develops the issue of the monk’s involvement in church administration from a canonical and legislative point of view (pp. 241-280). “Ora et labora. Prayer and labor activities in the monastery” (pp. 281-311) is the study of Protos. Dr. Iachint Vardianu, living at the Radu Vodă Monastery and inspector at the Chancery of the Holy Synod, who presents the main obediences of any monk. Finally, the nun Atanasia Văețiși from Stavropoleos Monastery presents the testimony of the typicon as a spiritual vocation and dynastic patronage, within five Constantinopolitan cenobitic communities from the 12th-14th centuries: Kecharitomene, Lips, Anarghiri, Christ Philanthropos, and Bebaia Elpis (pp. 312-352).

The second part of the volume contains studies on the organization and functioning of Romanian Orthodox monasticism (pp. 353-830). At the beginning of this part, Archimandrite Dr. Nectarie Șofelea, abbot of the Radu Vodă Monastery and administrative exarch of the Archdiocese of Bucharest, provides a historical overview of monasticism during the Phanariot period (1711/1716-1821), in which the monks, though many of them were foreigners, were united by the same faith and monastic life (pp. 353-380). Rev. Prof. Dr. Constantin Rus from Arad discusses the canonical organization of Romanian Orthodox monasticism in the 19th century (pp. 381-406), focusing on the provisions of the Îndreptarea Legii or Pravila cea Mare (1652), the Organic Regulation (1831-1832), the Organic Decree for regulating the monastic habit (1864), the Regulation for monastic discipline (1873), the Regulation for the good conduct of the clergy in general (1884), and the Organic Statute of the Greco-Orthodox Church of Hungary and Transylvania (1868). Archimandrite Dr. Policarp Crețulescu, Patriarchal Counselor and director of the Holy Synod Library, discusses the monastic life in Wallachia during the mid-19th century, including annexes with new information and data related to the income of dioceses and monasteries, the monastery archives, and a complete list of monasteries in Wallachia in the first half of the 19th century (pp. 407-505).

The first regulation dedicated to monastic life in the Romanian Orthodox Church (pp. 506-586) is thoroughly analyzed by Archim. doctoral student Andrei Anghel, Patriarchal Vicar in the Patriarchal Cabinet. This regulation, although it represented the first text dedicated to organizing monastic life in Romania, elaborated in 1866, was never approved or promulgated. The author notes that, on the one hand, this initial draft text succinctly presents the main monastic rules, down to the smallest details, while on the other hand, it includes innovations imposed by state authorities, which sought, through the Ministry of Cults, to directly and fully control the entire monastic life in the Romanian Orthodox Church. In the same context, Dr. Daniel-Grigore Filimon, from the Chancery of the Holy Synod, discusses the legislative and ecclesiastical provisions regarding Orthodox monastic life in the United Principalities (1859-1881) (pp. 587-644). An annex includes the letter addressed to the Patriarch of

Constantinople regarding the legitimacy of the reforms undertaken by the Romanian ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza concerning the Orthodox Church in the Kingdom (pp. 645-678).

The organization of monastic life in the Romanian Orthodox Church according to ecclesiastical decisions and state legislation from 1881-1947 is presented by His Grace Ieronim, Bishop of Dacia Felix (pp. 579-709). This period, known as the royal period, saw the adoption of the French model of recognized cults in the country's constitution, which also regulated the autonomy of the Romanian Orthodox Church. In this context, "the organization of monastic life was the responsibility of the Church and its governing bodies" (p. 708). Later, Protos. Dr. Joachim Bejenariu, Archdiocesan Counselor for the Colportage Service of the Archdiocese of Bucharest, reviews the main moments and events in monastic life in the Kingdom of Romania from 1881-1918 (pp. 710-734). "State and ecclesiastical legislative landmarks related to Romanian monastic life" is the title of the study by Rev. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Emilian-Iustinian Roman from Iași, where he presents and analyzes the Organic Decree of November 30, 1864 for regulating the monastic habit ("the monks' law"), the Organic Statute of the Greco-Orthodox Church of Hungary and Transylvania, and the Regulation for organizing monastic life approved by the Department of Cults in 1959 (pp. 735-752).

In a different register, Archim. Dr. Benedict Sauciuc, abbot of the Neamț Monastery, highlights the role of Paisian Hesychasm in the history of Neamț Monastery (pp. 753-774), using unpublished manuscripts from the famous lavra's library as sources of inspiration. "The Sacrifice of Romanian Monasticism After the Unjust Decree 410" is the communication written and published by His Grace Timotei Prahoveanul, Vicar Bishop of the Archdiocese of Bucharest (pp. 775-791), an emotional reflection on the sad events that led to the expulsion of monks and nuns from Romanian monasteries and their wandering in search of the prayer of the heart and inner peace.

Protos. Dr. Iustin Taban from the Putna Monastery discusses the inheritance of monastic goods in Church law and its interference with the provisions of the Civil Code (pp. 792-813), a highly relevant and

complex issue. “The Effects of Accessing Postmodern Technologies in the Monastic Area” is the theme of the research conducted by Archim. Prof. Dr. Teofil Tia, Dean of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Cluj-Napoca, in collaboration with Assistant Prof. Dr. Mihaela Brânză from the same institution (pp. 814-830). The authors conclude that “the monk must learn to use digital technology only to the extent that it does not affect, but rather encourages his spiritual life...he must carefully choose what to use and what not to, so that he can fervently fulfill his love for the Lord of all” (p. 830).

The last part of this volume is dedicated to the forms of organization and functioning of monasticism within sister Orthodox Churches. The first presentation is by His Grace Atanasie of Bogdania, Vicar Bishop of the Diocese of Italy, who competently addresses the theme of Orthodox monasticism as an essential factor in the mission to the West (pp. 831-888). His research is followed by His Grace Quais Sadiq, Bishop of Erzurum (Patriarchate of Antioch), with the study “Monasteries in the Patriarchate of Antioch: History and Mission” (pp. 889-896). The current situation of Orthodox monasticism in the Holy Land (Patriarchate of Jerusalem) is presented by Archim. Dr. Teofil Anăstăsoaie, the representative of the Romanian Patriarchate at the Holy Sites and the Superior of Romanian Monastic Establishments in Jerusalem, Jordan, and Jericho (pp. 897-908). Lect. Univ. Dr. Elena Silvestrova, from the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, is the author of the study “*Legislation of the Russian Orthodox Church on Monasteries and Monastics: Current State and Development Prospects*” (pp. 909-924), which essentially provides an overview of the main ecclesiastical provisions regarding the organization of monastic life in the Moscow Patriarchate. In the same context, Prof. Dr. Rastko Jovic, from the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Belgrade, Serbia, presents the organization and functioning of Serbian monasticism in his study titled “*Regulations of Monastic Life and Different Modes of Being: The Serbian Orthodox Church*” (pp. 925-936). The final research is dedicated to Georgian monasticism, written by Prof. Dr. Archil Metreveli, director of the Institute for Religious Freedom at the University of Georgia, and is titled “*Monastic Life and Monastic Activity from the Perspective of the Freedom of Religion and Belief*” (pp. 937-948).

In conclusion, paraphrasing His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of the Romanian Orthodox Church, “we express our hope that the results of this symposium, published in this volume, will be received as a beautiful contribution to the development of studies dedicated to monasticism and as a guide for all those who have embraced or wish to choose the monastic life, as well as a working material for drafting a new regulation on the organization and functioning of monastic life” (p. 12).

Rev. Dr. Traian NOJEA

Daniel LEMENI (ed.), *Ascetism și hagiografie în Antichitatea Târzie*, coll. *Patristica*, seria *Studii* 34, Ed. Doxologia, Iași, 2023, 526 pp.

Au cours de la dernière décennie, le professeur de spiritualité Daniel Lemeni de Timișoara a constamment porté à l'attention du public roumain des études du plus haut niveau intellectuel sur l'héritage patristique du premier millénaire, élevant ainsi le niveau de la discussion académique dans l'environnement théologique roumain tout en la maintenant dans la tradition de l'Église. Le dernier volume qu'il a coordonné confirme ces affirmations, tant par la sélection des auteurs présents dans le volume que par l'approche critique et ecclésiastique des différentes théories avancées par les spécialistes des écrits hagiographiques, présentées dans une introduction condensée qui précède le volume.

Le livre est divisé en trois sections thématiques: la première (« Sainteté, ascèse et paternité spirituelle dans le monachisme primitif ») s'ouvre sur une étude du métropolite Kallistos Ware, qui propose une analyse extrêmement profonde de la manière dont l'ascèse doit être comprise dans une perspective chrétienne : non pas comme une lutte contre le corps, mais plutôt comme une lutte pour sa transfiguration. Le théologien anglais insiste sur le lien entre la mortification du corps et la perfection humaine, concluant