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MACEDONIAN-ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH RELATIONS

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Abstract

The subject of this paper is a content analysis of the articles in the media about the Macedonian-Romanian Orthodox Church relations. According to the content analysis of the sample of articles in the media about the relations between the Macedonian Orthodox Church - the Ohrid Archbishopric (MOC-OA) and the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC), it can be concluded that the analyzed texts are mostly informative and transmit a positive attitude. The articles stress the extremely good, very close and friendly relations between MOC-OA and ROC. At the same time, the analysis shows that the Romanian Orthodox Church is considered one of the greatest supporters of the MOC on the road to its recognition and acceptance into the Orthodox world. The established close contacts contribute to the active engagement of the ROC as a "lobbyist" for the MOC-OA for recognizing its declared autocephality.

Introduction

The Macedonian Orthodox Church - Ohrid Archbishopric (MOC-OA) and the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) have both written important pages of the Orthodox history throughout

their centuries-old existence. Starting with the initial story about the first church on the territory of Macedonia, among other things, one must emphasize the significant work of the holy brothers, Cyril and Methodius, followed by their students, Sts. Clement and Naum, and the historical factography of Emperor Samuil's reign and the Ohrid Patriarchate, later Archbishopric, leading to the proclamation of the autocephaly of the MOC in 1967, and the contemporary developments. On July 17, 1967, the autocephaly of the MOC was proclaimed, but a period has followed where it is currently canonically unrecognized by other Orthodox churches.

The Romanian Orthodox Church, as an autocephalous church, has the rank of Patriarchate. Its centuries-long history goes back to the fourth century, then continues linked through the Ohrid Archbishopric. "The creation of independent Romania-after centuries of foreign control by Bulgarians, Turks, Greek-Phanariots, and, more recently, Russians led in 1865 to the self-proclamation of the Romanian Church as an autocephalous church. ... Constantinople recognized the Romanian autocephaly under the metropolitan of Bucharest (1885)"¹. It is important to underline the following: "ROC, [is] the largest autocephalous, or ecclesiastically independent, Eastern Orthodox Church on the Balkans today. It is the church to which belongs the majority of Romanians, and in the late twentieth century it had membership of more than 16 million."²

Fifty years after the proclamation of its autocephaly, the MOC is still not recognized by its sister Orthodox churches. Its isolation, on one hand, and its zealous perseverance in the Orthodox doctrine on the other, point to their need for consistently building good relations and

¹ Encyclopedia Britannica, topic Eastern Orthodoxy, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Eastern-Orthodoxy#ref64242>, accessed on May 17, 2017. It is important to have in mind these facts from the same quote: "The Romanians of Transylvania, still in Austria-Hungary, remained under the autocephalous metropolitan of Sibiu and others under the church of Czernowitz."

² Encyclopedia Britannica, topic Romanian Orthodox Church, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Romanian-Orthodox-Church>, accessed on May 17, 2017.

creating conditions for fruitful cooperation with the sister Orthodox churches. This paper will precisely focus on the relations between the MOC-OA and the ROC.

In addition, we must emphasize the fact that the inter-church relations³ are an extremely important segment in the history and modern life of their churches, which are incorporated as the common foundations of the faith, structure, organization and of course, the current events, conditions, visions and plans for the future of these churches. In the inter-church relations, the foundations for the existence of the churches, themselves, are perceived not only as independent units, but also as an integral part of the largest Orthodox family.

The inter-church relations are grounded on equal bases, and they reflect not only the *fruits* collected from the near and distant past, but also their realization in the present and of course, in the near and far future. The cooperation between the MOC-OA and the ROC has resulted in the formation of closest spiritual ties. The history of the two countries reveals that Macedonia and Romania nurtured centuries-long cooperation not only in the spiritual sphere, but also in many others. The good church relations can, among other things, be illustrated with a video material posted on an internet forum,⁴ accompanied by the following explanation: "Here is a video showing one of the many early books printed when the the Romanian Orthodox Church was under the Macedonian Orthodox Church. The language is Romanian, printed in Macedonian Church Slavonic letters. One icon in the book, which seems like a liturgikon, is of the Life Giving Font the feast day of which is this coming Friday, and has the date 1791 printed on the icon. It looks very much like an icon I saw at Bigorski.[monastery]." ⁵ This material is proof of

³ I. G. Mandzaridis., (2004), *Sociology of Christianity*, (Belgrade: Christian Cultural Center, 2004).

⁴ Forum - <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/alt.news.macedonia>, accessed on May 21, 2017.

⁵ The Romanian Orthodox Church Under Macedonia, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12GGcol8WVo&feature=youtu.be>, accessed on May 21, 2017.

familiarity, unity and, of course, sincere inter-church cooperation, but it is not part of the empirical basis for the main topic of this paper.

Methodological Approach

Based on insight in the available secondary database (from different sources) and the review of relevant literature, the following research questions, crucial for the content analysis, were formulated:

1. Is the media constantly writing/reporting on the Macedonian-Romanian Church relations?
2. How does the media write/report on the Macedonian-Romanian Church relations?

The subject of this paper is a content analysis of published articles about the Macedonian-Romanian Orthodox Church relations. The period from 2005 to 2017 has been analyzed (that is, the last 11 and half years). The first article was published on October 31, 2005, and the last on February 22, 2017. The sample of articles in the media for the content analysis⁶ was determined at random and is composed of all articles downloaded from the Internet in the period from May 25, 2017 to June 5, 2017.⁷ There are about a total of 35 articles of different lengths. The unit of analysis is the entire article, regardless of its length. The analyzed articles have been published in the Macedonian media, web pages, or portals. Some of the articles that are Romanian are used as

⁶ The prepared sample of articles from the media was brought to the attention of two experts for the church affairs in the Republic of Macedonia and one expert for the Romanian public. Everyone agreed that the sample mainly mirrors the inter-church cooperation. However, there may be another additional article, but it does not deviate from the already established course of the inter-church cooperation. Two of the experts, one of the MOC and the other from the ROC, state that a part of the inter-church cooperation were not written in the media. Anonymity is guaranteed to all consulted persons at this stage.

⁷ For example, there are several similar titles for a particular event on the Internet, but they cannot be found. Some of the archives of the media, but especially in the news aggregators, these articles are not available for downloading.

illustrations or arguments for the Macedonian-Romanian Church relations, but they are not part of the content analysis.

In this context, all articles referring to the Macedonian-Romanian Orthodox Church relations have been analyzed, as were the articles referring to the subjects involved in the particular event and their attitudes regarding the cooperation, or wherein it is mentioned. In this paper, the articles are first analyzed according to their quantitative features. That is, by how many articles have appeared in the media. The articles were selected according to the date of publication, and the medium in which they were published. Regarding their qualitative features, the analysis strives to explain the approach of every medium to the writing regarding Macedonian-Romanian Orthodox Church relations, then it indicates what is the attitude of the medium towards it (positive, negative or neutral) and, of course, the general or prevailing tone of its writing.

The research design of this paper is cross-sectional.⁸ The collected empirical evidence allows for the creation of a "certain notion in depth" of the Macedonian-Romanian Orthodox Church relations. The sample of articles is not representative, therefore the concluding observations refer to the analyzed database. On certain topics, there is saturation, i.e., identical or similar conclusions and perceptions are repeated. However, in this paper, through the approach to the research, the author generally tends to promote inter-church cooperation and to encourage further research on this cooperation.

⁸ Bryman, A. 2012, *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press, page 59.

Macedonian-Romanian Church Relations

According to the analysis of the available empirical database, it can be pointed out that the MOC-OA and the ROC have established close relations and in certain aspects, a fruitful cooperation. Important events and topics which support the close relations between these two Orthodox churches are noted. These events are usually also written in the media, thereby being subject of analysis in this paper.

✚ The connections between the MOC-OA and ROC "date since the time of the last Roman and the first Byzantine Emperor Justinian, who in 535 AD established the Justiniana Prima Archbishopric, under which jurisdiction were also the Byzantine provinces of Coastal and Mediterranean Dacia, Upper Mision and part of Pannonia."⁹ A frequently mentioned fact in the media is that the ROC, during a certain period, was under the jurisdiction of the Ohrid Archbishopric. The historical notes underline that after Emperor Samuil's rule, "the Byzantine Emperor Basil II (976-1025) left the Vlachs (Aromans) on the Balkan Peninsula under the jurisdiction of the Ohrid Archbishopric. In the fourteenth century a separate Wallachian Bishopric with its seat on Mount Pind or Gramos, which was in the diocese of the Ohrid Archbishopric, is mentioned."¹⁰

✚ The conclusion of the Council of Florence in 1439, by which the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate entered into union with Rome, was condemned by the Romanian people. Romanians, because they did not accept the Council of Florence, fell under "the

⁹ Dj. Ivanov, "Предавање: Свеченост на доделување почесен докторат на претседателот Иванов на романскиот универзитет *Димитрие Кантемир*" ["Lecture: Ceremony of awarding President Ivanov the title Doctor Honoris Causa at the Romanian University *Dimitrie Cantemir*"], 06.10.2011, <http://www.president.mk/en/media-centre/speeches/739.html>, accessed on 05.06.2017; DIMITRIE CANTEMIR Christian University, <http://ucdc.ro/en/doctor-honoris-causa-ucdc.php>, accessed on May 28, 2017.

¹⁰ A. Trajanovski, "MOC-OA and Other Local Orthodox Churches," in *Makedonika* (Skopje, 2013), 185.

jurisdiction of the Ohrid Archbishopric, which was its opponent."¹¹ In fact, the jurisdiction of the Ohrid Archbishopric was expanded to the areas of Wallachia and Moldova. During the church history of that period, it is written that "the Archbishop of Ohrid Dorotheus in 1466 gave his blessing to the Hungarian Metropolitan Macarius to ordain another Hungarian bishop to replace the deceased Metropolitan of Moldova Visarion."¹²

✚ "The ktetor (donator) of the monasteries, Vodica, Tismana,¹³ Visina, Prislop, the holy Nicodemus, remains the only example of spiritual life, the protector of the Orthodox faith and founder of monasticism in Romania for the believers." Saint Nicodemus of Prilep and Tismana was born in Prilep,¹⁴ around 1320, and took monastic vows in the Hilendar Monastery. He was well-educated, dedicated to spiritual work, and managed the above-mentioned monasteries "to become spiritual nurseries of monasticism and spiritual life ... for which reason the Romanian people from the very beginning respect him as their enlightener and accorded to him the blessed title of Sanctified."¹⁵ Of key importance for his mission was the monastery in Tismana, because from there, he "spiritually governed other monasteries and hermitages in the Romanian lands."¹⁶ St. Nicodemus was not only a great visionary and skillful strategist for sacred matters, but he also excelled in secular matters. St. Nicodemus (1405), as the founder of the copying/writing school, copied the Holy Gospel, which is the oldest in the Romanian Orthodox Church. His eagerness and

¹¹ Ibid., 186.

¹² Ibid..

¹³ <http://www.romanianmonasteries.org/other-monasteries/tismana>, accessed on May 28, 2017.

¹⁴ At that period, it was located within Byzantium.

¹⁵ *Романската православна црква основана од Македонец* ["Romanian Orthodox Church established by a Macedonian"], *Makedonsko sonce*, May 16, 2012, <http://www.mn.mk/komentari/6171-Romanskata-pravoslavna--crkva-osnovana-od-Makedonec>, or http://www.crkva.se/srbi/srbi_nikodim_tismanski.htm or http://makedonija.rastko.net/delo/12220#_Toc190867375, accessed on May 28, 2017.

¹⁶ Ivanov, *op. cit.*, <http://www.president.mk/en/media-centre/speeches/739.html>, accessed on June 05, 2017.

endurance are an exceptionally important example for the continuation of the sincere and comprehensive cooperation between the Romanian and the Macedonian people. Saint Nicodemus and his work have been also mentioned in recent articles. The celebration of the anniversaries related to his name have been reported in the media and on the web pages of the churches.¹⁷ Nicodemus was proclaimed a saint in 1767.

✚ In his diary, in 1968 in Moscow, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the restoration of the Moscow and All-Russian Patriarchate, the Bulgarian Patriarch and Academician Cyril, after conversations with the Romanian Patriarch Justinian, wrote that he informed him that he had sent his own priest from Bucharest to Macedonia in order to collect data on the position of the local Vlach population. However, regarding the issue of the autocephaly of the MOC, Patriarch Cyril stated: "We both concluded that the issue is becoming increasingly political."¹⁸

✚ For a constructive meeting and conversations with a representative of the Romanian Church, His Beatitude Gavril provided information to Professor Dimitar Mirchev¹⁹ that exactly 25 years ago, he met with the Romanian Patriarch Daniel. In the information which he sent to His Beatitude Gavril and the Synod of the MOC-OA, Professor Mirchev indicated that: "Regarding the recognition of the autocephaly of the MOC, the ROC has

¹⁷ In the section *Актуелности од православниот свет* ["Actualities from the Orthodox World"], on the website of MOC-OA, there is information that *Во Романија е чествувана 600-годишнината од раѓањето на свети Никодим Прилепско-Тисмански* ["Romania celebrates the 600th anniversary of the birth of St. Nicodemus of Prilep and Tismana"] (28.09.2006), transmitted from Crestinortodox.ro, <http://www.mpc.org.mk/svetaktuelno.asp?id=1506>, accessed on June 8, 2017.

¹⁸ A. Trajanovski, *Attempts for Recognition of the Autocephaly of the Macedonian Orthodox Church at the Moscow All-Orthodox Celebration in 1968, according to the Diary of the Bulgarian Patriarch Cyril*, Annual Collection, Book 8, at the Theological Faculty "St. Clement of Ohrid", Skopje, 2002, pp 178-9.

¹⁹ Prof. Dimitar Mirchev (1942-2016) was a vice rector of the "Sts. Cyril and Methodius" University in 1992-93. In that capacity he has participated in the International Scientific Conference "Academic Freedom and University Autonomy" in Sinaia (Romania), May 1992 (organized by CEPES/UNESCO and the European Rectors' Conference). The report was of the conversation with Metropolitan of the ROC for Moldavia and Bukovina, the current Patriarch Daniel (Chibotea).

no dilemmas, ... or reservations; it is ready to do so. It will do that—immediately after the recognition of the state's independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Macedonia." The information also included Metropolitan Daniel's assessment "about the insufficient connections, information, and contacts between the ROC and the MOC." At the same time, the information included the position of the ROC, that "in the ROC there is great interest and desire to deepen its cooperation with the MOC." ²⁰

✚ The Romanian Patriarch Teoctist gained the epithet of one of the greatest Romanian friends of the MOC. Not only did the media note his direct and "good relations with the Macedonian church leadership," but it is especially emphasized that with his blessing, "in 1995 two clergymen of the Patriarchate of Constantinople the monks Naum and Clement from Mt. Athos, were allowed to join the clergy of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The invitation of Archbishop Michael for return of the Macedonian monks from the Mount Athos Monastery of *Grigorij* for the restoration of monasticism in the MOC was not possible without the blessing of His Holiness Teoctist, who showed a complete understanding of the problem of our Church." With the blessing of Patriarch Teoctist, "the Romanian Bishop Kalinik in the joint service with the Macedonian Metropolitan Peter, as required by the canons, performed the ordination of the two Macedonian monks after which the hierodeacon Naum became a hieromonk, and the monk Clement received the title of a hierodeacon. This ordinance at that moment meant more than the act of ordination, because the monks from Mt. Athos, Naum and Clement, became the core of

²⁰ Letter from prof. Dimitar Mirchev, PhD, a vice rector of the "Sts. Cyril and Methodius" University to His Beatitude Gavril, Synod of MOC, Skopje, Archive No. 10-450, of May 11, 1992.

the Macedonian monasticism ... "21. Later, during the meeting with the Macedonian President Branko Crvenkovski, the Patriarch Theocrist would point out that he had close relations with the MOC and that he knew its history very well.²²

✚ Even after the election of the new Romanian patriarch, the Macedonian dignitaries believe and "informally comment that the ROC has long-term good relations with the MOC and in this respect they expect that Patriarch HH Daniel will also follow the policy of his predecessor, HH Teoctist."²³

✚ In some of the analyzed articles, it is emphasized that MOC-OA has traditionally good and "extremely close and friendly relations"²⁴ with the ROC. The Romanian Orthodox Church is considered to be "one of the greatest supporters" of the MOC for its international recognition.²⁵ One of the Macedonian bishops pointed to the Romanian Orthodox Church "as a lobbyist in the Orthodox world, which will help the promotion of the canonical truth about the MOC as the only autocephalous church in Macedonia.

✚ MOC also participated in the Romanian city of Sibiu at the European Ecumenical Council in 2007. The head of the MOC-OA said at this conference about the participation: "We need experience, we need contacts, we need to socialize with those

²¹ B. Jovanovska, „Делегација на МПЦ се прости од Романскиот Патријарх Г. Теоктист“ [“Delegation of the MOC at the Funeral of the Romanian Patriarch Teoctist”], August 4, 2007 (In a comment on this text, the reader Jordan C, on August 4, 2007, wrote about Romanian Patriarch Teoctist that “with his actions he proved himself as a friend of the MOC ... In the MOC in Toronto Macedonian and Romanian priests co-celebrated the liturgy, which means an indirect recognition of the MOC by the ROC“, the reader concludes his comment. <http://www.utrinski.mk/?ItemID=949D4FACC8EA684A89AC9985D3BB133C>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

²² MIA, „Романскиот патријарх предлага синод на православни цркви“ [“The Romanian Patriarch proposes a Synod of Orthodox Churches“], *Utrinski vesnik*, March 1, 2006, <http://star.utrinski.com.mk/?pBroj=2018&stID=63311&pR=2>, accessed on 27 May 2017.

²³ M. Nikolovski, „Романската црква останува пријател на МПЦ“ [“The Romanian Church Remains Friend of the MOC“], September 16, 2007, *Večer*, <http://vecer.mk/makedonija/romanskata-crkva-ostanuva-prijatel-na-mpc>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

²⁴ „Поздравот Стефан во мисија во Романија“ [“The Archbishop Stefan on mission to Romania“], *Utrinski vesnik*, October 31, 2005, <http://star.utrinski.com.mk/?pBroj=1917&stID=55336&pR=2>, accessed on May 29, 2017.

²⁵ In this context, it is reported that the visits and meetings of the church dignitaries were informal, private.

people, and of course, what is common among all churches and among all Christian churches should be learned by the MOC, but also MOC should tell them what is new, what happens, how the MOC lives." From Sibiu, the MOC announced the great diplomatic offensive undertaken by the MOC in order to "gain an equal position in Orthodoxy." The text emphasizes that the Romanian church had also appeared in the role of a mediator to resolve the dispute.

✚ In 2011, The Senate of the Christian University, *Dimitrie Cantemir*, awarded the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Dr. Gjorge Ivanov, the title "Doctor Honoris Causa" at a solemn ceremony.²⁶ He gave a lecture at the university and had a meeting with the current Romanian patriarch, HH Daniel. After the meeting, President Ivanov said: "I used the opportunity to thank him for what the Romanian Church did in the past. When the MOC became independent from the Serbian Orthodox Church, it received the holy myrrh²⁷ from the Romanian Church."²⁸

✚ The Romanian Patriarch Theoctist blessed "the Romanian nuns to stay in the monasteries of the MOC-OA."²⁹ Thanks to this blessing, contacts and visits between the monastic circles of both churches are intensifying.

²⁶ Ivanov, *op. cit.*, <http://www.president.mk/en/media-centre/speeches/739.html>, accessed on June 5, 2017.

²⁷ During the collection of the empirical evidence for this paper, the interlocutors from MOC-OA and the experts for the relations between the MOC-OA and ROC often mentioned the fact that immediately after the proclamation of autocephaly, the holy myrrh, the scepter of the Archbishop, the *mitre* of the Archbishop and the solemn clothes of the church dignitaries were a gift by the Romanian Patriarch Justin

²⁸ M. Nikolovski, *Романската црква нема ништо против автокефалноста на МПЦ* ["The Romanian Church has nothing against the autocephaly of the MOC"], October 7, 2011, <http://vecer.mk/makedonija/romanskata-crkva-nema-nishto-protiv-avtokefalnosta-na-mpc>, accessed on June 5, 2017.

²⁹ B. Jovanovska, *Делегација на МПЦ се прости од Романскиот Патријарх Г. Теоктист* ["Delegation of the MOC at the Funeral of the Romanian Patriarch Teoctist"], August 4, 2007 (In a comment on this text, the reader C. Jordan on August 4, 2007, wrote about Romanian Patriarch Teoctist that "with his actions he proved himself as a friend of the MOC ... In the MOC in Toronto, Macedonian and Romanian priests concelebrated the liturgy, which means indirect recognition of the MOC by the ROC", the reader concludes his comment. <http://www.utrinski.mk/?ItemID=949D4FACC8EA684A89AC9985D3BB133C>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

- ✚ The media reported that in August 2012, the Bigorski Monastery exchanged holy relics with the monastery, Robaya, of the ROC. Also, thanks to the engagement of the Abbess Petronia Dobrescu, who through the bishop of their diocese, Kalinik, managed "the monastic brotherhood in Bigorski to get relics directly from Bari, Italy, from the temple dedicated to St. Nicholas ... For this, the brotherhood has received a special certificate from the competent bishop of the Catholic Church."³⁰ This event is a topic in another article published in *Nova Makedonija*, and was transmitted to another media,³¹ as well as on the website of the monastery.³²
- ✚ On August 2, 2012, in the monastery complex "St. Mary the Pure" in Kichevo, "MOC-OA proclaimed the three holy martyrs, Eunuvy, Paisios and Averkij as saints," and representatives of the ROC attended the ceremony.³³
- ✚ The media also wrote about close meetings, joint prayers and joint services, visits of Macedonian dignitaries and believers to the Orthodox churches in Romania and vice versa. Representatives of the ROC visited Macedonian churches and monasteries.³⁴ A

³⁰ Zh.Z. – B.Gj., *Романска монахиња ни донела мошти од Свети Никола* ["A Romanian Nun Brought Us Relics of St. Nicholas"], May 21, 2013, *Dnevnik*, <http://212.13.64.43/default.asp?ItemID=0CABA9BC5815A44AA85E0E7EA197BE2B>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

³¹ *Заштитниците на верата станаа празник за МПЦ* ["The Protectors of the Faith became a Holiday of the MOC"], posted on August 5, 2012, <https://vistinatakeveoslobodi.wordpress.com/2012/08/05/>, transmitted from the newspaper *Nova Makedonija*, accessed on May 27, 2017.

³² *Мошти на Св. Николај Мирликиски – Чудотворец во Бигорски* ["Relics of St. Nikolai Mirliki – Wonderworker in Bigorski"], <http://archive.li/vhiJE>, accessed on May 29, 2017.

³³ R. Kardalev, *МПЦ-ОА ги прогласи за свети тројцата свмч. Евнувиј, Пајсиј и Аверкиј* ["MOC-OA Proclaimed the three martyrs Eunuvy, Paisios and Averkij as Saints"], *Preminal Portal*, 0.08.2012, <http://preminportal.com.mk/266-vesti/10478-mpc-oa-gi-proglasi-za-sveti-trojcata-svmch-evnuvij-pajsij-i-averkij-02-08-2012#comment-27017>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

³⁴ V. Apostolovska, *Делегација од Романската православна црква во посета на Битола* ["A Delegation of the Romanian Orthodox Church Visited Bitola"], June 18, 2010, The delegation was led by the Archbishop of Courtea de Arges HB Kalinik and Bishop Ambrose, <http://preminportal.com.mk/arhiva/266-vesti/6608-delegacijata-od-romanskata-pravoslavna-crkva-vo-poseta-na-bitola-18-06-2010->, accessed on May 27, 2017.

long stay by several Romanian nuns in Macedonian monasteries was also noted.³⁵ It is also mentioned in certain articles that the Romanian dignitaries have worn the *mitres* made by the Macedonian nuns.³⁶

✚ During 2013 and 2014, according to the information from the website of the Archbishopric of Arges and Muschel,³⁷ the Ambassador of Macedonia in Romania, met three times with Archbishop Kalinik, who is considered to be exceptionally close to the MOC.³⁸ At one of the meetings, Archbishop Kalinik, addressing the Macedonian ambassador, said: "... the gates of our church in Arges are always open to you and we consider you a true friend and brother of all residents in Arges district."³⁹

✚ The Orthodox Theological Faculty "St. Clement of Ohrid" undertook a series of activities for establishing closer cooperation with the Romanian theological faculties. In 2013, the representatives of both faculties and the University of Sts. Cyril and Methodius visited four Romanian theological faculties. His Eminence Irenaeus, Archbishop of Craiova and the Metropolitan of Oltenia, noted that theological faculties could be strong links to connect these two peoples, and he also hoped that the issue of recognition of the

³⁵ N. Shutinovski, "Монахињи од Романија го слават Бога во Калишта" ["Nuns from Romania Celebrate God in Kalishta"], March 18, 2006, <http://star.dnevnik.com.mk/default.aspx?pbroj=2959&stID=71041>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

³⁶ K. Kiprovski, *Македонски монахињи изработуваат митри за епископи од целиот свет* ["Macedonian Nuns Make Mitres for Bishops from All Over the World"], *Utrinski vesnik*, April 6, 2007, <http://www.utrinski.mk/default.asp?ItemID=44A585C2C115914585C4D75A0AFCC79E>, accessed on May 31, 2017.

³⁷ <http://www.eparhiaargesului.ro/arhieparg/index.php/component/search/?searchword=Pande%20Lazarevski&searchphrase=all&Itemid=435>, accessed on May 15, 2017.

³⁸ Metropolitan of Strumica Naum decorated the Bishop of Arges and Muschel HB Kalinik from ROC with a table medal of the Strumica Orthodox Diocese from the Order of the Holy Macedonian Cross, *Доделување на stolna medalja od redot na Svetiot Makedonski Krst* ["Awarding a table medal from the Order of the Holy Macedonian Cross"], November 25, 2008, <http://www.premportal.com.mk/266-vesti/2994-dodeluvanje-na-stolna-medalja-od-redot-na-svetiot-makedonski-krst-25-11-2008>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

³⁹ *Vizită arhierescă la Ambasada Republicii Macedonia*, <http://www.eparhiaargesului.ro/arhieparg/index.php/stiri-evenimente-din-eparhia-argesului/759-vizita-arhierasca-la-ambasada-republicii-macedonia>, accessed on May 15, 2017.

autocephaly of the MOC would be resolved. There was also an agreement to sign a protocol of cooperation.⁴⁰

✚ The Macedonian-Romanian Orthodox Church Relations "are characterized by a joint service, which from a church standpoint means recognition of the MOC-OA."⁴¹ In 2013, the main diocesan cathedral of Constanta "St. Peter and Paul," representatives of the MOC-OA served a joined liturgy with the Roman Archbishop Theodosius. The Ambassador of the Republic of Macedonia in Bucharest, Dr. Pande Lazarevski, described it as follows: "A miracle happened in the cathedral church in Constanta, that is, a joint liturgy on the feast of the Ascension of Christ, headed by His Excellency the Archbishop Theodosius, and the proto of the liturgy (first priest next to the Archbishop) was the archpriest *stavrophor*, the dean of the Theological Faculty from Skopje, Father Aco Girovski. At the liturgy there were many dignities, priests, monks, and deacons, including the hieromonk Gregory from the MOC. Priests from MPC worshiped in the Macedonian language. The cathedral church "St. Apostles Peter and Paul "was crowded, and there were also many people in front of the church. This is a historic event for us, the MOC to perform joint service with the second largest Orthodox church in the world—the Romanian Orthodox Church, which de facto implies the recognition of our Church. At the end of the liturgy, Archbishop Theodosius, introduced the Macedonian ambassador and the dean of the Theological Faculty from Skopje who attended the liturgy (father Aco) to the believers in the crowded sanctuary. Then, when leaving the church, the

⁴⁰ A. Girevski, *Посета на Теолошките факултети во Романија (прв дел)* ["Visit of Theological Faculties to Romania (Part One)"], 17.06.2013, <http://www.mpc.org.mk/vest.asp?id=5687>, accessed on May 27, 2017; Basilica.ro, *Ambasadorul Republicii Macedonia în România, la Craiova*, 10.06.2013, Craiova, <http://basilica.ro/ambasadorul-republicii-macedonia-in-romania-la-craiova/>, accessed on June 5, 2017.

⁴¹ *Поглаварот Стефан во мисија во Романија* ["Archbishop Stefan on Mission to Romania"], *Utrinski vesnik*, 31.10.2005, <http://star.utrinski.com.mk/?pBroj=1917&stID=55336&pR=2>, accessed on May 29, 2017.

multitude of the present believers, inclining their heads in an unbelievable spaler, touched the robes of the priest from Macedonia, kissing the robes and kissing his hand, while he was blessing them. The scene was magnificent, so far unseen by me."⁴²

✚ The Dean of the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Skopje, Professor Aco Girevski, in his address at the International Scientific Seminar "1150th anniversary of the Cyril and Methodius; Cyril and Methodius Contributors to the Development of Culture" stated, among other things: "For the last couple of days I also felt like being on a mission by visiting four Romanian universities and theology, a mission quite similar to that which took place 1150 years ago and which was led by our Great masters and spiritual enlighteners, the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius."⁴³ Professor Girevski also emphasized that the great Macedonian educator and writer Ioan Kratovski arrived in Craiova and wrote his two last handwritten gospels there, and he handed one manuscript to Duke Mihna.⁴⁴

✚ The same year, at the University of Bucharest (Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature), on the initiative of the Macedonian Language Lecturer's Office in Bucharest, the promotion of the monograph "The Konikovo Gospel" took place.⁴⁵

✚ The following year, a delegation from Macedonia led by His Beatitude, the Archbishop of Ohrid and Macedonia, Stephan, made a visit to the Russian Orthodox Church. The

⁴² A. Girevski, *Ođ posetata na Univerzitetot vo Konstanca (20.06.2013)* ["From the Visit of the University of Constanta (20.06.2013)"], Premin Portal, 19.06.2013, <http://preminportal.com.mk/266-vesti/12423-od-posetata-na-univerzitetot-vo-konstanca-20-06-2013>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

⁴³ A. Girevski, *Salutul profesorului Aco Girevski, arhiepiscop și decan al Facultății de Teologie Ortodoxă, Universitatea „Chiril și Metodie” din Skopje, Macedonia ROMANOSLAVICA* vol. XLIX, nr. 2, pp. 7-9, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_uQ9vm9C5K6TDBpU0FTbFp0bk0/view, accessed on May 15, 2017.

⁴⁴ A. Girevski, (2004), *Македонскиот превод на Библијата* ["Macedonian translation of the Bible"], Orthodox Theological Faculty St. Clement of Ohrid.

⁴⁵ T. Karanfilov, „Македонска печатница во Романија во XVII век” ["Macedonian printing house in Romania in the 17th Century"], 20.03.2013, *Makednska nacija*, <http://www.mn.mk/index.php/fotogalerija/templates/kultura/komentari/7501-Makedonska-pecatnica-vo-Romanija-vo-XVII-vek>, accessed on May 29, 2017.

delegation attended the Holy Divine Liturgy at the Antim Monastery, and then visited the Theological Faculty in Constanta. The Archbishop of Thomis—Theodosius agreed "one theologian from Macedonia to study at the Faculty of Theology in Constanta in the next academic year."⁴⁶ The agreement was realized and a Macedonian theologian is currently a student at this elite Orthodox faculty. Four years later, a delegation of the Faculty of Theology "Patriarch Justinian" from Bucharest visited the Faculty in Skopje. During its stay, the Romanian delegation "visited several churches and monasteries in Macedonia".⁴⁷

✚ At the beginning of this year, the Macedonian ambassador visited the Romanian Patriarchate⁴⁸ at the end of his mission. During his visit, "His Beatitude emphasized the opportunity for a better mutual knowledge and for more intensive cultural ties through pilgrimages ... In this regard, the Patriarch of Romania believes that in today's secularized world, cultural exchange can contribute to even stronger emphasis on common Christian values."

✚ An interesting part of the analyzed material is the fact that it is reported in the media that the MOC-OA was, like ROC, not invited to the celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the Milan edict.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ A. Girevski., Orthodox Theological Faculty (1977-2012) monograph, 2014, p. 128.

⁴⁷ The Orthodox Theological Faculty St. Clement of Ohrid – Skopje was visited by a delegation from the Theological faculty "Patriarch Justinian" of Bucharest, <http://pbf.edu.mk/pbf-skopje-go-poseti-pb-bukurest/>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

⁴⁸ A. Ifimiu, *Ambassador of the Republic of Macedonia in Bucharest visits the Romanian Patriarchate at the end of the mission*, 26.01.2017, Basilica.ro, <http://basilica.ro/en/ambassador-of-the-republic-of-macedonia-in-bucharest-visits-the-romanian-patriarchate-at-the-end-of-mission/>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

⁴⁹ Друштвото на признатите не им подаде рака на непризнатите ["The Society of the Recognized Did Not Offer its Hand to the Unrecognized"], 06.10.2013, <http://vecer.mk/makedonija/drushtvoto-na-priznatite-ne-im-podade-raka-na-nepriznatite>, or in Миланскиот едикт не важи за МПЦ-ОА ["The Milan Edict does not apply to the MOC-OA"], 03.10.2013, *Deneshen vesnik*, <http://denesen.mk/web/?p=200763>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

Frequency of Information about the Macedonian-Romanian Orthodox Church Relations

Based on the analysis of the empirical material, the following tabular overview of the published articles was made according to the date of publication and the media in which the articles about the Macedonian-Romanian Orthodox Church relations were published.

Distribution of the articles by dates and media

Media Date and number of articles	Utrinski Vesnik	Dnevnik	Vecer	Deutsche Welle	MOC- OA	Premier Portal	President of Macedonia	Makeonska nacija
31.10.2005	1	1	1					
12.01.2006		1						
01.03.2006	1							
26.09.2006					1			
03.08.2007	1							
11.09.2007				1				
16.09.2007			1					
27.05.2008					1 ⁵⁰			
25.12.2008						1		
19.06.2010						1		
06.10.2011							1	
07.10.2011			1					
19.07/01.08.2012					1 ⁵¹			
16.05.2012								1
20.03.2013								1
21.05.2013		1						
16.06.2013						1		
17.06.2013					1			
18.06.2013						1		
18.06.2013					1			
19.06.2013						1+1		
20.06.2013						1		
07.07.2013		1						
12.02.2014								1
26.03.2014								1
23.06.2014						1		
01.10.2015						1		
14.10.2015						1		
16.10.2015						1		
23.10.2015						1		
22.02.2017								1
23.04.2017						1		
Total / 35	3	4	3	1	5	13	1	6

⁵⁰MOC-MA – The Diocese of Povardarie (web-site).

⁵¹MOC-MA – Saint Jovan Bigorski Monastery (web-site).

The above tabular review points to the conclusion, on the analyzed sample of articles, that the media do not constantly write or report on the Macedonian-Romanian Orthodox Church relations, but that they do it relatively often. In the analyzed 11 and half years, 35 articles on this subject have been published, in printed daily newspapers, on portals, on two websites, and on a radio website. According to the frequency of publication of the articles, the most written texts were on 31.10.2005 (three texts). On other dates, there is only one article in continuity (except in two cases of publishing two articles on the same day). The magazine *Premi*n, which has its own portal (Prenin-portal) writes about the Macedonian-Romanian Church relations most frequently. All articles for this analysis are downloaded from this portal. Then following this is *Makedonska Nacija*.

According to the analysis of the 35 articles in 11 and half years, it can be generally concluded that the media write or report events about Macedonian-Romanian Church relations or write about events that occur in one or the other church, wherein they do not forget to at least mention the good church relations.

Macedonian-Romanian Orthodox Church Relations through the Prism of the Media

The journal of MOC-OA called *Premi*n writes mostly about the Macedonian-Romanian Church relations. In its portal, in 13 articles, during the research period, readers can get information on a number of events that relate to this topic. This portal transmits more detailed information on the undertaken activities which are accompanied by numerous photographs. For example, the portal reports on trips that have taken place in both countries, as well as meetings, lectures, etc. *Premi*n does not present a critical tone to these events, but its articles are of informative character.

The daily informative newspapers: *Večer*, *Dnevnik*, *Utrinski*, and *Deutsche Welle*,⁵² focus on issues that are of general importance for the Macedonian-Romanian Church relations. These relatively briefly report on a particular event or situation, and raise key issues for both churches, such as the recognition of the autocephaly and the role of the ROC in the process, the significance of the ROC for the MOC-OA, as well as for certain exceptionally important events (exchange of relics, visiting by the Macedonian state and church leadership of the ROC, joint liturgies, etc.). In these media, the point of the article is most often contained in its title or introduction. These articles are usually illustrated with a photograph of the event or from the archive.

The portal *Makedonska nacija* has its own specific concept of processing and presentation of the Macedonian-Romanian Church relations. This portal presents deeper thematic analyses of this subject, and they are predominantly written by one of the editors of the portal. In six articles, key issues about inter-church relations are discussed, such as the role of St. Nicodemus of Prilep and Tismana; the Macedonian printing press in Romania, information on the visit and the points of the conversation with Bishop Kalinik in the monasteries in Courtea of Arges for the cooperation with the MOC-OA and especially for their joint service.⁵³

On the MOC-OA website, brief information about the current events in the two churches is usually given, without special analysis of the very inter-church relations. A total of five

⁵² Deutsche Welle broadcasts a radio program in Macedonian language, and the Macedonian editorial office has its own internet production available on the website <http://www.dw.com/mk/%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%B8/s-10339>, accessed on May 21, 2017.

⁵³ *На Теолошкиот факултет на Универзитетот во Питешти студираат четири македонски студенти* [“Four Macedonian Students Study at the Theological Faculty within the University of Pitesti”]. S. Nikolovski, The Monasteries in Courtea of Arges – Supporters of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, 22.02.2017, <http://www.mn.mk/iselenici-region/12919-Manastirite-vo-Kurtea-od-Ardzes-%E2%80%93-poddrzuvaci-na-Makedonskata-pravoslavna-crkva>, accessed on May 31, 2017.

articles have been published, with a lot of brief information about the events, some of which are included in this analysis.

The website of the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Professor Gjorgje Ivanov, contains his complete lecture at the ceremony where President Ivanov was awarded the title Doctor Honoris Causa at the Romanian University *Dimitrie Cantemir*. This lecture comprises of the most important events related to the Macedonian-Romanian Church relations and, of course, their cooperation in other fields which are also elaborated in general.

The tone of the articles about the Macedonian-Romanian Church relations in all the analyzed articles is positive and these relations are assessed as positive and useful for both sides.

Concluding Observations

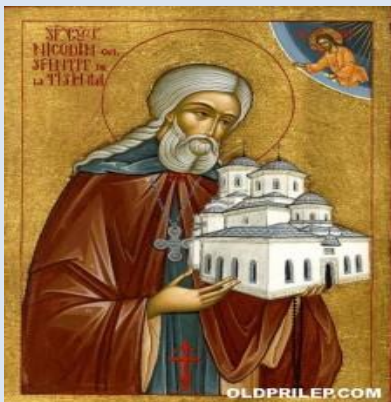
From the content analysis of the available database, comprised of 35 articles in the media, for a period of 11 and half years, it can be concluded that the Macedonian-Romanian Orthodox Church relations are good. The media do not constantly write about them but they do relatively often. Writing about them is usually based on certain events, but it is specific that even in those events, the articles often remind readers of the close historical events, the rich inter-church cooperation, and the determination to consolidate and continue.

In that sense, according to the content analysis of the articles in the media about the Macedonian-Romanian Church relations, it can be concluded that the analyzed texts are mostly informative and they have a positive attitude towards them. The articles emphasize the extremely good, very close and friendly relations between the MOC-OA and ROC. At the same time, according to at least part of the titles of the articles, it can be concluded that the Romanian Church is considered one of the greatest supporters of the MOC on the road to its recognition

and acceptance in the Orthodox world. The established close contacts contribute to the active engagement of the ROC as a "lobbyist" for the MOC-OA for recognizing its proclaimed autocephaly.

From the analysis of the articles, supported by insight into the historical factography, which is also partially transmitted in the media, it turns out that the cooperation between the two churches is centuries long, and it takes place not only on a religious but also on a cultural level. Inter-church relations cover issues that are of general interest to Orthodoxy, as well as of the interest to both churches. The analyzed relationships are "characterized by joint service." In part of the analyzed empirical material, it is noticed that the representatives of both churches are making efforts to continue, deepen, and enrich the already established inter-church cooperation.

Photographs



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