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The Rite of Tonsure in Monachism in the Slavic and Romanian Euchologies
- historical and liturgical study-
Abstract of the PhD thesis

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Abstract

The ascetic life born secretly in the entire Christian world since the first centuries imposed with an amazing force. It was the mash of the martyr blood and the Church praise, as through it the Christianity acquired a force that amazed the pagan world. Only those who lived the Christian world in its recesses could make the difference between ascets and ordinary Christians. The world's unquietness under the service of the sin determined many chosen souls to get out from the middle of the world after the impulse of the Scripture (John 15, 18-27; 13, 13- 15) and be fully isolated in the heart of the solitude. The motivation of choosing this title is given by the fact that I am a hieromonk of the Serb Orthodox Church and I considered it was my duty to research from a liturgical point of view the rite of tonsure in monachism in the Romanian and Serb *Euchologies*.

At the same time, through this paper I wanted to show the unity and universality of Orthodoxy through liturgical practices and especially through the rite of tonsure in monachism.

The current stage of the paper shows that the concern for the illustration and comparative analysis of the rite of tonsure in monachism in the religious books was made sporadically and at a quite low level.

The aim of this paper is a comparative analysis of the rite of tonsure in monachism from the editions of *Euchologies* published until the present, and the achievement of a historical-liturgical study on this topic.

The method that is to be used is a method of synthesis and I shall also use the comparative-historical method in analyzing the editions of the *Euchologies*.

The PhD thesis *The Rite of Tonsure in Monachism in the Slavic and Romanian Euchologies – historical and liturgical study* shall be structured in 5 chapters, each chapter having two subchapters.

In the first chapter I shall make a biblical foundation of monachal votes, followed by a history of monachism.

Before proving with Scriptural or Patristic texts the reason of the monachal lifestyle, it would be appropriate to see first the significance of the term *monk*.

The monachism (from the Greek term: *μοναχος*, designating basically a person who lives on oneself, alone) represents a fundamental practice of the Christian life,

which assumes leaving the world and dedicating the entire life to living a life in accordance with the Gospel. Aiming at unifying with Jesus Christ.

Jesus the Messiah is thus the supreme and eternal model for all those who want to be considered real sons of God, to act as beloved sons of the Father. Messiah Himself asks us to follow Him (Matthew 10, 38; 16, 24), to take as a model His goodness and ministration, etc. (Matthew 11, 29; Mark 8, 34-35).

Furthermore, the Holy Apostles declare themselves followers or imitators of Christ and advise people faithful to God to walk as Jesus walked, to be saints as Saint was Him (I John 1, 6; 3, 7).

The monastic life since its beginnings and until the present is animated by the same ideal of following Messiah in all His virtues. Lord Jesus is in the center of our Orthodox monachism. The monachal life is thus a life concentrated on Christ, centered on Christ, therefore it's a Christocentric life. The assumption of Peter's words prove that the parents of desert knew the Gospel well and in their actions they followed the example of Jesus or the apostles', therefore the monachism in its primary form was founded exclusively on biblical scripts. The morals and the life experience of the parents of desert were also assumed by those who created the first settlements of collective monachal life, Pachomius, Basil the Great, John Cassian founded their rules on the Holy Scriptures too.

A special interest for the monachal life in oriental provinces of the Roman Empire is registered after the half of the 4th century. In most of the regions, the Egyptian monachism represented a model and a source of ascetic practices. The greatest saints of the time, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianz, John "Golden Mouth", Jerome, lived many years a monachal life in Egypt before starting their activity.

Analyzing the history of Christianity, we found that monachism was first of all the effect of the desire of some Christians to complete themselves by living as virgins, as the bachelorhood was the common form of ascesis, and virgin girls and widows were respected in the primary Church.

We've made a historical incursion of monachism until the 14th century, when the hesychasm appeared. As prayer method and life style, the hesychasm does not appear at the same time with Gregory Palamas. In the second half of the first millennium, the hesychasm is related to monachism, as prayer method. The core of the hesychastic doctrine consists in the fact that God's being, inaccessible to the human being, and His divine energies are not separated, although they differ, they form a unit, but only the divine energies or powers, and not the God's being, arrive to the human being. The

foundations of the hesychastic doctrine advanced by Gregory Palamas consist in the first place in knowledge by experience. He rejects knowledge by means of abstract concepts. God cannot be known by intellectual activities but by experience and personal participation. The true knowledge comes from prayer, not from philosophy. The heart's prayer, the mental prayer, internal and uninterrupted, must go as far as silence, that point where words are not necessary any longer, because everything becomes the utterance of the Beloved Name, even breath itself.

In the end of this chapter, I referred to historians' assertions, who pointed out a long time ago fundamental differences between the oriental monachism and the one that is to appear later after the model of eastern coenobia, in the Occident.

First of all, a pronounced spirit of independence is revealed, perhaps even exaggerated in some places, specific to monks from the oriental provinces of the empire, which resulted in the possibility of adherence of monks to different heresies and splits. This independence had the advantage of offering the monks the possibility to oppose to heretic emperors, contrary to some bishops in the capital, these being one entity against the emperor, remaining faithful to the orthodox doctrine.

In the Orient there is no clear distinction between laic and religious, but just a single theology, the one of baptism. The aim suggested to any Christian, that the anchorite tries to achieve according to their own vocation is the simple and humble achievement of their own duty, of praying and working in the inner presence of God. Any person must therefore get closer in a way or another of what a monk is. But this gives birth to a multitude of forms of manifestation and living of monachism and thus a more difficult definition of this phenomenon or determination of its chronologic limits.

The Byzantine monachism keeps an internal act of faithfulness to origins, no matter whether it's about its individualism or the primacy of redemption. It does not know the concept of religious order. Monachal organizations did not survive their founders: Pachomius, Sava or others. There are no generally accepted regulations, but only traditions, regulations of Sava, Basil the Great, Theodore the Studite, which are accepted or not, eventually adapted to the local specific.

Then we've made a historical presentation of the beginnings of monachism in the Romanian and Serb spaces, concluding with a comparative analysis between the eastern and western monachism.

Starting even since the 3rd century, there appears a reference book of the monk's life, regulating all interior aspects. One of the first who let us teaching words is **Anthony**

the Great. We may speak about proper, exact, detailed, well-structured and imperative monachal regulations or rules after the foundation of the first coenobia settlements, since Pachomius.

Pachomius and Basil the Great ask monks to live in common.

But Pachomius is considered the founder of the coenobia-type monachism because he gave the monachal community a collective organization.

In the **Monachal Rules – Pachomius**, in keeping the discipline of the collective, all members were co-interested, the fact of not announcing a conflict made the others accomplices.

In the monachal practices of the Faithful Pachomius the Great are mentioned other functions, the one of cellarer, who administered the food preserved in the store room of the monastery, nurses who took care of sick people, those who neglected the sick people being punished. The doorman allowed or stopped the entrance of aspirants for monachism, clerics and other monks.

Admission to the collective monachal life. Anyone was welcomed to the monachal life, irrespective of age and social condition. The new members of the community were not admitted in the monastery from the beginning. The archondaris was the one who informed the hegumen of their desire to be admitted in the community. A period of time the person requesting it remained outside the monastery (up to a month at the end of the 4th century).

The daily life. The rule of Pachomius established the complete equality in respect of clothing and food, ensured decent conditions for sleep to each of the monks and realized a reasonable distribution of duties and physical works.

They had meals in the same room, at fixed hours, twice a day, at noon and in the evening. They went to meals wearing the sheep coat and the cap, but without sandals.

The prayer and the public divine cult. In the rite of Saint Pachomius we do not find specific advice related to the individual prayer of each of the monks in their own sanctum. Instead, the common prayer is strictly regulated.

Then we analyzed the *Monachal Rules of Saint Basil the Great*, which was considered the "guiding torch of eastern monachism".

The monachal rules. The great rules were composed between the years 358 – 362 and include 55 numbers that treat the most important problems of the monachal life. Small rules, subsequent to the big ones, include 313 numbers and are presented as brief

answers of Saint Basil to certain questions addressed by monks on the duty of their status.

Admission to monastery. As in the case of the Pachomian collective, it is shown that those who wish to enter the monastery ought to be tempted, researched for their habits, no matter whether they came from a sinful life or from the “hard life of knowing God”.

The program of daily prayers. The target of the concern related to the prayer is acquiring the habit of praying uninterruptedly or the permanent remembrance of God and enjoying Him with all attention.

Work. The monk has the duty to work in order to eliminate the laziness and to gain one’s living. Work is proven by the Saint Basil the Great through the example of Jesus and apostles.

Clothing. Basil the Great mentions several times that the monk’s clothing has to be different from the one of laics. Clothing articles are not mentioned nominally. The only recommendation is that they should be simple, cheap and with no great expense, so as “material necessities give us as less concerns as possible”.

Virginity. Saint Basil the Great is the first who introduced the monachal vote of virginity for men.

Saint Basil the Great’s rules are not just simple organizational rules of the collectives of monks, but they also include a broader range of advice, rules and norms of Christian life. **The study of *Great and Small Rules* does not concern the liturgics only, representing a valuable spring well for almost all the disciplines of the Christian theology: Christian moral, canonic law, catechetics, homiletics, etc.**

Moreover, it also allows the restoration of the most important religious practices from the 4th century.

The byzantine monachism in the 8th – 9th centuries. Until the 8th century, the byzantine monachism reached a large diversity, also manifested in respect of applied rules, ascetic means and the proper goal.

Generally, monasteries followed the rule of Saint Basil the Great, but between them there were large organizational differences, living an autonomous life in relation to the emperor and to the patriarch. Decisions of several synods were adopted against the tendencies of exaggerated autonomy of some monastic settlements.

The *Studion* monastery was founded by Studius, a Roman consul coming from the Occident. It was reorganized by Saint Theodore the Studite, at the beginning of the 9th century. He imposed the rule of monks being divided in three groups: some of them to pray, others to work and others to rest, by alternation. At the same time, monks called studites studied theology intensively.

The work of **Theodore the Studite** was characterized by historians using the **term of innovation, refreshment or especially correction rather than the one of reform of monachal life.**

Rules applied in the monasteries having adopted the **Studion monastery model** may be summarized as follows: coenobia life and the categorical opposition against the idiorhythmical life; the monastery is located in the town or near populated places, contrary to the large Egyptian monasteries, located in the middle of the desert; the reasons were offering the example of virtue to the inhabitants of the town, worship of icons within sight of people.

The hesychasm: appeared as ascetic practice at the beginning of the 13th century in Mount Athos, under the influence of the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite and Symeon the New Theologian. It was the consequence of an evolution started in the 11th century within the byzantine monachism, which found new possibilities of development of the Christian doctrine in practicing goodness and prayer.

Mount Athos: coenobia life and idiorhythmia. The first document on which the life of monks from Mount Athos is based, perhaps the most important document in its history, is the ***Typikon of Athanasios from 972.***

Monachal rules in the rest of the Christian world. Western Europe. Monachal rules applied here have its root in those of the parents of monachism from the East, especially Basil the Great's rules. His rules were adopted and generalized quickly in the Eastern Empire and in the other eastern communities, but they were subsequently adapted in the Western Europe too, especially after Benedict of Nursia compiled his rule, on the model of the Saint Basil the Great's rules, which were less hard than those in the East.

Monachal rules in Romania. The monachal life from our country, from Romanian historical provinces was not kept away from the struggles and the searches for the most appropriate piety form and ascesis or from the way of integrating the monachal settlements in the society.

- in the **Moldavian monasteries** happened a real **current of reform**, which is centered on **Saint Paisius Velichkovsky.**

Paisius's institution also insists on the duration and **type of praying** in the monastery: **observing the ecumenical law of the Eastern Saint Church**, all prayer times, the Divine Liturgies, are compulsory for all monks. These are: Vespers, Compline, the Midnight Office, Matins, Hours, the Liturgy, All-Night Vigil, being read to all monarchical holidays and of the Mother of God, and to those of the Great Saints, polyeleos, thanksgiving to smaller holidays.

The example of Paisius's monastery from Neamt was assumed both in Romania and abroad.

Romanian monachism at present. A series of legislative provisions represented the fundamentals of the current activity of Romanian monasteries, among which distinguishes the *Regulation for the organization of the monachal life and the administrative and disciplinary functioning of monasteries*, adopted by the Saint Synode of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

The statute for the organization and functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church provides the monachal ranks, namely: monk, hierodeacon, archdeacon, hieromonk, synkellos, protosynkellos and archimandrite. In the case of mothers, abbesses with and without cross are distinguished.

The first stage of the practice of tonsure in monachism is the one of rassophore. The simplest form of the monachal practice is accomplished by apprentice monks presented in the manuscripts of the *Euchologions* from the 14th century.

The final form of the rite of wearing the riasa is met for the first time in the manuscripts of *Euchologions* from the 14th century, the prayers that are also found in the contemporary *Euchologion* are written in "The apprentice's practice of wearing the priest clothing": "Thank You, our Lord and God" and the prayer of the Great Schema: "In Your Saving Yoke". After this prayer, the priest cuts the hair of the apprentice and dresses him with a riasa and a kamilavka, "more than that, no ectenia of the demand is uttered".

Saint Dionysius – called the Areopagite, is the first suggesting an analogy between the church service of baptism and the ritual of consecration of the monk. After a while, in the *Euchologion Barberinus Graecus*, dated generally around the year 700, appears for the first time the division of the practice in: Taking on the Little and the Great Schema. But there is no mention on the relation with the Saint Liturgy. This relation shall be made in the following period. In the end, the Rite of the Rassophore, as intermediate stage between being novice and taking on the Little Schema, shall be

introduced after the 10th century, as in the 14th century we may speak of a tripartite rite fixed for good.

However, the three Rites must be looked tending towards a single purpose: completeness in Christ, because it is not impossible for a monk remained at the first or second formal stage to reach a state of completeness. This was also the belief of Saint Theodore the Studite, who considered the Monachal Order as a whole that may not be divided, rooted in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. In the same respect, the Patriarch Anthony of Constantinople (1389-1390) shall promulgate a synode decree to emphasize that the separation of the two monachal schemas is contrary to canons.

In the fourth chapter I shall present the editions of the *Euchologion*, thereafter I shall make a comparative analysis of the rite of tonsure in monachism from these editions, concluded with an explanation of the church service.

The denomination of *Euchologion* comes from the Slavic *molitvinik*, designating *prayer, word*, while in Greek we have the denomination *Evhologhiul*, (*Evhologhion, evhi logos*) meaning *prayer or blessing*. Generally, the name of this religious book was preserved with differences depending on the area, such as: *Molitevnic*, being the Slavic edition of Targoviste from 1545; deacon Coresi prints a religious book in 1564 at Brasov, which he entitles *Molitevnic*; in 1681, in Iasi, Dosoftei entitles this book *Mltvnic=Moltănic*; in the edition of Balgrad from 1688 appears the denomination of *Molitevnic*; editions of Ramnic appear under the denomination of *Molitevnic*; editions of Bucharest from 1794 and Sibiu from 1874 bear the same name of *Molitevnic*.

As mentioned above, another denomination of this church service book is the Greek denomination, namely *Evhologhion*, also called *Molitevnic*, such as the edition of Balgrad 1689 or Ramnic 1730. Other editions entitled *Evhologhion* are also the ones from Buzau, Ramnic, 1706, Targoviste 1713, Bucharest, Iasi 1749, 1754, Blaj 1815 and 1913.

Few editions bear the name *Evhologhion* and here we mention: Bucharest 1808, *The Evhologhion or Prayer Book*, Bucharest, 1888 and *The Rich Evhologhionul*.

Another denomination of this religious book, but which is rarely encountered, is used especially in Moldavia, coming to our country from the Orthodox Russia, the so-called *Trebnic (Ordinary)*, being printed in three editions: one would be the *Slavic Ordinary* of Campulung from 1635 and two editions of the *Romanian Ordinary* of Kishinev from 1920, respectively 1926.

The variation of the title from *Molitfelnic* to *Evhologhion* or *Trebnic* on the Romanian territory is due to the influences of the ecclesiastic culture, either the Slavic or the Greek one.

The Slavic denomination appears due to the Slavic influences on the Romanian territory, and the Russian influence appears during the lordship of Prince Matthew Basarab, when the book was called as in the Russian Church, *Trebnic (Ordinary)*, and during Constantin Brancoveanu, the Greek denomination of the book was used, namely *Evhologhion*.

Nowadays, the denomination of this liturgical book is *Molitfelnic – including church services, rites and prayers of the priest for different needs of Christian lives*, denomination which is used and that has not been changed since the editions from 1854, respectively 1859, appeared in Bucharest during the Metropolitan Nifon.

In the last chapter I shall present the situation of monachism from Serbia and problems they encounter in the 21st century.

The second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century are full of paradoxes in the field of spirituality and of the Orthodox life in general.

The young belonging to the Serb Orthodoxy have grown in a period when the Orthodox votive values not only were denied, but completely forgotten and destroyed by people driven by demonic vision on the human unity and happiness, wherefrom God was excluded. They tried to destroy the seeds planted in the soul of each earthly being.

However, even under these circumstances, there were uncounted families who visibly continued the Christian Orthodox life. The period we talk about gave thousands of grandmothers and mothers who, through their prayer, fasting and patience tried to purify the spiritual background where so many young souls were growing.

While the majority of the Serb young people tried to taste the fruits destroying the soul and body, covered in the syrup of western decadence, there was another energy that veiled them, although they were not aware of it at that time. It was the energy of the supreme commitment, love and self-abandonment; that energy that blows out from the saint places of Serbia and from the continuous vigilance of monks and mothers – whom the people do not know, but whom are well-known by God. They defended not only the Serb old monasteries, but also the Serb souls.

The needs encountered by the new generations of monks and mothers from Serbia are difficult to estimate. But the new monachal movement of Serbia is a direct continuance or the era of the saint priests and mothers who left everything for God's Empire. Among them we mention Saint Parascheva, Saint Prohor, martyr John Vladimir and others.

The fact that in 2007, the Serb Orthodox Church counted 300 monasteries, among which 120 for mothers and about 160 for monks shows that monachal call still exists among

the young who are to carry forward the Serb Orthodoxy, both from spiritual and historical points of view. Further details are presented in Annexes.

However, we have to know that if from God's tolerance, all churches and monasteries of Serbia would have been destroyed or closed, the eagerness of God's chosen people (irrespective of their number) shall increase even more. That is why, even if a faithful soul dies for Jesus, as God promised to Abraham, the Serb Church shall be on guard, at the command given by God, accomplishing God's words: "Behold, I will come soon" (The Apocalypse, 3, 11).

Monks from Serbia know they live in the only nation totally sacrificed to Jesus, and which from a strategic, logistic and spiritual point of view fought even the largest Orthodox fight in the military and political plans in the history of Orthodoxy.

In the conclusion I shall expose what I found following the research carried on the editions of the *Euchologions*.