



PhD Thesis

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Only Unity Will Save the Serbs

Eastern Orthodox history, memory and politics in Montenegro post-Yugoslavia

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“Such is history. A play of life and death is sought in the calm telling of a tale, in the resurgence and denial of the origin, the unfolding of a dead past and result of a present practice.”

Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*

Front image: The sanctuary in the church of the monastery of Kom on the Island of Odrinska Gora on Lake Skadar, June 2019. The monastery was built between 1415-1427. Author’s own photograph.

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Chapter I: Introduction

In May 2011, I crossed the Montenegrin-Albanian border and entered Montenegro for the very first time in my life as part of a group of researchers under the direction of Professor Jørgen Nielsen. That evening we passed Mount Rumija and the ruins of the city of Suacium and were accommodated in the old citadel of the House of Balšić. This thesis is dedicated to the history and historiography of those sites that I saw for the first time in 2011. It is a history deeply connected to the inner dynamics of the emergence and struggles of the Orthodox communities in Montenegro after communism. Eastern Orthodoxy and its history in Montenegro is the subject of this thesis.

The research question and focus will be presented in this chapter within the context of Eastern Orthodox Christian studies in South Eastern Europe. A short outline of the thesis, its scope and the articles it contains follows. The final part of the chapter is a review of the current state-of-the-art on research into Eastern Orthodox Christianity and historiography in post-Yugoslav Montenegro.

Context: At the periphery of the European mind

My first article about Montenegro was an account of the journey through the Balkans in 2011 titled “A journey at the periphery of the European mind”.¹ The region is at the very fringes of European politics and interest. I would argue that studies of religion in Montenegro provide a mirror, which reflects a new perspective on European values, politics, culture, nations and, prominently, religion. Montenegro, a newly founded state with deep historical roots in the seventh century, is a continual reminder of how unstable states, governments, nations and even religious communities continue to be in Europe today. Currently, the Montenegrin state is in the making and so it offers insights into the crucial factors and mighty forces of humanity that make and break religions and societies – history, memory, ideology and even war. The national and religious identities in Western countries might seem more stable than those of Montenegro, but places such as Montenegro are a reminder of how swiftly a shift in religious or national identity

¹ Emil Saggau. “En rejse i det yderste af Europas bevidsthed”. *Arken*, 2012.

might come and how deep the consequences can be as far as political turmoil and war. In Montenegro a shift occurred in less than a decade which involved two wars.

Nationalism and religion have been on the rise since the 1980s in the post-Yugoslav republics. They are deeply intertwined in Post-Yugoslavia, as one leading Serbian sociologist, Mirko Blagojević, noted.² This massive religious revival of the Eastern Orthodox Churches and their close bonds to the formation of new states and nations in the 1990s stands out. It is perhaps one of the greatest turns in European religious life since the Reformation, and will influence the fate and culture of Europe for ages to come. The enlargement of the Western alliance of NATO in the former Eastern bloc will make issues at the fringes of Europe into potential hotbeds for political, financial, religious and even military challenges. This is already the case in Montenegro where Russian interference in state and church politics is lurking beneath the current debate about church politics following the 2016 and 2020 election. The incumbent president, whom pro-Russians tried to assassinate during the election in 2016, has made the 2020 election into a vote for or against the Serbian Orthodox Church's presence in Montenegrin society. The law on religion from 2019 has already drawn tens of thousands to protests against the government, and several parliament members, clergy members and even bishops have been detained for their protests in the spring of 2020. It has never been harder to separate church, national identity and politics than in today's tensions in Montenegro. This dissertation provides inroads into the structures, ideologies and their practical manifestations of Eastern Orthodoxy in Montenegro post-Yugoslavia.

My initial study of this subject was my master's thesis in which I attempted to come to understand the conflict through a narrow study of the ecclesiology of the Orthodox communities in Montenegro. However, I was left with a crucial question about what the hidden structure beneath all the debate about legitimacy, autocephaly (ecclesial independence) and rights to sites, saints and property was. This deeper historiographical structure is closely linked to the immense need to retell the history of the Balkans over and over again – and the churches and their clergy don't only play a great role in these narratives, but are also some of their greatest producers. These post-communist narratives of the past are crucial, because they are the raw

² Mirko Blagojević. "Religijske promene, desekularizacija i nacionalizam". In D. Đorđević (ed.), *Religija, crkva, nacija*. Niš: Jugoslovensko udruženje za naučno istraživanje religije, Otvoreni Univerzitet Subotica, 1996, p. 218-221

material for the modern religious, national and ethnic identities and the concrete basis on which states are re-formed. This study is an attempt to look into the religious ideology behind the historiography and how it plays out in the form of materials, place-making, ritual performances and historical writings. In other words: *what is the historiographical practice and religious ideology of the Eastern Orthodox churches in Montenegro post-Yugoslavia?*

Focus of this thesis: The making of a modern Orthodox history of Montenegro

In order to understand the current conflict, I will argue that one needs to understand the historical “stage” at which the conflict and national identity are formed. Eastern Orthodoxy in Montenegro has a long history of its own where the church often has been at the center of politics. This is perhaps most visible in the Serbian Orthodox Church, which dates itself back to St. Sava in the twelfth century. According to a Romantic Serbian legend, exemplified in a Serbian nationalist play from 1882, St. Sava uttered the words “Only unity will save the Serbs” (Serbian: само слога Србина спасава / samo sloga Srbina spasava) when he had founded the church. The slogan and symbol of Sava later became associated with the Serbian national uprisings against the Ottomans that eventually led to the formation of a modern Serbian nation-state in the late nineteenth century. The slogan became an essential part of the so-called Serbian cross. The unity of the Serbian nation and the Orthodox Church became symbolically bound to each other in the cross and politically enshrined in the Serbian nation-state.

St. Sava, who was also the brother of the first Serbian king, was the symbol of this. The saint thus became the very name for the national blend of religion and unique national character (Saint-Savaism – Svetosavlje) in Serbia.³ This particular popular interpretation of St. Sava and the Serbian cross reappeared during the wars of the 1990s in which the cross once more appeared on walls and posters across the region claiming them as Serbian lands. The restoration of unity between state, church and people seemed to be the first crucial step towards the civil wars of Yugoslavia. The narrative of how the Serbs restored the unity of church and nationalism in the 1990s is often seen as a tale about the ideological root for Serbian aggression. It is at least the way in which the story is often told today. It is, however, a simplistic tale of Serbian nationalism and religion bewildering those that claim to be the defenders or critics of the Serbian

³ Klaus Buchenau. *Kämpfende Kirchen – Jugoslawiens religiöse hypotek*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006, p. 13-51 for a thorough introduction and discussion of the concept in modern Serbian Orthodoxy.

nation and church.⁴ The history of the Serbs, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the memory of St. Sava is not so simple to untangle. History is never that easy.

A reminder of this can be found in Podgorica, the capital of present-day Montenegro, where the slogan of Serbian national and religious unity and the Serbian cross often appear as graffiti outside public buildings or even at monuments. Alongside it the year 1918 is inscribed, which was when the independent kingdom of Montenegro was dismantled and turned into a province controlled by the victorious (some would say Serbian) Belgrade army after World War I. The graffiti is a constant reminder to the people passing by that many see present-day Montenegro as a Serbian province that has defected from the union with Serbia; a region disloyal to the Serbian cause and a defying state and church now in pursuit of a fantasy of an independent ethnicity, language, culture and even Orthodox church outside of Serbia. This independent church was first founded as an attempt to revive the Orthodox church organization which existed in Montenegro prior to the Serbian takeover in 1918, but is not recognized by the Serbs and the historical Eastern Orthodox churches. The Serbs even have a derogative name for Montenegro's nationalist fantasy and church. They call it "Duklja" as an irony of history. But the Montenegrins are relentless in their project of building a new history of Montenegro in which the Serbs only have a role to play as the villains that seek to thwart the freedom of the Montenegrin mountain-dwellers and their church. St. Sava, his royal sibling and their modern descendants are tyrants suppressing the genuine Montenegrin state and church in this new Montenegrin narrative.⁵ There is no longer room for a common history with the Serbs and the historical unity between Montenegro and Serbia is denied, as was explicitly expressed when the president of Montenegro announced in May 2020 that the Montenegrin state's greatest threat was from

⁴ See examples of this narrative repeated in Milan Vukomanovic. "The Serbian Orthodox Church as a Political Actor in the Aftermath of October 5, 2000". *Politics and Religion*, 1, 2008, p. 237–269 & Branimir Anzulovic. *Heavenly Serbia – from myth to genocide*. London: Hurst & Company, 1999. These studies should be read in the context of the wars in the Balkans and the inner Serbian discussions between liberals and conservatives in which among others Vukomanovic is a well-known liberal voice. A balanced account of Saint-Savaism is found in Klaus Buchenau. "Svetosavlje und Pravoslavije, Nationales und Universales in der serbischen Orthodoxie". In Martin Schulze Wessel (ed.), *Nationalisierung der Religion und Sakralisierung der Nation im östlichen Europa*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006, p. 203-232.

⁵ Hans-Michael Miedlig. "Zur Frage der Ethnizität und Identität der Montenegriner in Geschichte und Gegenwart". *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 42, 2006.

Serbian clerics presenting this common history.⁶ The union with the Serbs is in Montenegro today officially a tale of Serbian invasion and Montenegrin submission leading only to suffering and misery – far removed from the promised salvation St. Sava spoke of.

The rivalry of these two simplistic narratives of who the Montenegrins are and which church they belong to – a Serbian or Montenegrin one – dates back to the nineteenth century.⁷ The question of Montenegrin identity has existed since then, but it has become even more radicalized since the fall of communism in 1989. Since the 1990s, Montenegrin and Serbian nationalists alike have nurtured the polarization.⁸ The formation of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church in 1993 in opposition to the local branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, and the subsequent alienation between the Serbian clergy and the Montenegrin government, has made the conflict of national identity into one with an increasingly religious tone.⁹ The tension was in the spring and summer of 2020 at its highest level due to the new law on religion, which can be used by the former government to seize all historical Orthodox shrines currently owned by the Serbian Orthodox Church. A highly contested issue, which seemed to be the decisive reason for the fall of the rule of Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro (Mng. Demokratska partija socijalista Crne Gore) government from 1996-2020 in the Montenegrin election of August 2020.

⁶ Pobjeda [Montenegrin Newspaper] 19.05.2020. "Dukanovic: Crna Gora odoljela politickoj agresiji iz Beograda, p. 2-3. [accessed https://issuu.com/novapobjeda/docs/pobjeda_19052020 27.09.2020]

⁷ František Šístek. "Regimes of Historicity, Identity, and Temporality in Montenegro 1905-45". In Balazs Trencsenyi, Marja Jalava, Diana Mishkova (ed.), *'Regimes of Historicity' in Southeastern and Northern Europe, 1890-1945*. New York: Palgrave, 2014, p. 82-100.

František Šístek. "Pan-Serb Golden Age and Montenegrin Heroic Age: Reconstructing History and Identity Narratives in Montenegro, 1905-1914". In *New Imagined Communities' Identity Making in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe*, Edited by Libusha Vajdova and Robert Gafrik, Kalligram and Ustev Svetovej Literatry, Sav. Bratislava 2010

⁸ Jelena Džankić. "Cutting the mists of the Black Mountain: Cleavages in Montenegro's divide over statehood and identity". *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 41, No. 3, 2013, p. 412-430; Kenneth Morrison. *Montenegro – A Modern History*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2009.

⁹ František Šístek. "Clericalization of Nationalism". In András Máté-Tóth and Cosima Rughinis (eds.), *Religion and Society: Spaces and Borders: Current Research on Religion in Central and Eastern Europe*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010, p. 118-130.

The rivalry and contradiction between these two narratives of Montenegro's past, in the Serbian and Montenegrin Orthodox churches, is the point of departure for this dissertation. The dissertation is not an attempt to give an exact and detailed account of these national narratives or to prove which of these two narratives is a correct historical account of Montenegro's past.¹⁰ The point is rather to identify how they are established and narrated within the Orthodox community through the renewed history of sites, saints and relics, what their purpose is and which ideological traditions and notions they draw upon. This will be used to reflect on how religious, ethnic and national identity is created in Europe today inspired by Michel de Certeau's critical assessment of what he calls the practice and religious ideology behind history. The final two chapters of this thesis aim to discuss these issues and contextualize them in a broader debate about the revival of churches, nations and states in Eastern Europe as well as Orthodox theology.

Research questions

The major societal changes in independent Montenegro from the 1990s onwards were, as noted, accompanied by a bipolar reformulation of the country's religious and political history after the breakdown of communism. The new narratives, ranging from an ultra-Serbian nationalist one across a moderate middle ground to an ultra-Montenegrin nationalist one, often excluded or marginalized other competing approaches and narratives about the past. The two Orthodox communities, the local branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church, play a key role in these narratives and in their production. Both institutions seek to establish their own narrative about the past in which they are the sole legitimate church and thereby monopolize history, persons, events and sites within one institution and one narrative. The central research question raised by these Eastern Orthodox historiographies is: *What is the historical backdrop and logic in these competing claims?*

¹⁰ Such an almost positivistic approach to history seems futile and has in the Balkan context often been a dangerous endeavour. An example of this is the much debated work of Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo—A Short History*. London: Macmillan Press, 1999. In which Malcolm seeks to show the “proper history” of Kosovo rather than the myths. Malcolm's endeavour is debated because it implicitly postulates problematic racial and ethnic claims, a discussion further unpacked by Pål Kolstø's “Introduction: Assessing the Role of Historical Myths in Modern Society”. In Pål Kolstø (ed.), *Myths and Boundaries in South-eastern Europe*. London: Hurst & Co., 2005 p. 1–34.

The purpose of this thesis is to answer this research question by examining – in Michel de Certeau’s words – the *historiographical strategical practice and religious ideology* behind their claims.¹¹ The focus is therefore on the historiographical practices and religion-based ideological reasoning in the contemporary Orthodox churches in Montenegro. This focus will highlight the importance of religious ideology in the construction of national narratives. The answer to this question has been divided into the following contributions:

1. An updated and well-grounded documentation of the transformation of the branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro and the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church after communism in articles 2 and 3.
2. An extended analysis of the historiographical practice and religious ideology within the branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro and the Montenegrin Orthodox Church’s publications on their history in articles 4-7.
3. A comparative discussion of similarities and differences in these newly shaped histories in chapters V and VI.
4. A broader reflection upon the similarities and differences of the historiographical practice and religious ideology in Montenegro with that of the Orthodox world and Orthodox theology in chapters V and VI.

Scope and overview

The scope of this thesis is limited to Eastern Orthodoxy in the former Yugoslavia and in particular the Orthodox communities in Montenegro. The period is delimited mainly to the years after the communist breakdown that followed the anti-bureaucratic revolution in Serbia, Montenegro and Vojvodina in 1989 orchestrated by the Milošević regime and up until the end of 2019. This delimitation provides a spatial and temporal scope, a *chronotope*, in which Eastern Orthodoxy can be studied through its relation to history, memory, place-making, state-making and politics. The period from 1989 to 2019 in Montenegro is characterized by one major political, cultural and religious transformation connected to the independence of Montenegro in

¹¹ See chapter II and Michel de Certeau. *The Writing of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

which a renewed interpretation of Montenegrin religious history came about in the two rival Orthodox communities.

The purpose of the dissertation is to investigate the historiographical practice and religious ideology of the two churches in Montenegro. This investigation takes its point of departure from de Certeau's theories, which will be outlined and discussed in detail in chapter II, and his theory of history has been used to structure the dissertation. De Certeau argues that a historiographical analysis needs to contain a closer look into the "place" of production. The place is the socio-political context for the production of historiography. De Certeau further underlines that a historiographical analysis entails both the historiography practiced and the embedded "religious ideology".

Chapter III therefore focuses on the socio-political context or the "place" of the two churches. The analysis takes the form of two inquiries, articles 2 and 3, into the size, spread, organization and political context of the churches. This chapter provide the basis for the following analytical chapter IV that contains the four main articles of this dissertation.

Focus	Saints and sites	
<p>Cult of Duklja - rulers from Vojislavljević, Balšić and Crnojević dynasties (9th-15th century)</p> <p><i>Article 4</i></p>		
<p>Cult of Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrović-Njegoš (1813-1851)</p> <p><i>Article 5</i></p>		
<p>Cult of Prince-Bishop Petar I Petrović-Njegoš (1784-1830)</p> <p><i>Article 6</i></p>		
<p>Cult of St. Jovan Vladimir (d. 1016)</p> <p><i>Article 7</i></p>		

Figure 1: Overview of the cults, saints and sites in this thesis

The articles focus on the reformulation of four different cults and interpretations of the saints and sites of these cults, as displayed in the figure above. These cults are used as inroads into the

question of historiography as practiced and material phenomena or as a notion and perception of history.

The conclusions are summarized in chapters V and VI in which the results are expanded, contextualized and discussed. The result is used as a basis for a definition of what historiographical practice is in the Montenegrin case and what the major part of this process entails. I will argue that the process always takes its departure from already existing historical materials, which are either revived, neglected or differentiated to pave the way for a new outlet of meaning. As such, the reconstruction of the cults is often closely bound to the development of nationalism, because both consist in the demarcation, neglect and differentiation of a social identity (a religious or national one). The definition and observation from the analysis is further tested on three similar cases from the Eastern Orthodox commonwealth, North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Ukraine, before a final conclusion is reached on the practice of historiography.

Chapter VI continues with a deeper exploration of the religious ideology in place in the churches, which inevitably also raises the question of the churches' relation to nation and state. I will argue, using Andrew Louth's analysis of Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology, that the Montenegrin Orthodox Church relies on a Eusebian historiographical ideology. This ideology draws on a reinterpretation of the church historian Eusebios's (263-339) notion of the symphonic emperor-church relation. The Eusebian connection between emperor and church is interpreted as a necessary and God-sanctioned connection between state, nation and church today in the Montenegrin Church. I will further argue that in contrast stands a different notion formulated by Orthodox theologians, such as Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900) and Georges Florovsky (1893-1979). This notion of history is based on the Church Father Athanasius's depiction of the church as an eremite in the desert. In Athanasius's image, the church is only related to the Divine and detached from secular affairs of the emperor and state. This notion is further explored in Florovsky's works and in the writings of four Slavic/Serbian theologians. My conclusion is that the Serbian Orthodox historiographical ideology of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to a great extent concurs with Solovyov and Florovsky's notions of state and church. The Serbian historiographical ideology is also shaped with the use of the concepts of Godmanhood and Integral knowledge into a Serbian tradition through the use of the teachings and image of St. Sava (known as *svetosavlje*) and the All-Man.

Articles in this thesis

All the articles in this thesis were produced between 2014 and 2019. Each article will be introduced briefly with its context, purpose, findings and reflections upon subsequent research in each chapter. The thesis contains the following articles:

1. “Unblocking the sacred: new perspectives on the religious revival in South Eastern Europe”. *Journal for Religion and Society in Central and Eastern Europe*, vol 11, no. 1, 2018.
2. “The self-proclaimed Montenegrin Orthodox Church – A paper tiger or a resurgent church?”. In Mirko Blagojevic and Zlatko Matic (eds.). *Religion in Contemporary Society/Религија и современно общество*. Belgrade: Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Education and Culture, 2017. p. 31-54.
3. “The revival of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro from 1990”. *Sociološka Luča – Montenegrin Journal for Sociology*, 2019.
4. “The return of Duklja: the Montenegrin Orthodox Church’s recast of history”. In Vasilios N. Makrides and Sebastian Rimestad (eds.). *Coping with Change – Orthodox Christian Dynamics between Tradition, Innovation, and Realpolitik*. Erfurter Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des Orthodoxen Christentums. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, Vol. 18, 2020.
5. “A Shrine for the nation - the material transformation of the Lovćen site in Montenegro”. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 2017.
6. “The beast from the abyss – a contemporary Serbian Orthodox historiographical response to war”. *Studia Theologica – Nordic Journal for Theology*, 2019.
7. “Hallowed be thy war helicopter – forging and forgetting the past”. Submitted to *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, Routledge, March 2020.

Apart from this selection of articles, a few other relevant ones were produced, but their focus is outside the scope of the thesis. Only parts of these works’ conclusions and findings are included – with due references.¹² A few popular articles have as well been produced and served as a

¹² See Emil Saggau. “Mellem eusebisk og Neo-patristisk ekklesiologi – ekklesiologiske positioner i den montenegrinske kirkestrid 1993-2013”. *Dansk Teologiske Tidsskrift*, 77. årg, 2014, p. 235-51; Emil Saggau. “Eastern Orthodox positions on violence”. In Aslan Ednan and Marcia Hermansen (eds.), *Religion and Violence*.

testing ground for analytical points and conclusions, which were later revised and supported with further materials.¹³

Language and names

Before I turn to the issue at hand, I would like to make a few remarks about the use of language and national identity. In this thesis I have not altered the self-identification of identity or language. This means that I refer to the Montenegrin language and ethnicity, if the source self-identifies as Montenegrin. This is not a statement about my own position. Secondly, I have tried to refer to Njegoš and other proto-national figures as “Slavic” rather than call them “Serbian” or “Montenegrin”. The thesis is not about which “ethnicity” they belong too. Most translations of Slavic quotes are my own (from time to time with help from indigenous speakers) and most often the Slavic text is quoted directly in Latin script below, except for crucial quotes for which the Serbian text is in brackets after the English translation. The use of names for clergymen, such as Amfilohije or others, differs in the various articles, which is not my choice, but that of the editors of the various publications in which the articles appeared. In the text, I generally follow the Orthodox tradition and call them by their monastic names – sometimes with their full name or secular names in brackets. References to places follow the English translation, if a standardized form exists. Otherwise, the Latinized Montenegrin or Serbian name is given preference, as is the case for example with Lake Skadar, which in Albanian is called Skhöder. Most names use the Latin version of Slavic with “š”, “ž” or “Đ”, or the standard alliteration whereby Lovćen becomes Lovchen or Đukanović becomes Djukanovich and so on. The

Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2017; Emil Saggau. “Kosovo Crucified – narratives in the contemporary Serbian Orthodox perception of Kosovo”. *Religions*, 2019; Emil Saggau, Sabina Pacariz and Vladimir Bakrač. “Religious education in Montenegro”. In Martin Rothgangel, Geir Skeie & Martin Jäggle (ed.), *Religious Education at Schools in Europe, Part 4: Southeast Europe*. Wiener Forum für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft. Vienna: Vienna University Press, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht unipress, 2020.

¹³ See Emil Saggau. “Emil Hilton Saggau zum Kirchenkonflikt in Montenegro”. *Der Nachrichtendienst Östliche Kirchen (NÖK)*, 18.06.2019 ; “Velsignet være din kamphelikopter”. *TEOL-information*, Bind 59, 02.2019, p. 35-39.; “Kun enhed kan frelse serberne”. *Magasinet rØST*, 27 October, 2015; “Østeuropas religiøse fantom”. *Magasinet rØst*, 10 June 2015; “Patriarkernes kamp”. *Magasinet rØST*, 16 October 2013; “I skyggen af det sorte bjerg”. e-article, *Danske Kirkers Råd*, d. 16 October 2013; “Striden om en tinkirke”. *Magasinet rØST*, 13 March 2013.

differences in the paper are often the reflection of the editorial practice and do not reflect my own choices.

Religion in Montenegro

The first question is whether other research projects and academic publications already answer the questions of this thesis. The following review of studies of religion in Montenegro is an assessment of this.

Orthodox historiography in Serbia and Montenegro

On the surface, there are hardly any studies of Eastern Orthodox historiography as a specific genre. There are numerous books and articles on the history of the Eastern Orthodox churches, mostly written by members or pupils of the Paris-based Russian émigré theologians of the twentieth century.¹⁴ A key figure here is Georges Florovsky (1893-1979), who tried to establish a new account of Orthodox history separated from the Western tradition and the – at the time – communist nation-states in the East.¹⁵ In Florovsky's works the history of the churches was reinterpreted. Quite an array of studies have been devoted to this so-called “neo-patristic synthesis” in Eastern Orthodoxy, as Florovsky's project has been named. Few of these assess Florovsky's historiography and none of them address the similar development of Orthodox historiography in Serbia and Montenegro further discussed in chapter VI.¹⁶ In chapter VI, I will argue that a historiographical transformation quite similar to Florovsky's was undertaken by Serbian theologians during the same period in the twentieth century. This form of Serbian theological reinterpretation of the Orthodox past is historiography *practiced* and very little effort has been put into understanding it – and no serious academic studies on Serbian or Montenegrin Orthodox

¹⁴ Andrew Louth. *Modern Orthodox thinkers*. London: SPCK, 2015.

¹⁵ See his magnum opus: Georges Florovsky. *Ways of the Russian Theology*. Robert L. Nicholas (trans.). Vaduz: Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1987.

¹⁶ See Paul L. Gavrilyk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*, Oxford University Press 2014. Gavrilyk is one of the few who has paid attention to Florovsky's historiography, which he further discusses in Paul L. Gavrilyk. “Georges Florovsky's Monograph ‘Herzen's Philosophy of History’: The New Archival Material and the Reconstruction of the Full Text”. *Harvard Theological Review*, 108(2), 2015, p. 197-212.

historiography exist.¹⁷ This thesis is the first of its kind within historiographical studies of Orthodox Churches in former Yugoslavia and one of the rare studies of Eastern Orthodox historiography.

Orthodox historiography as national historiography

Orthodox historiography has more often resurfaced and been studied when the national historiography of the nation-states with a majority of Orthodox believers has been examined. Such studies highlight how a national historiography with inspiration from the local Eastern Orthodox Church was developed in the Eastern European nation-states of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Secular and Orthodox history were slowly entangled in these years. In Bulgaria, for example, even the neo-saints of the church were more often chosen due to their merit as proponents of the national cause rather than their spiritual effort. National history was the primary focus, and the church the secondary. In the case of Bulgaria, Carsten Riis and others have written several crucial studies of the late development of Orthodox and national historiography.¹⁸ Similar studies exist for the Baltics,¹⁹ Russia,²⁰ Romania²¹, Greece²², etc. In this line of study there is an obvious lack of studies on Orthodox historiography in Serbia and

¹⁷ There are hardly any academic studies on Serbian Orthodox historiography. Most studies could be characterized as a popularized form of theology. One departure from this pattern is Andrew Louth's study of Popović's theology in *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*. 2015, which provides some insight into the historiography of the Serbian Orthodox world.

¹⁸ Carsten Riis. *En osmannisk arv – Historieskrivning og religion i Bulgarien*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Faculty of Theology, 1999; Riis. *Religion, politics, and historiography in Bulgaria*, Boulder: East European Monographs ; New York: Distributed by Columbia University Press, 2002.

¹⁹ Sebastian Rimestadt. *The Challenges of Modernity to the Orthodox Church in Estonia and Latvia (1917-1940)*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012.

²⁰ In the case of Russia there is a long line of studies devoted to either the entanglement of national and Orthodox historiography, or studies of the Russian émigré theologians' thought on history, like for example Florovsky, who was mentioned above.

²¹ Adrian Velicu. *The Orthodox Church and National Identity in Post-Communist Romania*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

²² As an example see Trine Stauning Willert. *The New Ottoman Greece in History and Fiction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019 and Roderick Beaton & David Ricks (eds.). *The Making of Modern Greece - Nationalism, Romanticism and the Uses of the Past*. London: Routledge, 2009.

Montenegro. There exist only a few case studies for this region, which mainly focus on Kosovo.²³

The major reason for this is that the construction of Yugoslavia in historiography and as an identity in the twentieth century overshadowed and marginalized the national and ecclesial histories of the Serbs and Montenegrins for several decades – unlike the case of Bulgaria or Greece. The implosion of the Yugoslav idea, state and communist rule in the 1980s only meant a greater interest in Yugoslav historiography, because these ideas had now failed and were replaced with reemerging national identities. The question of why the idea of Yugoslavia failed and the region plunged into war attracted much scholarly attention.²⁴ Less academic effort was devoted to the new emerging national historiographies of the 1990s. It is therefore not until the end of the 1990s that academic studies of particular national and ecclesial histories in former Yugoslavia emerged. In these studies, the overarching paradigm of the 2000s and 2010s studies of religion in Eastern Europe was to focus on the religious communities' role in politics, nation-building and national identity. The modern development and reformulation of several national Orthodox identities through history in the post-communist countries has therefore been explored in numerous studies, but again very few focused on Serbia and even fewer on Montenegro, which will be discussed in detail in the following section.²⁵

²³ See Klaus Buchenau. "Verpätete Ernüchterung: Die Serbische Orthodoxe Kirche im Kosovokonflikt 1960-1999". Berlin: Arbeitsberichte des Osteuropa-Instituts der FU Berlin 2, 1999, p. 5-43 as an example concerning the historiography of Kosovo. Buchenau's works is a key example of some of the central studies that exist on Serbian theology and thought on history, which are further discussed later in this chapter.

²⁴ An example is Tea Sindbæk. *Usable history? Representations of Yugoslavia's difficult past from 1945 to 2002*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2012; Dejan Djokic (ed.). *Yugoslavism – Histories of A Failed Idea 1918-1992*. London: Hurst & Company, 2003.

²⁵ See as examples Lucian Leustean (ed.). *Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Southeastern Europe*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2014; Lucian Leustean (ed.). *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, London: Routledge, 2014; Sabrina P. Ramet (ed.). *Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe – Challenges since 1989*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014; Daniel P. Payne. "Nationalism and the Local Church: The Source of Ecclesiastical Conflict in the Orthodox Commonwealth". *Nationalities Papers* 35, no. 5, November 2007, p. 831-52; Christopher Marsh. "The Religious Dimension of Post-Communist 'Ethnic' Conflict". *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 35, No. 5, November 2007, p. 811-830; Ina Merdjanova. "In Search of Identity: Nationalism and Religion in Eastern Europe". *Religion, State and Society*, 28:3, 2000, p. 233-262.

Religion in Montenegro

The issue of religion and history in Montenegro after 1989, which is the focal point of this thesis, has rarely been an academic subject in the twentieth century – partly because it was mostly seen as an integrated part of the study of religion and history in Serbia. Montenegro is reduced to a part among many in central studies of Serbian Orthodoxy, such as Alexander Stella's crucial 1979 work *Church and State in Yugoslavia since 1945*.²⁶ Montenegro's close continual integration in the Serbian-controlled Yugoslavia of the 1990s, when all other republics had defected from the federation, maintained this status until the early 2000s. For that reason, scholars that taught religion in higher education in Montenegro, until the Montenegrin referendum on independence in 2006, were often directly linked to, educated at or even faculty members in academic institutions in Belgrade or the institute for sociology of religion at the University of Niš, and their perspective was thus Serbian-oriented.²⁷ Studies of religion in the region of former Yugoslavia during the 1990s were mainly undertaken by members of the Yugoslav Society for Scientific Studies of Religion, such as Mirko Blagojević and Milan Vukmanović. Both of them noted that the traditional religious communities experienced a revival after communism – in particular the Serbian Orthodox Church, in the late 1980s and early 1990s.²⁸ As Blagojević described it, Yugoslav society experienced a *desecularization* and *clericalization* of political issues, such as Kosovo.²⁹ Blagojević's early studies from the 1994-1996 period set the scene for most studies that followed and are used as the point of reference in

²⁶ Alexander Stella. *Church and State in Yugoslavia since 1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

²⁷ Srđan Vukadinović. "Sociology of Religion in the Montenegrin Academic Circle (1991-2007)". In D. Djordjevic (ed.), *The Sociology of Religion in Former Yugoslav Republics*. Nis: Punta, 2008, p. 57-64.

²⁸ See Mirko Blagojević. "Serbian Empirical Sociology of Religion (Crucial Research Studies of Religiousness from 1991-2007)". In D. Djordjevic (ed.), *The Sociology of Religion in Former Yugoslav Republics*. Nis: Punta, 2008, p. 65-72 for a detailed overview of the studies of religion in former Yugoslavia. Early attempts to catch the transformation are described in Mirko Blagojević. "Društveni sukobi i revitalizacija religije". In D. Đorđević (ed.) *Religija i razvoj*. Niš: Jugoslovensko udruženje za naučno istraživanje religije, 1995 p. 138-143; Blagojević. "Religijske promene, desekularizacija i nacionalizam". 1996.

²⁹ Mirko Blagojević. "Desecularization of Contemporary Serbian Society". In Paul Mojzes and Walter Sawatsky (ed.), *Religion in Eastern Europe*, vol. XXVII, Number 1, 2008. p. 37-50.

articles 2 and 3 in this thesis.³⁰ Vukmanović was one of the first to add a further dimension to Blagojević's descriptive sociological works. Vukmanović tracked the close relationship between the new nationalist political elite of Serbia, the military and the Serbian Orthodox Church, underlining their close integration with each other.³¹ A similar line of inquiry was undertaken by Klaus Buchenau and Bojan Aleksov in the late 1990s and early 2000s in Serbia.³² Buchenau's and Aleksov's works are characterized by a nuanced approach to the revival of Orthodoxy and their inquiries deal with different parts of the churches's history, saints and sites, but mainly in Serbia. The attention in Buchenau and Aleksov's studies is on how nationhood is constructed and sacralized, which is why they seldom deal with the theological backdrop of the churches. Furthermore Buchenau and Aleksov are mainly preoccupied with Serbia, in which the transformation and transition of society is very different from Montenegro, which slowly departed from the alliance with Serbia in 1996 until the complete breakup after the referendum in 2006. A few papers and a chapter by Buchenau deal directly with Serbian Orthodox theology and contain some of the most in-depth analysis of modern Serbian theology written outside of Serbia. In particular, his analysis of the concept of *Svetosavlje* broke new ground, which I am heavily relying on in my analysis of Serbian theology in chapter VI.³³ Blagojević's, Buchenau's

³⁰ An example is Radmila Radić and Milan Vukmanović. "Religion and Democracy in Serbia since 1989: The Case of the Serbian Orthodox Church". In Sabrina P. Ramet (ed.), *Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe – Challenges since 1989*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

³¹ Milan Vukmanović. "The Religious Dimension of the Yugoslav Conflicts". *European Association for the Study of Religions*, Santander, 2004; Vukmanović. "Serbian Orthodox Church as a Political Actor in the Aftermath of October 5, 2000", 2008.

³² Buchenau "Verpätete Ernüchterung: Die Serbische Orthodoxe Kirche im Kosovokonflikt 1960-1999", 1999; Buchenau. "Die Rolle der Christen im Balkankonflikt". In Herbert Hoffmann (ed.), *Religionsfreiheit gestalten*. Trier: Paulinus verlag, 2000, p. 52-86; Buchenau. "What Went Wrong? Church-State Relations in Socialist Yugoslavia", *Nationalities Papers* 33, 4, 2005, p. 547-567. See a comprehensive study of Serbian orthodoxy by Buchenau, *Kämpfende Kirchen*. 2006. Bojan Aleksov. "Nationalism in Construction: The Memorial Church of St. Sava on Vračar Hill in Belgrade". *Balkanologie*, VII (2), 2003, p. 47-72; Aleksov. "The New Role for the Church in Serbia". *Südosteuropa*, 2000, p. 353-375; Aleksov. "The Serbian Orthodox Church: Haunting past and challenging future". *International journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 2010, p. 176-191.

³³ Buchenau, *Kämpfende Kirchen*. 2006., p. 13-42; Andrew Louth, "Modern Orthodox dogmatic theology: 2 St. Justin Popović". In Andrew Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*, 2015, p. 143-158; Jovan Byford. *Denial and*

and Aleksov's main points are of great relevance to this study due to the continual close relationship between the branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro and the Serbian Patriarchate in Belgrade. Orthodoxy in Montenegro cannot be understood outside of the broad history and modern development of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

In addition to the afore-mentioned studies by Blagojević and others, a series of works exist, which are often written by Croatian or Anglo-American academics and journalists, on Serbian nationalism in the context of the Yugoslav civil wars of the 1990s.³⁴ Many of these works focused on the Serbian Church and argued that its history and theology – most often boiled down to the so-called “Kosovo myth” and “Svetosavlje” – were the root of Serbian nationalism. These studies thereby touch on the subject of this thesis. However, many of these studies were directly anti-Serbian and written too much under the emotional influence of the wars. In most of these studies it is argued that the foundation for the civil wars and ethnic cleansing of the 1990s should be found in the revival of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the 1980s. The Serbian Church's revived belief system was framed as the root for genocide, perhaps most starkly in Branimir Anzulovic's book, *Heavenly Serbia – From Myth to Genocide*, from 1999, or Tim Judah's *The Serbs*, from 2000.³⁵ These works often include crude and anachronistic portrayals of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its founding beliefs, such as the cult of St. Sava mentioned in the introduction, which are countered by Buchenau's more balanced assessment.³⁶

A crucial, thorough and seminal work published at the same time is Vjekoslav Perica's *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*, from 2002. In it, Perica, a former Yugoslav diplomat, presents a grand narrative of the revival of religion in Yugoslavia

Repression of Antisemitism- Post-Communist Remembrance of the Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008.

³⁴ See among others Tim Judah. *The Serbs: History, Myth, and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000; Judah. *Kosovo: War and Revenge*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002; Judah. “The Serbs: The Sweet and Rotten Smell of History.” *Daedalus* 126, no. 3, 1997, p. 23–45; Malcolm. *Kosovo*. 1999; Michael Sells. *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*. San Francisco: University of California Press, 1998.

³⁵ Anzulovic. *Heavenly Serbia*. 1999; Judah. *The Serbs*. 2000.

³⁶ An example is Vukmanović, “Serbian Orthodox Church as a Political Actor in the Aftermath of October 5, 2000”. 2008 which contains a description of the cult of St. Sava, which contrasts to the nuanced study in Buchenau, “Svetosavlje und Pravoslavlje, Nationales und Universales in der serbischen Orthodoxie”. 2006.

with an emphasis on the Serbian Orthodox Church. His results and points were aligned with the groundbreaking work by the members of the Yugoslav Society for Scientific Studies of Religion of the 1990s, which he put into the larger context of the history of Yugoslavia. The theoretical approach to religion in his study became the standard of subsequent studies of religion in both Serbia and Montenegro in the 2010s. Perica's work, and studies related to his approach, are discussed further in article 1. In Perica's work, there are very few direct references to Montenegrin or Serbian Orthodox theology. The subject and point of departure for this investigation here is barely considered in his study.

Florian Bieber and a group of local Montenegrin academics, with a publication edited by Bieber in 2003, were the first to consider religion in Montenegro as a subject in its own right. The book was the first to attempt to write an account of the changes taking place solely in Montenegrin society after the fall of communism.³⁷ It included one of the first accounts of the political and cultural transformation taking place there before the 2006 referendum on independence from Serbia. The anthology included two contributions, one written by Srđa Pavlović and one by Šerbo Rastoder, which describe the development of a Montenegrin-centered and independent national, religious and cultural narrative detached from the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian nationalist narrative. Pavlović's conclusion in 2003 was that the endeavor to create a new independent Montenegrin national identity and separate church seemed to be highly political and fueled by the Montenegrin government's need to distance itself from the Milošević regime. He notes that the independent cultural, religious and political identity of the Montenegrins was being moulded together in 2003, which led to a process of marginalization and rivalry between a Montenegrin and a Serbian centered religious, cultural and political identity.³⁸ Pavlović's conclusion in 2003 foreshadowed what was about to come in the wake of the referendum in Montenegro in 2006. The polarization detected by Pavlović in 2003 between Serbs and Montenegrins was even more visible in Thomas Fleming's English-language book on Montenegrin history from 2002, which is a Serbian-centered version of Montenegro's history. In it, Fleming sharply attacks any Montenegrin claim of a specific national character separate from

³⁷ Florian Bieber (ed.). *Montenegro in Transition*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2003.

³⁸ Srđa Pavlović. "Who are Montenegrins? Statehood, identity, and civic society". In Florian Bieber (ed.). *Montenegro in Transition*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2003. p. 83-106; Šerbo Rastoder. "A short review of the history of Montenegro". In Florian Bieber (ed.). *Montenegro in Transition*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2003, p. 107-138.

that of Serbs'. The Montenegrin independence narrative of the early 2000s was heavily criticized as an invention in Fleming's assessment of Montenegro's history and its Orthodox community.³⁹ Fleming's account seems to be a "naïve" English version of an undated Serbian article on the ideological roots of Montenegrin separatism, which is extremely critical of any idea of ecclesial independence of Montenegro. The article was written by a member of the Historical Institute at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slavenko Terzic. An English version of it can be found in the digital library of the National Library of Serbia and is probably dated to the late 1990s.⁴⁰ During the same period, members of the newly founded Montenegrin nationalist academic association, called the 'Doclean Academy of Sciences and Arts' (Mng.: *Dukljanska akademija nauka i umjetnosti*, DANU), began to produce works which argued for a separated Montenegrin ecclesial history, most notably Goran Sekulović's text "Crnogorska identitetska prava i slobode" published in *Matica Crnogorska* in 2010. The points made by Terzic, Sekulović and others from the Serbian and Montenegrin academies are further discussed in article 4.

Following Bieber and at the height of political tensions in Montenegro between the camp of the pro-Serb unionists and the pro-Montenegrin independence movement, Hans-Michael Miedlig published a study in 2006 of the question of the ethnic identity of Montenegro in which he traces its cultural and historical roots. Miedlig concludes that the Montenegrin independence project is in historical, cultural and religious terms, a new construction undertaken by elites. This point was crucial for the initial shaping of this study, which due to Miedlig's conclusion, focuses on the ecclesial elites rather than on the broader Montenegrin population.⁴¹ Bieber, Pavlović, Rastoder and Miedlig provide accounts of the transformation of Montenegrin society. These results are used to provide a context to this study, but the studies lack any deep assessment or conclusion about religion and historiography (which is also not their focus).

Kenneth Morrison follows in the footsteps of Bieber's study, and Morrison has undertaken substantial fieldwork in Montenegro. His major work, *Montenegro – A Modern History*, from 2009, includes a chapter on the religious conflict.⁴² In it, he provides an account of

³⁹ Thomas Fleming. *Montenegro: The Divided land*. Rockford: Chronicle Press, 2002.

⁴⁰ Slavenko Terzic, "Ideological roots of Montenegrin nation and Montenegrin separatism". Stefan Branisavljevic (trans.). https://www.rastko.rs/rastko-cg/povijest/terzic-ideological_roots.html [retrieved 20.06.2020]

⁴¹ Miedlig. "Zur Frage der Ethnizität und Identität der Montenegriner in Geschichte und Gegenwart". 2006.

⁴² Morrison, *Montenegro – A Modern History*. 2009.

how the Montenegrin Orthodox Church was founded and its initial conflict with the Serbian Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral in the 1990s up until the referendum in 2006. The main focus in Morrison's work is on the churches' involvement and entanglement in Montenegrin politics and the discussion over national identity. As Morrison writes; "In Montenegro, the church served as a point of reference for expressing national identity and attitudes towards the state".⁴³ The churches and their conflict are essentially seen as proxy for nationalism in Morrison's study – a point several later studies of religion in Montenegro tend to make, often based on the conclusions from Perica Vjekoslav's 2002 study and its theoretical foundation. Such a point of view often reduces or overlooks the significance of religious development in Montenegro as further discussed in article 1. Morrison repeats his point about the Orthodox communities from his 2009 book in several of his later publications on the same subject.⁴⁴ His study from 2009 is thorough on Montenegrin politics and rich with empirical findings, but it does not bring forth any direct or new reflections on Orthodox historiography after communism. Nevertheless, it does highlight several interesting points on religious development in Montenegro, which are further unpacked in articles 2 and 3.

One reason for this blind spot towards religion in Morrison's works comes forth in his portrayal of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro in his book from 2009. In it, he makes direct reference to and use of Branimir Anzulovic's book, *Heavenly Serbia – From Myth To Genocide*.⁴⁵ Anzulovic's work is often criticized for being too careless about sources and the connection between them – and as John Fraser writes in his review of the book, Anzulovic's description of the Serbian Orthodox Church can "only contribute to the demonization of the Serbs".⁴⁶ Many of the conclusions in Anzulovic's work seem to be without any scholarly merit

⁴³ Ibid., p. 129.

⁴⁴ Kenneth Morrison. "Autocephaly, Log Burning, and Legitimacy: The Montenegrin and Serbian Orthodox Churches in Conflict". In B. Radeljić and M. Topić (ed.), *Religion in the Post-Yugoslav Context*. London: Lexington Books 2015, p. 101-121; Aleksander Zdravkovski and Kenneth Morrison. "The Orthodox Churches of Macedonia and Montenegro: The Quest for Autocephaly". In Ramet, S. (ed.), *Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

⁴⁵ Anzulovic. *Heavenly Serbia – From Myth to Genocide*. 1999.

⁴⁶ John Fraser, "The disintegration of Yugoslavia (Book Review)". *International Journal*; Toronto Vol. 55, Iss. 1, Winter 2000, p. 146. See also the critique by Ivo Banac. "Heavenly Serbia: From Myth to Genocide. Branimir Anzulovic". *History of Religions* 41, no. 2, Nov., 2001, p. 173-174.

and Morrison's use of Anzulovic therefore is invalid and counterproductive. Secondly, Morrison refers to Vjekoslav Perica in his study of the churches in 2009. Perica's works, as mentioned earlier, are both reductive towards religion and have a potential blind spot towards the theological backdrop, which Morrison adopts, and which is discussed further in article 1. Finally, Morrison vaguely refers to the concept of svetosavlje (Saint-Savaism) as a national-religious concept in his description of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro. Morrison argues that this concept is a toxic blend of the church and nationalist mission, which he claims is the basis for the revival of the Serbian Orthodox narrative in Montenegro.⁴⁷ However, Morrison's assessment of the concept of svetosavlje is problematic. The concept of svetosavlje tends to only be used in Western academia in order to criticize the Serbian Orthodox Church as a proponent of nationalism rather than assessing the concept as a contemporary cult devoted to St. Sava. The same is often also the case with most references to the "Kosovo Myth" in descriptions the Serbian Orthodox Church.⁴⁸ These two multifaceted cults and complex historical phenomena with a long history of reception are often reduced to forms of Serbian nationalism arising from the Church. This is seldom the whole story. Klaus Buchenau has in several important studies managed to nuance the concept of svetosavlje and the interpretation of Kosovo in Serbian Orthodoxy, problematizing the use by Morrison.⁴⁹ To sum up, Morrison does not deliver an explanation of the content and reasoning of the Orthodox community in Montenegro apart from the blunt point that the churches are proxies or agents of nationalism.

Morrison's point about the religious communities as proxies of nationalism is repeated several times by one of the most prolific academics on the issue of Montenegrin politics, nationhood and occasionally religion, Jelena Džankić. The majority of Džankić's work centers on the sharp analysis of Montenegrin politics and her approach is generally speaking social

⁴⁷ Morrison, *Montenegro – A Modern History*. 2009, p. 132.

⁴⁸ This is indeed the case in Anzulovic. *Heavenly Serbia – From Myth to Genocide*. 1999, but is also to some extent visible in Sells. *The Bridge Betrayed - Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*. 1998 and Judah. *The Serbs – History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*. 2009.

⁴⁹ Buchenau, "Svetosavlje und Pravoslavlje". 2006, p. 203-232. See also Maria Falina. "Svetosavlje : a Case Study in the Nationalization of Religion". *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte = Revue suisse d'histoire religieuse et culturelle = Rivista svizzera di storia religiosa e culturale*, Band (Jahr): 101, 2007. For a discussion of the Kosovo theme as a historiographical narrative in the Serbian Orthodox Church, see Saggau "Kosovo Crucified". 2019.

scientific.⁵⁰ Her two major contributions to the study of religion in Montenegro could be found in articles from 2015 and 2014 devoted to the symbolic and religious division of identity in Montenegro. In Džankić's paper from 2014, she presents new empirical material on the division in Eastern Orthodoxy in Montenegro, which shows that a large proportion of the Orthodox community do not adhere to either a Serbian or Montenegrin form of Orthodoxy. Her conclusion and material are further discussed in article 2.⁵¹ The second article, from 2015, was published in an anthology on monasticism in Eastern Europe and it falls short of illuminating that subject.⁵² The paper is rather a repetition of points previously made by herself and Morrison in a new theoretical setting without new empirical data – despite the massive transformation of Orthodox monasticism that has actually taken place in Montenegro as discussed in article 3 and also mentioned in a paper by Alice Forbess from 2013.⁵³

A few additional articles take up the issue of religion in Montenegro. The three most prominent ones are written by František Šistek, Pieter Troch and Stefan Kube, who reach almost the same conclusion as Morrison and Džankić – often with the use of the same references, the same specific rituals and events – without much new empirical backing from the field or from

⁵⁰ See among others Jelena Džankić. *Citizenship in Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro; Effects of Statehood and Identity Challenges*. London: Ashgate, 2015; Džankić. "Reconstructing the meaning of being 'Montenegrin'". *Slavic Review*, Vol. 73, Issue 2, 2014; Džankić. "Citizenship between the 'image of the nation' and 'the image of politics': the case of Montenegro". *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 14, Issue 1, 2014; Džankić. "Cutting the mists of the Black Mountain", 2013; Džankić. "Understanding Citizenship in Montenegro". In Jo Shaw and Igor Štiks (eds.), *Citizenship after Yugoslavia*. London: Routledge, 2013, p. 53-69; Džankić. "Understanding Citizenship in Montenegro". *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 16, Issues 3-4, 2012; Džankić. "Montenegrin NATO membership aspirations after the referendum on independence". *Crossroads – The Macedonian Foreign Policy Journal*, Vol. 1, Issue 3, 2007; Džankić. "Political Transformation in Montenegro". In *Integration Perspectives and Synergic Effects of European Transformation in the Countries Targeted by EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policies*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009, p. 4-87.

⁵¹ Jelena Džankić. "When Two Hands Rock the Cradle: Symbolic Dimensions of the Divide Over Statehood and Identity in Montenegro". In Pål Kolstø (ed.), *Southeast European Studies: Strategies of Symbolic Nation-Building in South Eastern Europe*. Farnham: Routledge, 2014, p. 115-138.

⁵² Jelena Džankić. "Religion and identity in Montenegro". In Ines Angeli-Murzaku (ed.), *Monasticism in Eastern Europe*. London: Routledge, 2015, p. 110-129.

⁵³ Alice Forbess. "Montenegro versus Crna Gora – The rival hagiographic genealogies of the new Montenegrin polity". *Focaal—Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 67, 2013, p. 47–60.

primary sources.⁵⁴ The content of these studies is further discussed in article 1. The issue of church and identity is also partly the focus of Daniel Grabic's book on "Montenegrizität", which is mainly an analysis of the creation of a separate Montenegrin identity through the idea of an independent church and language. Grabic's focus is more on the concrete construction of identity and independence than the historical thought and facts at play. It is however one of the most comprehensive analyses of the recent development of the Montenegrin language and language politics.⁵⁵ Alice Forbess's work from 2013 departs from the usual pattern of social scientific analysis of religion in Montenegro.⁵⁶ Forbess draws attention to the construction of places and images in Montenegro as an outlet for the interpretation of history. This has been the major inspiration for articles 5 and 7 in which her approach is tested on other materials.

In 2020 Dragan Šljivić and Nenad Živković published a paper on "Self-Ruled and Self-Consecrated Ecclesiastic Schism as a Nation-Building Instrument in the Orthodox Countries of South Eastern Europe", which goes beyond the confines of the social-scientific paradigm on Orthodoxy in South Eastern Europe, and which contains a section on Montenegro. Šljivić and Živković provide a short overview of the recent discussion about autocephaly, the right to property and the new law on religion from 2019, which is assessed in the context of the same debates in North Macedonia and Bulgaria. Their analysis is exemplary in its depiction of Montenegrin ecclesial politics. Their description of the churches in Montenegro relies partly on papers from this thesis, as well as an ongoing discussion and exchange of information between them and myself.⁵⁷ Nenad Živković's work on North Macedonia is the primary base for the comparison between Montenegro and North Macedonia in the final part of this thesis. The focus of the 2020 paper is, however, not on historiography, but rather on autocephaly and nationalism more strictly.

⁵⁴ Šistek. "Clericalization of Nationalism". 2010; Pieter Troch. "From 'And' to 'Either/Or': Nationhood in Montenegro during the Yugoslav Twentieth Century". *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 28, 2014; Stefan Kube. "Wer repräsentiert die Orthodoxie in Montenegro? Kirchliche Konflikte um den öffentlichen Raum". In Alojz Ivanišević (ed.), *Re- Sakralisierung des öffentlichen Raums in Südosteuropa nach der Wende 1989?*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012, p. 115–131.

⁵⁵ Daniel Grabic. "Montenegrizität - Sprache und Kirche im Spiegel des Identitätsdiskurses in der Republik Montenegro 1990-2007". Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010.

⁵⁶ Forbess. "Montenegro versus Crna Gora". 2013.

⁵⁷ Dragan Šljivić & Nenad Živković. "Self-Ruled and Self-Consecrated Ecclesiastic Schism as a Nation-Building Instrument in the Orthodox Countries of South Eastern Europe". *Genealogy*, 2020.

Another noticeable departure from the social scientific trail described above are studies of Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrović-Njegoš (1813-1851), his literature and his reception, which is also the main theme in article 5 and further discussed in chapter VI.⁵⁸ In some of these, such as Andrew Baruch Wachtel's works, a careful analysis of Yugoslavia's cultural policy and its effects can be found. Wachtel points out the extent to which a government-controlled cultural policy affects cultural agents in shaping the interpretation of history in opposition or in the pursuit of the state's goals in former Yugoslavia. In doing so, Wachtel highlights how organisations, such as the Orthodox churches, are forced to interact and shape their reception of history, its characters and events in a dialogue with the government. It is not an entirely isolated process, but rather one created out of conflict and interaction, as unpacked in article 7.⁵⁹

A few local studies of religion also exist. Most of them are written by Vladimir Bakrač, who focuses entirely on the landscape of religions in Montenegro in a classic sociology of religion manner. Bakrač's works, such as his thesis on youth and religion in Montenegro, assesses the religious trend and provides some empirical base to the depiction of the development laid out in this thesis in articles 2 and 3, which were written with Bakrač as editor and reviewer.⁶⁰ Alongside Bakrač's works several other works depict the local Muslim community in the country and deal to some extent with the social and legal situation of organized religion in Montenegro.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Andrew Baruch Wachtel. "How to use a classic: Petar P. N. in the Twentieth Century". In J. Lampe and M. Mazower (ed.), *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of the Twentieth-Century South-East Europe*. Budapest: CEU Press, 2004, p. 131–147; Wachtel. "Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation – Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia". Stanford: Stanford University press, 1998; Bojan Baskar. "The Third Canonization of Njegoš, the National Poet of Montenegro". In Jón Karl Helgason and Marijan Dović (eds.), *Great Immortality: Studies on European Cultural Sainthood*. Leiden: Brill, 2019, p. 269–293. See also Z. Zlatar. *The Poetics of Slavdom Vol. II*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007.

⁵⁹ Wachtel. "How to use a classic". 2004.

⁶⁰ Vladimir Bakrač. "Religioznost mladih u Crnoj Gori i njihov odnos prema nekim moralnim vrijednostima". *Sociološka luča*, 2011, p. 16–28; Bakrač. "Religioznost mladih u Crnoj Gori". *Sociološka luča*, 2012. Bakrač & Milo Blagojević. "Religija i sloboda u Crnoj Gori". *Religija*, 2013.

⁶¹ Sabina Pačariž. "Montenegro". In Jørgen S. Nielsen et al. (eds.), *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, Volumes 3-7, Leiden: Brill, 2012-2015; Omer Kajoshaj. "Montenegro". In Jørgen S. Nielsen et al. (eds.), *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, Volumes 1-2. Leiden: Brill, 2010- 2011; Sabina Pačariž. "The Migrations of Bosniaks to Turkey from 1945 to 1974: The Case of Sandžak". Sarajevo: Centre for Advanced Studies, 2016.

Montenegrin national historiography

There does not exist any major work on Montenegro's (or Serbia's) recent Orthodox history and theological transformation, such as is the case for Bulgaria among others. However, Šistek has, apart from his works on religion in Montenegro today, written some central pieces describing the development of Montenegrin historiography and national identity prior to the Second World War. This perception of Montenegrin history is later used by the Montenegrin Orthodox Church, as discussed in article 4.⁶² Šistek provides an account of the changing concept of the ethnicity of the Montenegrins during the period from Montenegrin independence in 1878 to the communist takeover in 1945. This is supplemented by an account of the long history of Montenegro in a work from 2007 written by the former diplomat Elizabeth Roberts.⁶³ Alongside her work, medieval historians such as Paul Stephenson, Francis Dvornik, Matthew Spinka, Florin Curta, A. P. Vlasto and John V.A. Fine have provided detailed discussions of Montenegro's medieval and Byzantine past and its sources. These classical historical works have been used in this thesis as grounds to assess the modern-day conception of the same sources, persons, sites and events in the Orthodox communities.⁶⁴ However, the works of Roberts, Stephenson, Fine and other historians, do not answer or look to the present in a manner which could have informed this thesis beyond the establishment of the history of ancient and medieval Montenegro.

⁶² Šistek. "Regimes of Historicity, Identity, and Temporality in Montenegro 1905-45". 2014; Šistek. "Pan-Serb Golden Age and Montenegrin Heroic Age: Reconstructing History and Identity Narratives in Montenegro, 1905-1914". In Libuša Vajdová and Róbert Gáfrík (eds.), *"New Imagined Communities" – Identity Making in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe*. Bratislava: Kalligram, 2010, p. 191-205.

⁶³ Elizabeth Roberts. *Realm of the Black Mountain – A History of Montenegro*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2007.

⁶⁴ Paul Stephenson. *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans 900-1204*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006; John Fine. *The early medieval Balkans: a critical survey from the sixth to the late twelfth century*. Ann Arbor: MIU Press, 1991; John Fine. *When Ethnicity Did Not Matter in the Balkans: A Study of Identity in Pre-Nationalist Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slavonia in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*. Ann Arbor: MIU Press, 2006; John Fine. *The late medieval Balkans: a critical survey from the sixth to the late twelfth century*. Ann Arbor: MIU press, 1994; Francis Dvornik. *Byzantine missions among the Slavs*. New Brunswick: NJU Press, 1970, Francis Dvornik. *The Slavs in European History and Civilization*. New Brunswick: NJU Press, 1962; Florin Curta. *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, A. P. Vlasto. *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970; Matthew Spinka. *A history of Christianity in the Balkans*. Archon Books, 1968.

In summary, the studies of contemporary Orthodoxy in Montenegro are often variations of the same point about the close connection between the revival of religion and nationalism, which Blagojević, Buchenau and Vukmanović detected in the former Yugoslav republics in the late 1990s. Most of the newer works on religion in Montenegro focus on the same rituals and sites in Cetinje and their empirical findings often overlap, with the exception of one of Morrison's and Džankić's studies as further discussed in chapter III. There is a substantial lack of a thorough empirical description of the Orthodox community in Montenegro and hardly any research on the structure, content and backdrop of the churches' narrative of history. One major reason for this is that most studies are social scientific in their scope and therefore often not interested or aware of this – one might call it emic – perspective. Part of this thesis is an attempt to provide such an emic perspective and deliver a comprehensive empirical portrayal of the Orthodox churches in Montenegro from 1989 to 2019 before moving on to the deeper form of practice and ideological historiography in Montenegro.

Chapter II: The theory of historiography and the social form of religion

This chapter is a broad and general introduction to the main theories, methods and concepts used in this dissertation. The intention of this chapter is not to repeat the method section of each of the following articles, but rather to provide the overarching theoretical framework.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is an overall introduction to historiography as a field of study and a critical discussion of how to approach this field with analytical tools drawn from Michel de Certeau. The second section examines some of the key topics and concepts used in the analytical chapters and their relation to each other before moving on to the introduction of the source materials and a reflection on the status of these sources. The chapter concludes with an article (article 1) discussing a specific theoretical approach to religion in Montenegro and its pitfalls as indicated in the review of the state-of-the-art section. Article 1 will set the theoretical stage for the following chapters.

Church history: Towards a theory of historiography

Historiography is a discipline with two sides. It is first and foremost the teaching of how to write history, and in being so it tends to entail specific instructions in the style, method and theory of composing history. Secondly, it is also the study of how these styles, methods and theories have evolved and are used, and their effect in the reception of events. This study is of the latter type, which focuses on the reception of history and the history of history-writing.

History as a specific discipline and style dates back to ancient times such as the histories written by Herodotus and Thucydides. The tradition was passed on to the Romans, then to the medieval Christian writers, and finally emerged as a specific discipline during the Renaissance. This tradition continued through the Enlightenment and the Romantic era, and was finally formalized as a profession in the nineteenth century by among others Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886). The professionalization of history as an academic discipline led to the Western

form of history, in which a certain pattern of methodology developed.⁶⁵ Today, historical studies have mostly become multidisciplinary and poststructuralist in their way of writing history. This is an approach which often relies on various forms of social science, as the Danish historian Uffe Østergaard argues in a recent theoretical essay.⁶⁶

Historiography relies partly on social sciences today. Historiographical studies can be divided into two sorts of distinct ways of thinking and perceiving history. The first is a continuation of the positivist form of history, which upholds that historians provide accurate interpretation of facts of the past – a sort of mental archeology that recovers the past in its truest form freed from myths.⁶⁷ The second one is the critical approach born out of postmodernist thinking, such as *histoire croisée* or *transnational study*.⁶⁸ Michael Werner and Benedict Zimmermann's programmatic theoretical reflection on *histoire croisée*, for example, draws attention to the blind spots and misconceptions within national historiographies that tend to isolate or marginalize other forms of history. Such a critical approach is appropriate in regions like the Balkans, which is by all means an area of entangled history.⁶⁹ The sources and materials in question in this thesis are embedded into various national contexts and it is therefore necessary to use such a critical approach in order to avoid ending up in a nationalist exclusive pitfall. The neo-positivist way of studying history, characteristic of among others Noel Malcolm's work on Kosovo's history from 1999, contains an approach which tends to present the past in a one-sided way. Secondly, studies like Malcolm's uphold an idea of history as an epistemological endeavor capable of delivering truth, which Malcolm indirectly undermines himself due to his own work's one-sidedness.⁷⁰ In order to avoid such a pitfall, the theoretical point of departure for this study is

⁶⁵ Uffe Østergaard. "Historiefaget mellem samfundsvidenskab og kulturvidenskab". In David Budtz Pedersen, Frederik Stjernfelt and Simo Køppe (eds.), *Kampen om Disciplinerne*. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2015, p. 181-220.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Michael Werner & Benedicte Zimmermann. "Beyond comparison: *histoire croisée* and the challenge of reflexivity". *History and Theory*, no. 45, 2006, p. 30-50.

⁶⁹ Nils Arne Sørensen. "Den transnationale vending?". *Historisk Tidsskrift*, Bind 109, hæfte 2, 2009, p. 459-472.

⁷⁰ Malcolm. *Kosovo*. 1999 in which Malcolm argues to account for the "proper history" of Kosovo rather than myths. The very term "proper history" echoes historicism to an extent, which seems theoretically and epistemologically unjustified. Malcolm's work is debated because it implicitly postulates problematic racial and

Michel de Certeau's critical assessment of history, which will be presented and further discussed below. De Certeau's approach to history has shaped the basic structure of this thesis, because he argues that historiography is a triangular study. It is a study of personal discourse or text, and the practiced form of history, both of which are bound to an order or ideology. Person, practice and ideology need to be taken into account. The emphasis is therefore on the practice of historiography and the historiographical order or ideology, which are the cross-sectional topics in the articles and the final chapters V and VI.

The following section is an assessment of the main points in de Certeau's historiographical theory and his theory on the social world. De Certeau's concept of historiography and key terms will be introduced and discussed below, before they are used within the analysis that follows. In chapters V and VI, de Certeau's approach will be applied to the material and discussed.

De Certeau – history as “A labor of death”

Michel de Certeau (1925-86), the French historian, Jesuit and cultural thinker, stands at the intersection of both the secular and the ecclesial traditions of writing history. Fully aware of the potential, the methods and the hidden structure of history, he crafted a post-structural approach to history, which encapsulates not only history, but also the social and political world at play behind it. His approach to history has shaped this study, because its multidisciplinary tools have been crucial in order to identify theological, social and political streams in the Orthodox history of reception and the writing of a Church history of Montenegro. De Certeau is, despite his clear inspiration from French philosophy such as Foucault or Derrida, a strong, but still critical, reader of empirical and social history, who avoided the pitfalls of post-modernist deconstruction.⁷¹

ethnic claims. For further discussion of Malcolm's presumptions see Kolstø. “Introduction: Assessing the Role of Historical Myths in Modern Society”. 2005.

⁷¹ Gabrielle M. Spiegel. “Revising the Past / Revisiting the Present: How Change Happens in Historiography”. *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 46, 2007, p. 1-19. Spiegel's article provides a contextualization of de Certeau within modern theories of history and especially the broader discussion of the epistemology question for historians in post-modernism. For a full introduction and a broader discussion of his work on the history of spirituality and mysticism see Inigo Bocken (ed.). *Spiritual Spaces – History and Mysticism in Michel De Certeau*. Studies in Spirituality no. 24. Leuven: Peeters. 2013.

In one of the opening paragraphs of de Certeau's *The Writing of History (L'écriture de l'histoire, 1975)*, he explains that history "aims at calming the dead who still haunt the present, and at offering them scriptural tombs."⁷² History, in its Western and modern form, is not a neutral recording of the past, but one intended to create order or justify a specific contemporary social and political state. It provides a sense of the order of the world. It is a break between past and present in which "it promotes a selection between what can be *understood* and what must be *forgotten*".⁷³ In this "labor" as de Certeau calls it, historiography produces symbols, periods, categorizations and other mental forms, in which "the *given* must be transformed into a *construct*".⁷⁴ History is a way of legitimizing political power or the affirmation of it, and in the process historians create "space proper (a walled city, a nation, etc.) where a will can and must write (construct) a system (a reason articulating practices)."⁷⁵ Every form of history originates from a place, according to de Certeau. This place is the social, cultural and political context, which determines the categorization of history. The determinations of periods of the past, as de Certeau argues, are "current events [which] are the real beginning" of history.⁷⁶ In such a critical approach to history, he implicitly rejects any neo-positivist account of history, which is an essential part of "historicism".⁷⁷ De Certeau argues that "'facts' speak of 'choices'" rather than convey a neutral form of truth detached from a certain point of view.⁷⁸

The first chapter of de Certeau's *The Writing of History* opens with a reflection on the discourse and practice of history. De Certeau points out that the determination of the remit of a historiographical study is essential; which period of time is taken into account, which places and what point of view.⁷⁹ These questions need to be answered in order to create transparency about the very point of departure of a study and the historian's own construction of history. The introduction of this thesis is an attempt to provide answers to such questions for this inquiry. De

⁷² Certeau, *The Writing of History*. 1988 p. 2.

⁷³ Ibid. p. 4.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 6.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 6.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 11.

⁷⁷ Spiegel, "Revising the Past / Revisiting the Present". 2007, p. 2.

⁷⁸ Certeau. *The Writing of History*. 1988, p. 59.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 20.

Certeau then turns to a methodological definition of what a historiographical study must take into account. He writes:

[For] historiographical practices and discourses, I propose taking up in turn the following points: 1) The treatment of religious ideology by contemporary historiography requires us to recognize the ideologies that are already invested in history itself. 2) There exists a historicity of history, implying the movement which links an interpretive practice to a social praxis. 3) History thus vacillates between two poles. On the one hand, it refers to a practice, hence to a reality; on the other, it is a closed discourse, a text that organizes and concludes a mode of intelligibility. 4) History is probably our myth. It combines what can be thought, the “thinkable”, and the origin, in conformity with the way in which a society can understand its own working.⁸⁰

In this quote, de Certeau briefly lays out a methodological guideline for the study of history, which is hard to unpack and that is perhaps what the rest of his *The Writing of History* tries to do. At first, de Certeau argues that a study of historiography needs to be aware of both practice and discourse. Practice is social praxis, which is a key concept in his general work, and I will return to it later. For now, it is enough to note that history is not cut off from the social life of a community, but is in fact formed from it in its everyday activity, performance of rituals and labor of symbols, places, memories and other materials. Moreover, history is related to the discourse of a given text, which for de Certeau is its structure and its “religious ideology” or the ideologies “already invested in history itself”. As de Certeau says, in point 3 of the quote, history “vacillates” between these two; the social practice of history and the hidden discourse of religious ideology. A study needs to investigate both *historiographical practice* and *religious ideology*, and thus take both texts and the material and social form of religion into account.⁸¹

De Certeau goes on to lay out specific modes of epistemological history, arguing that historians need to borrow other disciplines’ ways of creating knowledge such as folklorist,

⁸⁰ Ibid p. 21.

⁸¹ See conclusion at bottom of page 30 in Certeau. *The Writing of History*. 1988, p. 30.

sociological, cultural and linguistic-structuralist analysis.⁸² Each epistemology is bound to its own sphere of knowledge production and its own form of communication – both related and detached. De Certeau’s concluding reflection is that history is mythmaking, as already noted in point 4 of the quote. This should be understood as a prolongation of the structural turn in the humanities, such as the thought of Roland Barthes, etc.,⁸³ because the discourse of history is argued to be myth insofar as that it explicitly gives form to “social identity” through “differentiation”.⁸⁴ The history of the Serbian Orthodox Church is a form of the church’s and its adherents’ social identity. Here, history is a way in which the church differentiates itself from other social and religious groups. Historiography becomes a justification of the given religious ideology of a church, because it answers the question of who they are and what they were through differentiation, as article 4 in particular discusses. History is a “legitimation to new orders of reason”, as Graham Giles notes in his discussion of de Certeau.⁸⁵ Towards the end of the first chapter of *The Writing of History*, De Certeau writes: “Such is history. A play of life and death is sought in the calm telling of a tale, in the resurgence and denial of the origin, the unfolding of a dead past and result of a present practice”.⁸⁶

Gabrielle Spiegel argues that de Certeau’s understanding of history is one in which: “Historians must draw a line between what is dead (past) and what is not, and therefore they posit death as a total social fact, in contrast to tradition, which figures a lived body of traditional knowledge, passed down in gestures, habits, unspoken but nonetheless real memories, borne by living societies.”⁸⁷ History is an account of the dead past differentiated from the living memory spoken of in the present, but nevertheless bound to it and originating from the very same seed. History writing is the explication and differential process. History mirrors the present identity

⁸² Ibid. p. 23-47. See also Wim Weymans. “Michel de Certeau and the limits of historical representation”. *History and Method*, 43, 2004, p. 161-178, p. 174.

⁸³ See Roland Barthes. *Mythologies*. Hans-Jørgen Andersen & Jens Juhl Jensen (trans.). Copenhagen: Rhodos. 1969.

⁸⁴ Certeau. *The Writing of History*. 1988, p. 45.

⁸⁵ Graham Giles. “The Concept of Practice, Enlightenment Rationality and Education: A speculative reading of Michel de Certeau’s *The Writing of History*”. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 2014, Vol. 46, No. 3, 255–268, p. 257.

⁸⁶ Certeau. *The Writing of History*. 1988, p. 47.

⁸⁷ Spiegel. “Revising the Past / Revisiting the Present”. 2007, p. 4.

through an obsession with the past in which memories are forged or forgotten in order to create a cultural order of the dead. As de Certeau puts it, history is the “scriptural tomb” of society.

De Certeau and the social world of history: place, practice and infrastructure

Spiegel further notes that de Certeau’s description of history writing is a “constantly changing triangulated relationship among a *place* (a recruitment, a milieu, a profession), analytical *procedures* (a discipline), and the construction of a *text* (or discourse).”⁸⁸ In this section, I will turn towards the *place* and *procedures* or *practice*, which are tightly bound to the conception of the social world and its order in de Certeau’s thinking. A central trait of de Certeau’s theoretical work is that it’s not entirely philosophical or structural in the same way as the work of many of his contemporary French colleagues such as Lacan, Foucault or Ricoeur. It is more open to the social and cultural world with a keen eye for the ever-evasive social phenomena.

The conception of *place* in de Certeau’s thinking is a way to situate every form of discourse to a distinct place. Place is essential for the production of history, because “history is entirely shaped by the system within which it is developed”, as de Certeau remarks.⁸⁹ The political, cultural and spatial form of a given place determines what can be said and thought – and more essentially what cannot be said and what has to be forgotten and repressed. History writing provides legitimacy to a political or cultural order, or establishes it, but it also implicitly becomes a history of the very same order and can be studied as such.⁹⁰ A study of a certain way of writing history is a study of that structure of power that formed it, be it religious, political, ethnic or cultural – or as de Certeau puts it, “*the sociocultural localization of religious ideologies*” (de Certeau’s italics) in his study of Christian saints.⁹¹

In de Certeau’s chapter on religious hagiography, he provides further details of the relation between place and religious realm. Each of the religious texts de Certeau analyses, revolves around a place and is constituted by this distinct place. It is a sort of temporal and

⁸⁸ Spiegel. “Revising the Past / Revisiting the Present”. 2007, p. 1. See Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, p. 59.

⁸⁹ Certeau. *The Writing of History*. 1988, p. 69.

⁹⁰ Spiegel. “Revising the Past / Revisiting the Present”. 2007, p. 5.

⁹¹ Certeau. *The Writing of History*. 1988, p. 134 (de Certeau’s italics).

physical anchor of the religious text, which fixes the holy to this world. It provides a material form. In de Certeau's theory of space, he argues that a given place is turned into a space through social practice. A place become a habitable space only when it is in use.⁹²

A set of practices is thus essential to place-making, and that could be either a tradition or academic standard for how to produce history, or a social practice that then mirrors the place and the textual realm of history. Practice is an outward human embodiment of a place and a discourse which becomes its visible form. De Certeau argues that

religion is progressively brought back to the field of *practice*. Practice is the fact which can be observed. A proof that faith makes of itself, practice is the justifying visibility of a belief that from then on also obeys the imperative of social utility under the bias of philanthropy and the defense of order.⁹³

De Certeau argues that the social practice of religion, or its performance, is the observable proof of faith. Religious practice is formed in defense of a certain religious order of power. This point is further expounded upon in the introduction of de Certeau's seminal cultural study *The Practice of Everyday Life*, originally published in French in 1980 (*L'invention du quotidien. Vol. I, Arts de faire*). In this work, de Certeau provides a further qualification of what a social or religious order is. He argues that humans construct place in two ways, which allow for two sets of practice. At first, a given place in time and space is formed from the organized narratives that create a "strategy".⁹⁴ A strategy is the overlaying governing system that is formed through the use of power. It is a uniform system informing individuals about where to go, what to do and what to believe. Against this power structure exists the individual's everyday practice, a *tactic*, which bends the rules and takes short-cuts. A strategically formed place sets up a scene at which a social practice can take place.⁹⁵ Philip Sheldrake argues that we can better understand this

⁹² Marian Füssel. "Tote Orte und gelebte Räume. Zur Raumtheorie von Michel de Certeau S. J.", *Historical Social Research*, 38, 2013, 3, p. 22-39.

⁹³ Certeau. *The Writing of History*. 1988, p. 129.

⁹⁴ Michel de Certeau. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Steven Rendall (trans.). Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

⁹⁵ Claire E. Wolfeich. "Practices of 'Unsayings': Michel de Certeau, Spirituality Studies, and Practical

concept of practice and place, if de Certeau's essays "Walking in the City" and "Ghost in the City", are taken into account.⁹⁶ In these two essays, de Certeau describes how a strategy is a sort of mental form of an infrastructure, which can be used to form places and practice.⁹⁷ De Certeau uses an architect's vision of a city as an example, because it is a mental map (a discourse), which can be used to create a strategy for the infrastructure. It creates the places and the roads, which each individual is obliged to follow. The individual does, however, have the opportunity to create an everyday tactic which bends the rules of the strategically formed infrastructure – like cyclists in Copenhagen taking short-cuts across pedestrians lanes, defying the rules of the normal infrastructure.⁹⁸

The strategic infrastructure – or as Stephen Hartnett calls it, "a politically manageable cognitive map"⁹⁹ – often takes its form in a text, a discourse. From the text, a place and a social practice of the individual are shaped. In the strategic discourse, the place, however, is also inscribed in a form of determination of what can be thought and what can be forgotten. To study a historiographical practice is, if one follows de Certeau, to study the very place-making and social practice which a certain religious group embodies. This practice attests to the social and religious order of certain religious texts and histories, which have been formed through the use of power to create a strategic infrastructure. Consequently, there are two lines of enquiry into the historiography of the Orthodox communities in Montenegro. One goes through a study of the textual version of the history of Montenegro, and the strategic order of power and notion of differentiation and breaks which creates an infrastructure. This will reveal the underlying religious ideology of a strategic infrastructure of history. The second route goes through the study of practice and place, which is the "*the sociocultural localization of religious ideologies*". This entails on the one side a material and social study of places and practice, and on the other a

Theology". *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, Volume 12, Number 2, Fall 2012, p. 161-171, p. 164.

⁹⁶ Philip Sheldrake. "Theorizing Christian spirituality". In Ralph Kunz & Rebecaa A. Giselbrecht (eds.), *Sacrality and Materiality*. Vienna: Vienna University Press, 2016, p. 27-40.

⁹⁷ Certeau. "Walking in the City". In Certeau. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. 1988, p. 91-110; Certeau. "Ghosts in the City". In Michel de Certeau, Pierre Mayol and Luce Giard. *The Practice of Everyday Life, Vol. 2: Living and Cooking*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

⁹⁸ Sheldrake. "Theorizing Christian spirituality". 2016, p. 38-40.

⁹⁹ Stephen Hartnett. "Michel de Certeau's critical historiography and the rhetoric of maps". *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1998, p. 283-302, p. 290.

contextualization of a certain religious ideology. In this thesis, in order to follow the lines laid out by de Certeau, the thesis will first and foremost be a study of the social and material world of the given communities and secondly a discussion of their particular attachment to a given system of a certain religious ideology. Most of the articles in the analytical chapter, articles 4-7, contain both. The historiographical practice is further assessed, discussed and contextualized in chapter V, while the religious ideology is discussed and unfolded in the comparative discussion in chapter VI.

Nationalism and religion – the same order?

As de Certeau notes, history is a way of establishing an order and providing legitimacy to a political rule in the way it presents the past to its reader. The emergence of the sovereign state and nation in the period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century is seen by de Certeau as a new set of practice and order rooted in the disintegration of the totality of Christianity in the seventeenth century. Christianity as an all-encompassing system was by then replaced with a new order – that of the state or the nation. The religious order was used to establish the new political or cultural order of the nation-states.¹⁰⁰

The close connection between nationalism and religion had from the outset of the wars in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s been apparent for most, and a number of studies dealt with this as mentioned in the state-of-the-art section.¹⁰¹ Martin Schulze Wessel summed up this point of view on religion in Eastern Europe, when he wrote in 2006 that “the sacralization of the nation means that the nation takes over the form of expression of religion”.¹⁰² Such an understanding of nationalism builds on the constructivist school’s view of nationalism, the proponents of which include Ernst Gellner and Benedict Anderson, whom is also the inspiration

¹⁰⁰ Graham Giles. “The Concept of Practice, Enlightenment Rationality and Education: A speculative reading of Michel de Certeau’s *The Writing of History*”. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 2014, Vol. 46, No. 3, 255–268. See de Certeau, *The Writing of History*. p. 134-157 for the full analysis.

¹⁰¹ Vasilios N. Makrides provides an overview in his recent article “Orthodox Christianity and State/Politics Today”. In Tobias Koellner (ed.), *Orthodox Religion and Politics in Contemporary Eastern Europe*. London: Routledge. 2019, p. 235-253.

¹⁰² Martin Schulze Wessel. “Einleitung: Die Nationalisierung der Religion und die Sakralisierung der Nation im östlichen Europa”. In Martin Schulze Wessel (ed.), *Nationalisierung der Religion und Sakralisierung der Nation im östlichen Europa*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006, p. 7-14, p. 7 (own translation from German).

for many scholars working with civil religion – such as Glenn Bowmann whose approach to religion and nationalism has been inspirational for this thesis and in particular for articles 1 and 7.¹⁰³ The concept of nationalism and its relation to sacralization is further discussed in detail in the context of studies of former Yugoslavia in article 1. At this point it is sufficient to note that this study’s approach to the connection between nationalism and religion in South Eastern Europe follows that of Klaus Buchenau et al., as initially discussed in the state-of-the-art section in chapter I, as well as described and discussed in further detail in article 1. An integrated part of the discussion of nationalism and religion is the influence religious symbols, organisations and sites have on the formation of modern-day nation-states – a discussion very much within the confines of what de Certeau argued was the immediate consequence of history; the creation of a political and social order, such as the national one.

There are, however, a few points from Andrew Hastings’ critique of the constructivist perspective on nationalism, which it is essential to take into account here. In Hastings’ analysis of the historical aspects of nationalism, he highlights that the idea of a nation draws on a deeper tradition than the mere concept of “volk”, which Herder introduced in the Romantic period. The biblical model of the Jewish nation and medieval vernacular literature have forms and elements which have become core parts of nations.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, Hastings traces these components and uses their existence to criticize the “modernist” conception of nation in among others Gellner’s and Anderson’s work.¹⁰⁵ The point Hastings makes, is that a nation is not a completely new phenomenon instituted by the advent of nation-states in the eighteenth century. In fact, *natio* was already a Christian medieval concept used to describe a certain population’s specific “language, laws, habits, mode of judgment and customs” as Hastings quotes a British bishop’s definition from 1140.¹⁰⁶ A point in case is the Serbian, Slavic or Montenegrin nations, which all draw heavily on medieval predecessors’ “narod” (A Slavic word etymologically deriving from the word for *blood-bound*, but later understood as “volk”), which Hastings

¹⁰³ Ernst Gellner. *Nationalism*. New York: New York University Press, 1997; Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1998.

¹⁰⁴ Andrew Hastings. *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 p. 3-4; see also Caspar Hirschi. *The Origins of Nationalism – An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

¹⁰⁵ Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, 1997. p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* p. 17.

provides (a debateable) account of in chapter five of his book.¹⁰⁷ Hastings highlights that the connection between a religious faith and a nation derives firstly from the impact religion has on the early expression of the nation, and secondly the extent to which a religious community interacted with the proto-nation, as discussed in article 4. The process of sacralization of the nation or the nationalization of the holy is not merely a modern process, but one with deeper historical roots, according to Hastings. This is closely intertwined with the point de Certeau makes concerning hagiographical texts, because in these texts, places, memories and the fabric of the past needed for the creation of a nation are already present. These “scriptural tombs”, as de Certeau calls them, can be used by modern-day historians when they seek to establish and maintain the political and social order of a given national political system. Religious materials become building blocks for nations to come.

Theory: Religious practice and place-making

As de Certeau stresses, history-writing is bound to its social and historical context, which more generally means that any form of historiography needs to be firmly contextualized with a social and societal map. History is the externalization of the symbolic order of politics and religion invested in the social and material life of its community. Therefore, this study takes the social form of religion into account in order to contextualize the historiography. In the following chapter, theories and key concepts from the sociology of religion, memory studies, material religion studies and pilgrimage studies that will be used in the analytical articles will be briefly introduced and discussed. This is by no means a thorough and in-depth survey, but rather a general introduction and definition of key concepts in order to set the stage for the analysis that follows.

Functionalism and the sociology of religion

The basic foundation of this study is its presupposition about what religion is and how it can be studied. As will be mentioned several times in the following articles, this study builds on a functionalist approach to religion in which religion is seen as a social category and a collective

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 124-145. Hastings’ account of this is simplistic and perhaps more a caricature than a critical assessment. His point is nevertheless of relevance, but a much more thorough description of the development of nations in the Balkans can be found in Fine. *When Ethnicity Did Not Matter in the Balkans*. 2006.

system of ways of behaving and belonging in relation to a delimited belief system.¹⁰⁸ This is often referred to as the “three Bs” (behaving, belonging and believing), which are used as the basic definition of religion. This functionalist definition, deriving in this study from Samim Akgönül’s work,¹⁰⁹ approaches religion as a social and collective phenomenon which provides answers to the questions of what we are, how we should behave and what to believe. Religion is a collective expression of the basic needs to imagine an afterlife or a collective national identity (among other things) and enact that belief through certain rituals, symbols or ways of life. As such, it is an expression of a strategic “religious ideology” to use de Certeau’s words.

The functionalist approach to studying religion is to identify where it unfolds in society and from that point trace it back to a religious system. Detlef Pollack and Gergely Rosta summarize this approach: “The functional method relates religion to a problem to which it is the solution. [...] Functional definitions seek to determine what religion *does* and *achieves*”.¹¹⁰ At the heart of the religious system in this approach is the sacred, which consists of places, symbols or transcendent ideas that are set apart from the profane society. The sacred is a category that erupts and marks a difference in everyday life – a category of belief, ritual behavior or symbolic belonging. The origin of this definition is Emile Durkheim’s (1858-1917) work on religion in among others his work *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (French: *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*) from 1912,¹¹¹ in which he writes: “A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and

¹⁰⁸ This might perhaps better be labeled as “neo-functionalist”, because it is not strictly the same as the functionalist approach to religion found in anthropology and in the debated functionalist school of social anthropology. However, these two forms of functionalism correspond, because their main focus is on the social function of a specific ritual or thought – and both approaches deal with the social in a Durkheimian way which fails to explain the phenomenon in its totality and is often reductive. See Herbert Burhenn. “Functionalism and the Explanation of Religion”. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1980, p. 350-360 for a discussion of functionalism in classical anthropology. A modern discussion of the concept of religion and functionalism can be found in Detlef Pollack and Gergely Rosta. *Religion and Modernity: An International Comparison*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 34-49.

¹⁰⁹ Samim Akgönül. “Muslim as minorities”. In Ednan Aslan, Marcia Hermansen et al. (eds.), *Islam, Religion and Pluralism in Europe*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2016, p. 143-145.

¹¹⁰ Pollack and Rosta. *Religion and Modernity*. 2017, p. 39.

¹¹¹ For a thorough discussion of both Durkheim and Otto see Michael Stausberg. “The sacred and the holy – from around 1917 to today”. *Religion* 47:4, 2017, p. 549-556.

forbidden”.¹¹² In Durkheim’s definition, religion is a collective social phenomenon, which forms a certain way of believing and practicing.¹¹³ Religion forms a structure in which each individual is brought up and acts within – a sort of cultural infrastructure determining the social practice of each member of the community. Each individual is bound to this collective through his or her relation to the sacred, which is institutionalized in a collective organization, such as the church.¹¹⁴ The sacred is the very structure of society and the way “societies become conscious of themselves and their history”, as Durkheim writes.¹¹⁵ The sacred is a point in which the history and the fabric of identity are structured.

The theologian Rudolf Otto (1869-1937) provides a deeper description of the sacred – or “the holy” as Otto calls it in his work *Das Heilige* from 1917. The concept of the sacred in Durkheim’s works and the holy in Otto’s writings share many basic characteristics, but Otto does not seem to have been aware of Durkheim’s work on religion published shortly before his own.¹¹⁶ Otto’s description focuses on its inner qualities, while Durkheim focuses on its social role and function. In Otto’s conception, the holy is known for being the completely different (*ganz Anderen*) and by its ability to create both negative fear (*tremendum*) and positive fascination (*fascinans*).¹¹⁷ In a functionalist study, this assessment is of relevance because it provides other nuances to what marks the sacred in a society beside Durkheim’s basic definition of the sacred as the opposite of the profane and as something that marks a break.

However, Durkheim, Otto and functionalist theories all have their flaws.¹¹⁸ The modern application of functionalism to the study of religion has a tendency to either be reductionist or to apply to it broad categories and problems, which is further discussed in article

¹¹² Emile Durkheim. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Joseph Ward Swain (trans.), 1915, p 48 http://www.gutenberg.org/files/41360/41360-h/41360-h.htm#Page_48 (retrieved 02.07.2020).

¹¹³ Hans J. Lundager Jensen. “Durkheim og den store teori”. *Religion*, 2005, no. 2, p. 8-21.

¹¹⁴ W.S.F. Pickering. *Durkheim’s Sociology of Religion: Themes and Theories*. Cambridge: James Clarke Company, Limited, 2014. P. 117.

¹¹⁵ Quoted from Emile Durkheim. *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*. Cornelia Brookfield (trans). Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1958, p. 112 referred to by Michael Stausberg in “The sacred and the holy”. 2017.

¹¹⁶ Stausberg. “The sacred and the holy”. 2017, p. 550.

¹¹⁷ Rudolf Otto. *Das Heilige*. Breslau: Trewendt und Granier verlag, 1920.

¹¹⁸ See Pickering. *Durkheim's Sociology of Religion*. 2014 , p. 503-513 for a discussion of Durkheim’s legacy and its reception.

1. To avoid this blind spot, Pollack and Rosta suggest that a substantive definition of religion should be re-introduced in order to delineate what is religion and what is not. Pollack and Rosta's proposed definition of religion is that religious activities, practices and thoughts have an element of or reference to the transcendent.¹¹⁹ Peter Beyer seems to concur that this definition is the base-line for most studies of the social form of religion.¹²⁰ This definition picks up on Durkheim's and Otto's concept of the sacred or the holy, which is constituted precisely, according to Otto's analysis, by its reference to the transcendent. However, it is important to note that this definition is Euro-centric, but this study is limited to a modern European context in which a Euro-centric concept of religion works well. It might therefore be best to simply state that this definition of religion is a working definition.

Another crucial term in this study is "tradition". History in itself is a form of safeguarding a tradition and preserving the sacred of a certain religion, as de Certeau notes. The German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) provided an early analysis of what tradition meant for the early Christians. According to Weber, a religion is founded around the charismatic authoritative power (one might call it a power to invoke the sacred) of one or more persons, which, after their death, needs to be transmitted from one generation to the next. The transmission is an institutionalization of a tradition of authoritative power. The power (or the sacred) is safeguarded by the tradition and preserved by specialists, such as bishops, clergy or chronicle writers. These specialists hand the authority over to the next generation in, among other things, history.¹²¹ In such a perspective, *history becomes the institutionalization of the sacred* in a specific tradition. Writing history is both the establishment and transmission of what the sacred is, where it is located and the meaning and identity of a certain society or community.¹²² This study's focus on the establishment, supervision and historiography of the

¹¹⁹ Such a definition has of course its own shortcomings, which Pollack and Rosta themselves highlight in Pollack and Rosta. *Religion and Modernity*. 2017, p. 47.48, 39.

¹²⁰ Peter Beyer. "Social forms of religion and religions in contemporary global society". In Michele Dillon (ed.). *Handbook of Sociology of Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 45-60.

¹²¹ Max Weber. *Udvalgte tekster*. Heine Andersen, Hans Henrik Bruun and Lars Bo Kaspersen (trans./ed.). Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2003, p. 359–370 (vol 1.), p. 7-356 (vol 2); Thomas Ekstrand. *Max Weber in a Theological Perspective*. Leuven: Peeters, 2000.

¹²² A landmark study in which Weber's analysis is applied to the study of the Christian tradition is Gerd Theissen. *First Followers of Jesus: A Sociological Analysis of the Earliest Christianity* from 1977, which was translated to

four different cults follows Weber's characterization of "tradition". History writing and the forming of places, icons and rituals are a form of outward practice of historiography in order to create or recreate a tradition of the sacred which impacts in society – on the issues of politics and nations.

Following Durkheim and Weber, a multitude of ways to study religion in its social form developed – among which functionalism is just one out of many.¹²³ More recently, the Italian professor of law and religion Silvio Ferrari has also contributed with theoretical models that could also be used to structure a "field" in the form of a religious landscape in a certain country.¹²⁴ Ferrari is used by the Danish scholar, Niels Valdemar Vinding, in his conceptualization of a so-called religio-organisational field. This concept provides an analytical frame in which the relationship between state and church organizations can be studied and structured, and which in turn points to the differences, similarities and positions of the various organizations.¹²⁵ Vinding's concept is used and discussed in articles 2 and 3 as a tool to unfold the state-church relationship in Montenegro.

Place-making: pilgrimage, memory and materiality

De Certeau initially stressed the place of production as an essential part in the writing of history. The practice of history writing is bound to this physical place. So far, this chapter has only dealt with the immaterial social form of religion and its impact on systems of thought. The following section will return to the physical form of religion in the materiality of sites, places and religious practice, which follows the material turn in religious studies in the 1970-80s. In this "turn" it was

Danish by Geert Hallbäck, *Jesus-overleveringen og dens sociale baggrund: et sociologisk bidrag til den tidligste kristendoms historie*. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel, 1979.

¹²³ See Michele Dillon (ed.). *Handbook of Sociology of Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003 for other examples, such as religious economies.

¹²⁴ Silvio Ferrari. "State regulation of religion in the European democracies: the decline of the old pattern." In Gabriel Motzkin and Yochi Fischer (eds.), *Religion and Democracy in Contemporary Europe*. London: Alliance Publishing Trust, 2008; Ferrari. "Church and State in Post-Communist Europe". In Silvio Ferrari, Cole W. Durham Jr. and Elizabeth A. Sewel (eds.). *Law and Religion in Post-communist Europe*. Leuven: Peeter, 2003, p. 411-27.

¹²⁵ For a full discussion of the concept and P. Bourdieu and S. Ferrari, see Niels Valdemar Vinding. *Muslim Positions in the Religio-Organisational Fields of Denmark, Germany and England*. Copenhagen: Publikationer fra Det Teologiske Fakultet, no. 42, 2013, p. 25-51.

stressed that the studies of human life have had a tendency to focus on the transcendent and immaterial whereas the materiality of human existence often was overlooked or seen as an outlet for immaterial meaning. The studies of the social form of religion, following Durkheim and Weber, are prime examples of this neglect or reduction of sites, rituals and material expressions of religion to outwards symbols rather than material phenomena in their own right.¹²⁶

De Certeau saw both the immaterial and material forms in the creation of systems of thought. As already mentioned, de Certeau's cultural studies had a tendency to focus on the physical form of religious systems, rites, places, sites and architecture in close alignment with theological thought. In particular, de Certeau's work on pilgrimage has spawned a whole tradition for studies of spirituality in its own right.¹²⁷ In doing so, de Certeau followed the changing perception of religion in the 1970s during the later period of his life. Following de Certeau, Victor Turner (1920-83) reshaped the study of rites and pilgrimage in the 1970s. Turner, in his major theoretical works on pilgrimage from 1969 and 1978, written together with his wife, argued for a renewed focus on the agents and the *communitas* in the studies of pilgrimage and place-making.¹²⁸ These individuals' as well as collectives' pilgrimages formed sites through interaction, political opposition and limitation. Pilgrimage was not just a mere sign of the religious devout or an outlet of a structural system, according to Turner. The pilgrim was something more, with both the power to establish or contest political and religious orders.¹²⁹

In relation to this study of cults in Montenegro, it is essential to underline that the creation of the holiness of a given site is narrowly bound to pilgrimage, if one follows Turner's approach. The *communitas* can be an ideological one, who set out to restore or contest the sacred. Such a *communitas* is often, in the case of Montenegro, the clergy in close accordance with their believers. This *communitas* asserts its ideological power through movement, rites and

¹²⁶ Jessica Moberg. "Material religion". In James R. Lewis and Inga Tøllefsen (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements: Volume II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 383.

¹²⁷ Sheldrake. "Theorizing Christian spirituality". 2016, p. 38-40.

¹²⁸ Victor Turner and Edith Turner. *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011 (originally 1978); Victor Turner. *The Ritual Process*. London: AldineTransactiond, 1995 (originally 1969).

¹²⁹ For a prolonged discussion of pilgrimage and theories of pilgrimage see John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow. "Introduction". In John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow (eds.), *Contesting the Sacred – The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000, p. 1-30.

differentiation in which it marks what the sacred is in opposition to the profane. The pilgrims – and the rites, parades, liturgies and symbolism – thus form the infrastructure of the Holy and turn sites into embodiments of holiness. The physical form, the architecture, the texts, the movement of pilgrims and the social and political practice (rituals, statements, etc.) bound to the places is what constitutes the holy. Without it, the significance of the site is lost – and without it a new place of worship is not constituted, as further discussed in article 7.¹³⁰ Moreover, Glenn Bowman has stressed that pilgrimage is a politically and religiously significant form of practice, which embodies the interpretation of history and a given religion’s sacred nature, as further unfolded theoretically in article 1 and discussed in article 7.¹³¹

In the study of pilgrimage, the material turn is present because of the centrality of the sacred sites and the place-making, which often determines the form of pilgrimage. The sacred place is often simply where the pilgrim is going. The physical and outward characteristic of the place and route, such as the scallop shell of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, becomes also the very material symbol of the pilgrim. The shell, as an example, is a sacred material deriving from the site rather than from any form of immaterial thought. Therefore, the study of material religion is closely linked to pilgrimage studies and its creation of sites. The study of material religion departs from materiality in the form of sites, architecture, crosses, icons, food or drink, etc., in order to examine how and why certain objects become sacred and what such a process entails. As Birgit Meyer notes, it entails “very concrete empirical questions about the specific practices, materials and forms employed in generating a sense of something divine, ghostly, sublime or transcendent”.¹³² The material form and the process of transforming material into sacred material involves a pattern or practice of memory, as both Danièle Hervieu-

¹³⁰ John Eade & Mario Katic (eds.). *Pilgrimage, Politics and Place-Making in Eastern Europe*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014, p. 8-10.

¹³¹ See Glenn Bowman. “Christian Ideology and the image of a holy land: the place of Jerusalem pilgrimage in the various Christianities”. In John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow (eds.), *Contesting the Sacred – The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000, p. 98-121; Bowman. “Nationalizing the sacred: Shrines and shifting identities in the Israeli-occupied Territories”. *New Series* 28(3),1993, p. 431–460.

¹³² Birgit Meyer. *Mediation and the Genesis of Presence – Towards a Material Approach to Religion*. Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen, 2012, p. 22.

Léger and E. Frances King note.¹³³ Hervieu-Léger and King’s interpretation of chains of memory attached to material forms echoes de Certeau’s conceptualization of the practice of historiography as an material outlet. As such all three stress the close connection between movement, limitation and differentiation (the pilgrimage) with the material form of the holy in a given place or revered item that all invoke or are attached to a memory of the past. The site becomes a place of memory through the pilgrim, as further discussed in articles 5 and 7 as well as chapter V.

The invocation of a certain chain of memory is an integrated part of the history and place-making of cults. Therefore the concept of memory and the attached field of memory studies need to be taken into account.¹³⁴ Quite often, studies of historiography, pilgrimage and material religion seem to jump across the discussion of memory and its development, which is the case in both Hervieu-Léger’s and King’s study of material religion. In de Certeau’s work, it is almost impossible to separate between the concept of history and that of memory, because de Certeau seems to presuppose that history is simply a written form of memory. Memory studies is, however, also comparatively younger than de Certeau’s cultural studies, and has succeeded in drawing attention to the production of memories and the political and social process behind it. In the case of former Yugoslavia, a series of studies on memory have emerged during the past decade. One of these studies, undertaken by Jovan Byford, deals with the memory and legacy of the Serbian metropolitan Nikolaj Velimirović in a nuanced and careful way. Byford’s main points are taken into consideration in the analysis of Velimirović in chapter VI.¹³⁵

It is perhaps not surprising that historiography and memory studies are hard to separate. One of the reasons for this is that, as Jan Assmann asserted, “memory [is] contemporized past” – which almost sounds like de Certeau’s remark that history is formed by

¹³³ Danièle Hervieu-Léger. *Religion as a Chain of Memory*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers U. Press, 2000; E. F. King. *Material Religion and Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

¹³⁴ I owe much gratitude to Ismar Dedovic. *Our War? Their War? Which War? Remembering the First World War in the Yugosphere*. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2018 for ideas, concepts and references for this section on memory studies.

¹³⁵ Sindbæk. *Usable history?* 2012 and Djokic. *Yugoslavism – Histories of a Failed Idea 1918-1992*. 2013; Byford. *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism – Post-Communist Remembrance of the Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović*. 2008.

the present.¹³⁶ Assmann also argues that the past is perceived through the needs and desires of the present day, which can turn into forms of schematic narrative templates. These templates function, according to James Wertsch, as “simplifying organizational frameworks”¹³⁷ that shape the memory of the past. These narratives are created through the repeating of a narrative, which slowly assumes the form of being the only “natural” way of perceiving the past. One could call them a sort of historiographical scheme that informs and standardizes the way historical events are interpreted and presented in a way that seems not to be entirely ideologically driven.¹³⁸ This is perhaps obvious in the case of Montenegro and Serbia in which a range of new nationalist-driven interpretations of the past have spawned since the late 1980s, which catered to the new nation-states after Yugoslavia. However, in the assessment of the past there is not only a creation of new textual works about the past, histories, but a series of what is often called “collective memories”, which are also shaped by events, political speeches, films, television, etc. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney argue that “memory can only become collective as part of a continuous process whereby memories are shared with the help of symbolic artefacts that mediate between individuals and, in the process, create communality across both space and time”.¹³⁹ This process resembles that of the pilgrim or the writer of history in their interaction with the material form of religion in place-making or sacralization. The creation of collective memories is a broader process than that of a particular religion or a particular cult. Religious communities can play a crucial role in the shaping of memories of the past, which is argued in this thesis, if the process is viewed through the lense of memory studies. In a few selected analyses, mainly in articles 4, 5 and 7, memory will be used as a concept to pinpoint the practice of historiography and underline certain ways structures of memories are created or neglected.

In this thesis, memory studies could have substituted the theoretical and methodological approach in de Certeau’s writings on historiography. A reason for not doing so,

¹³⁶ Jan Assmann. “Communicative and Cultural Memory”. In Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008, p. 109-118; Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka. “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity”. *New German Critique*, no. 65 (1995), p. 125-33.

¹³⁷ James Wertsch. “Blank spots in collective memory: A case study of Russia”. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 617, 2008, p. 58-71, p. 60.

¹³⁸ Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (eds.). *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*. Berlin: De Gruyter, p. 66-68.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 1.

is that memory studies lacks the awareness of the religious ideology, which de Certeau is sensitive to – and which will be further discussed in chapter VI. Memory studies has been used as a tool and a reference in some of the analytical chapters due to its awareness of the culture of remembrance and the production of memories, which supplement de Certeau well.

Primary sources

The primary sources for this study are publicly available sources published by either the churches or organizations closely related to them mainly in Montenegro. Each article has further information on the specific sources used in the analysis and this section is only a broad introduction to the general source materials in question. The majority of sources have either been gathered from field site visits in October 2013, October 2014, April 2018 or June 2019, or located during these visits or related ones to Serbia in 2017 or North Macedonia in 2015. All primary sources are published by principal actors and are therefore treated as direct sources to their views on various issues pertaining to this topic. Each source is read historical-critically, often in its original form (in Montenegrin or Serbian).

The working principle on sources for this thesis has been that preference has been given to publicly available sources, which provides a great transparency into the source material in question. Non-public sources have only been used when they illuminate certain crucial points or perspectives which are not possible to find in public ones, such as the metropolitan's letter to the Montenegrin president used in article 5. The majority of primary sources have been written by the Orthodox communities themselves in the period dating from 1989 to 2019. The positions expressed in them have therefore often been taken as representative of the entire community – this is of course debatable, but nevertheless must sources published in church magazines to some extent reflect the attitude of that community. Many sources are signed by the metropolitan or high clergy from the community, which gives them some authority.

The locating, assessing and analyzing of primary sources have been undertaken in dialogue with local clergy members and academics in order to provide an accurate depiction of their position and narrating of the history of their community. The source material is vast, and the informal talks have been used as guidance through it and as a base for selection. The informal interviews and observations from the field site visits have rarely been used as primary sources – only in particular cases in which the information was nowhere else to be found. A major reason for this is that anonymity would have been virtually impossible to grant to interviewees, because the religious communities in Montenegro are that small after all and I, as a tall blond blue-eyed Westerner, am that visible. Secondly, most information from interviews has

also been publicly available in closely related forms and the transparency is much greater in publicly available sources – and for that reason these have been preferred.

Sources for the Montenegrin Orthodox Church were located after an interview in 2013 with a high-ranking spokesperson for the church, either on the website of the church (cpc.org.me) or on the online publishing platform [scribd.com](https://www.scribd.com). The primary sources have been the founding documents of the church organization and their Orthodox magazine *Lučindan*.¹⁴⁰ The church sources were supplemented with material from the *Journal Matica Crnogorska*, a Montenegrin nationalist academic journal, and books published through this outlet as well.¹⁴¹ A key text is Goran Sekulović's "Crnogorska identitetska prava i slobode" (2010), which provides a detailed account of the legal and historical arguments of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church.¹⁴²

Sources pertaining to the branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, namely the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral, were also gathered or located during the above-mentioned site visits, as well as meetings with local clergy members in 2013 and 2018. In addition, the metropolitanate has been helpful in locating specific sources related to particular topics, such as the Metropolitan's letter on Lovćen used in article 5. A few of the books used for this study are gifts from the churches or were bought from them directly. Several sources also derive directly from the Serbian Orthodox news agency in Montenegro *Svetigora*,¹⁴³ while others are published by the Serbian Orthodox Church on other platforms.¹⁴⁴ *Svetigora* is closely related to Metropolitan Amfilohije (Radović), and his works are a central

¹⁴⁰ See especially articles 2 and 3 for further information on sources like the founding documents of the church, *Za parvo I status crnogorske pravoslavne crkve*. Cetinje: The Montenegrin Orthodox Church, 2014, the church constitution, "Ustav Crnogorske pravoslavne crkve" (2009), and articles from the Montenegrin Orthodox magazine *Lučindan* no. 33-47 (2009-2014).

¹⁴¹ See article 3 or *Matic Crnogorska* <http://www.maticacrnogorska.me/index.html>

¹⁴² Goran Sekulović. "Crnogorska identitetska prava i slobode". *Matica Crnogorska* 44, 2010, p. 1–74.

¹⁴³ See article 3 or article 7 for further details on works such as *Саборни храм Светог Јована Владимира у Бару* (The Saint Jovan Cathedral in Bar). Cetinje: Svetigora Press, 2016; *Обнова и градња манастира и храмова у Црној Гори 1990–2010* (Renewal and construction of monasteries and temples in Montenegro 1990-2010). Cetinje: Svetigora Press, 2010.

¹⁴⁴ Such as Nikolaj Velimirovic, *Читанка о Светоме краљу Јовану Владимиру* (Reading about the Holy King John Vladimir), 1925 [retrieved at ratsko.rs https://www.rastko.rs/istorija/sv_jovan_vladimir_c.html on 27.07.2020] or Bogoljub Šijaković (ed.). *Legal Positions of Churches and Religious Communities in Montenegro Today*. Nikšić: Bona Fides, 2009.

and primary source for this study.¹⁴⁵ Several historical sources on the Serbian Orthodox Church have also been located in the digital library of the National Library of Serbia (<https://www.rastko.rs/>) where standardized editions are published by the Serbian state and are freely available.

Article 1: Unblocking the Sacred: New perspectives on the religious revival in South Eastern Europe

The following article is included in the methodological section of this thesis, because it contains the initial steps towards establishing a theoretical frame for the study of historiography and religion in Montenegro. It therefore contains the crucial thoughts underlying much of the analytical chapter IV. The article includes in addition a critical assessment of studies of religion in Montenegro, and a discussion of theoretical paradigms and their blind spots when they are applied to studies of religion in Montenegro.

Context

The article was originally written as a paper for a panel chaired by Annika Hvithamar at the Conference for The European Association for the History of Religions (EASH) at the University of Helsinki on 29th June 2016. The original title was: “The ecclesiology of kinship: (re)locating the sacred among kin and places in contemporary Montenegro”. The paper was redrafted and submitted to the competition for the Miklós Tomka Award in 2018, held by the International Study of Religion in Eastern and Central Europe Association (ISORECEA), an affiliate of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR). The paper won the award and was presented at the ISORECEA conference in May 2018 at the University of Szeged in Hungary. Following the presentation, the article was peer-reviewed and published in December 2018 by

¹⁴⁵ See articles 3, 5, 6 and 7 for further details on works such as Amfilohije (Radović). “Letter from the Serbian Metropolitan of Montenegro, Amfilohije Radović, to the Montenegrin Government and President Igor Lukšić”, AEM6p 970, (25.6.r, 2012). Author’s translation; Amfilohij. “Sveti Petar Cetinjski I rat” [St. Petar of Cetinje and War]. In *Jagnje Božije I Zvijer iz Bezdana*. Cetinje: Svetigora Press, 1996; Amfilohije. “The Church as the Pillar and Stronghold of the Truth – The Question of Autocephality and the Church”. *Orthodox Research Institute*, 2013; Amfilohije. *Светосавско просветно предање и просвећеност Доситеја Обрадовића [The Enlightenment of St. Sava and Dositeja Obradovica]*. Cetinje: Svetigora Press, 1994 [retrieved at [ratsko.rs](https://www.rastko.rs/bogoslovlje/m-amfilohije-prosvetno_predanje_c.html) https://www.rastko.rs/bogoslovlje/m-amfilohije-prosvetno_predanje_c.html 27.07.2020]

the journal *Religion and Society in Central and Eastern Europe*, which is published by the ISORECEA.

Focus and results

The paper's focus is a critique of the social scientific and functionalist approaches to religion especially in former Yugoslavia, and in particular in Montenegro. The article's main point is that the functionalist approach precludes a deeper understanding of religion, because all religious phenomena are reduced to forms of nationalism. Religion is emptied as a category.

The article suggests that instead of constantly seeing religion as a way to sacralize the nation, it might be theoretically and empirically fruitful to look at religion alone or the nationalization of religion. This approach is crafted with inspiration from Glenn Bowman, Daniela Kalkandjieva and Klaus Buchenau.¹⁴⁶

Subsequent research

The study and its approach have been used as the theoretical basis for the focus of the articles in chapters III and IV. The subsequent articles 2-7 are all attempts to study religion beyond the narrow view of the social scientific and functionalist approaches, but without denying their significance. As mentioned in this chapter, the functionalist approach to religion is a guiding principle of this study. This article discusses the problems with this theory in order to pave the way for using it critically.

¹⁴⁶ Bowman. "Nationalizing the sacred". 1993; Daniela Kalkandjieva. "A comparative analysis on church-state relations in Eastern Orthodoxy: Concepts, models, and principles". *Journal of Church and State* 53(4), 2011, p. 587–614; Daniela Kalkandjieva. "Eastern Orthodoxy and its churches in Central and Eastern Europe". In A. Máté-Tóth and G. Rosta (eds.). *Focus on Religion in Central and Eastern Europe – A Regional View*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2016, p. 111–128; Klaus Buchenau. "Religion und Nation in Serbien, Bulgarien und Rumänien, Drei verschiedene Wege in Südosteuropa". In A. Ivanišević, Alojz (ed.). *Re-Sakralisierung des öffentlichen Raums in Südosteuropa nach der Wende 1989*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012, p. 61–83.

UNBLOCKING THE SACRED: New perspectives on the religious revival in South Eastern Europe

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ABSTRACT: Many studies of contemporary religion in South Eastern Europe link resurgent nationalism to the revival of religion, arguing that nationalism is grounded in religion and has taken over many former religious symbols, beliefs and rituals. This argument is a key feature of social science studies of religion in the region. In cases from the former Yugoslavia, focus on this type of connection between religion and nationalism has prevented a more nuanced description of the religious transformation of communities after the fall of communism. This article will discuss the pitfalls of such a simplification and how it is possible to nuance the study of religion in the South Eastern European context. This will be done through a critical review of studies of religion in Montenegro and an examination of the local badnjak Christmas ritual. This article aims to craft a revised analytical strategy the nuances the connection between religion and nationalism but also acknowledges religion as its own system.

KEYWORDS: Religion, Nationalism, South Eastern Europe, Montenegro, Serbia, Eastern Orthodoxy

THE REVIVAL OF EASTERN ORTHODOXY AND NATIONALISM

On June 28, 1989, the Serbian saint's day, Vidovodan, was celebrated at Kosovo Polje in Kosovo. The day marked the 500th anniversary of the battle at Kosovo Polje and the fall and death of St. Prince Lazar. During the celebration, then Serbian president, Slobodan Milošević, took the stage. Milošević gave what would come to be known as the Gazimestan speech, which marked the return of religion and nationalism—two sets of beliefs and practices that had been marginalized for decades by the communist authorities throughout South Eastern Europe. This marked the decline of the communist ideology and the beginning of a new era for nation-states and churches throughout South Eastern Europe. Milošević spoke of the Serbian nation, the Serbian state and the Serbian Orthodox Church as one unit in which ethnicity, identity and

religion could not be separated and a historical unit upon which the Serbian state stood and depended.¹

However, Milošević's speech at Kosovo Polje was not a turning point ushering in a new time of revival and reconnection between the nationalism of nations in existence before the communist take-over and the churches of these nation-states. The speech was rather a witness to how nationalism and religion had slowly become a new foundation upon which states, political elites, and ethnic groups would build their identity after communism. This process took place throughout the formerly communist-controlled Eastern European region from Moldova (Zabarah 2011) in the northeast to Croatia (Pavlakovic et al. 2001) in the southwest.

The region saw a revival of religious communities and national movements, which took place in different forms and at different speeds, before and during the political transition of these formerly totalitarian-controlled nation-states. These movements were quite noticeable in the former socialist federation of Yugoslavia, where the ruling authorities had relied on the creation of a common Yugoslav identity and an acceptance of local republics' ethnic identities to ensure a peaceful co-existence (Lampe 2000). The rise of nationalism and religion—as well as several other factors—challenged this federation and led to its dissolution amid wars, civil wars and the formation of new nation-states. Religious communities and national movements often formed opposition groups against the communist authorities, which added to the new prominence of religion and nationalism in the region (Clardie 2016, 18). Indeed, religion and nationalism were the counterpoints to communism in many states. The prominence of religion in the region was even further advanced by a series of political, social and economic initiatives, such as the Serbian revision of the laws on religion granting the Orthodox community access to funds, sites and a role in the new school system (Pollack and Rosta, 2017, 416).

In the early 1990s, the rise of nationalism and religion created stronger differentiation between the former Yugoslav republics, and these two forces came to be seen as the primary drivers behind the Yugoslav wars, as well as the main factors that caused an onslaught on civilians of different ethnicities and religious groups, according to several studies, such as those by Branimir Anzulovic (1999) and Michael Sells (1998).

This interpretation of the conflict in Yugoslavia has meant that the studies of religion, especially in Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, such as those by František Šitek (2010) and Milan Vukomanovic (2008), have focused, above all, on the connection between religion and nationalism. In these studies, it is argued that nationalistic movements use religion and the religious world-system to attain political goals. This is often referred to as “clericalization” of politics (Blagojević 2008, 39). This assumption and analytical point of view has become an all-encompassing departure into studies of religion, blocking a more nuanced picture of religion in the area and of the revival of its religious communities.

This article seeks to reexamine this assumption and point of view to religion—theoretically and through an in-depth study of a case from Montenegro—in order to underline the need to historically and sociologically understand religion in the former Yugoslav republics before any conclusion can be reached and to discuss how a more nuanced approach to religion in these states could be shaped. The entanglement of religion and the politics of nationalism often leads to an “easy avenue” of analysis, whereby religion is simplified and reduced to categories of nationalism without the proper contextualization of its religious practices, ideas and symbols.

This article consists of three parts. The first one is a short review of recent studies on religion and nationalism in Yugoslavia and Montenegro to highlight how religion has been

¹ The full speech in Serbian is accessible here: <http://www.pecat.co.rs/2011/06/govor-slobodana-milosevica-na-gazimestanu-1989-godine/> /retrieved 07.01.2017.

studied and theoretically framed, and how its connection to nationalism has been identified. The second part of the paper is a case study from Montenegro, exemplifying the blind spots and oversimplification that studies have made in relation to religion in this particular case. The final part is a discussion of how a more nuanced approach, called nationalization of the sacred, could be shaped and how such an approach would function.

STUDIES OF RELIGION AND NATIONALISM IN YUGOSLAVIA

In his key study of religion and nationalism in the former Yugoslav republics, Vjekoslav Perica (2002, 6) claims that the formation of the ethnic “nations” (Croats, Serbs, Slovenes etc.) of Yugoslavia were based on an identification of links between religion and nationalism. This connection was forged in the 20th and 21st centuries by various religious institutions, scholars and state elites during the formation of the first Yugoslavia and its predecessor states. Perica argues that this connection was necessary in order for the political elites to legitimize their power in myths and achieve the subsequent sacralization of the nation-state. This new, sacred foundation of the nation secured the political elites’ hold on power, and the population’s support of the state—in Perica’s terms, the church, nation and state became inseparable.

This interpretation of religion is primarily based on the functionalist approach to social phenomena, such as religion and nationalism, as Perica notes (2002, 6). The functionalist approach focuses on the function of religion and the nation within a specific political and cultural context and on how individuals or groups use these concepts to make sense of the world, accumulate power and legitimize the use of power. The functionalist approach is based on the notion that religion and nationalism gain prominence in a society to solve or answer a problem. An example is the belief in the afterlife, which in functionalism is seen as the answer to the problem of mortality. Therefore, religion is not defined by what it is (its content), but rather what it does or achieves (its function). In this way, functionalism leads to a reactive definition and interpretation of religion—religion needs to do something or achieve something before it can be studied. Functionalism, therefore, only paints a partial picture, as Detlef Pollack and Gergely Rosta note (2017, 40); however, the functionalist interpretation is nevertheless a suitable analytical tool to examine the former Eastern Bloc over the last thirty years. Functionalism is well suited to study religion empirically, because it highlights the social features of religion regardless of the religions inner logic.

The fall of communism meant that the problems of identity, belonging and fulfilling everyday practical needs had to be re-defined and re-adjusted to a new world order where communism no longer had an iron grip on society. In such circumstances, the functionalistic analysis is able to grasp and nuances the relations between identity and religion. Religious communities rose to the forefront of the affected societies, and their offer of redemption or belonging was necessary once more. Therefore, religion and nationalism overtook the functions of communism, in the same manner as communism had overtaken many former religious functions almost half a century before (Pollack and Rosta, 2017, 39-40).

According to the functionalist approach, religion is a system of beliefs and practices that corresponds to a system of national beliefs and practices. Both of these systems of symbols, ideas and practices could support a group identity, such as the imagination of a collective community of a nation (Anderson 1998). The theoretical backbone of functionalistic studies of religion is the constructivist school of nationalism (Tomka et al. 2016, 81). Functionalism’s

approach to nationalism is a constructivist one; a range of examples can be found in Pål Kolstø et al.'s (2014) anthology, which focuses on strategies for nation-building in the Balkans.

In constructivism, nationalism and religion are characterized by their social roles and interpreted as constructions of human imagination; in that sense, religion and nationalism are similar, and, therefore, religious practices and beliefs can correspond to national ones. Key differences, however, are their contextual and historical aspects. Religions, as organized and practicing communities, often transcend national boundaries and draw from older and deeper traditions. Religion, therefore, often has the aura of authenticity, which newer constructions lack. Nationalism, as Benedict Anderson (1998) points out, has grown out of religion and has “borrowed” its authenticity (Tomka et al. 2016, 83-85). In other words, nationalism sometimes uses religious practices and beliefs to claim legitimacy and authenticity as a true nation, as Andrew Hastings (1997, 187-188) shows in greater detail.

The notion that religion is more authentic builds on an assumption that religion and nationalism are not identical forms of a cultural system. Nationalism is a different kind of phenomenon, or a “*differentia specifica*,” to quote Pollack and Rosta (2017, 36). Using this perspective, religion is irreducible because it has features that separate it from other human systems, such as the political principles of nationalism. A classic description of a unique religious feature is Rudolf Otto’s (1920) description of “the holy” in his seminal work from 1917. According to Otto, “the holy” should be understood as a numinous and mysterious force that creates both fascination and terror in its spectators (*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*). This force, which makes places holy or sacred, is a unique feature of religion. Meanwhile, nationalism, could be defined as a political principle based on a national identification or cultural similarity, as Ernest Gellner (1997) states in his classic definition.

Perica (2002, 6) works with a functionalist approach and is aware of the potential danger of his definitions of religion and nationalism, which leads to critical reflection on this issue within his work. However, Perica’s description of the connection between nationalism and religion in Yugoslavia is echoed and retold—in a less reflective manner—through a vast body of literature on religion in the Yugoslav-sphere (e.g., Merdjanova 2000; Sells 1998; Kolstø 2014; Vukomanovic 2008; Anzulovic 1999; Mylonas 2006). The same connection between religion and nationalism outside Yugoslavia can be found in Daniel Payne’s study (2007), where the approach is broadened to cover Eastern Europe in general. The aforementioned studies often reproduce or accept Perica’s notion. As Daniela Kalkandjieva concludes in a 2011 study, such an uncritical assumption about the connection between church, state and nation/ethnic community need to be supported rather than assumed. Symbols, rituals, beliefs and ideas often have histories of their own that do not necessarily correspond one-to-one to a national narrative, as Kalkandjieva (2011, 2016) shows in her examination of the Orthodox idea of state-church relations. A function within one system of practice and belief is not necessarily directly transferable to another.

The point of departure for this article is that Perica and others’ approaches to religion in Yugoslavia have prevented a deeper understanding of the concrete dynamics at play because, as Kalkandjieva (2011) warns, these studies have oversimplified the connection between religion and nationalism. The aforementioned scholars have come to see religion as a part of culture in broad terms and have, therefore, reduced the concept to an empty category. My main critique levied against these studies is that this reduction lose sights of religious function in a broader historical and cultural context. Studies of religion in Yugoslavia (Vukomanovic 2008; Anzulovic 1999; Mylonas 2006) have taken the functionalist approach too far in their study of nationalism and have skipped over the contextualization of social phenomena. This hypothesis is unfolded and tested in the present article by an examination of the case of Montenegro to determine whether it could be ascribed to the inherent problem in functionalism.

MONTENEGRO: RELIGION AS THE HALLMARK OF NATIONALISM?

Since the fall of communism, religion in Montenegro has mainly been studied within the social sciences, as is the case for many other former Yugoslav countries. Most seminal and contemporary studies of Montenegrin society are focused on the transition of Montenegro from a Yugoslav republic to an independent state in 2006, such as those by Kenneth Morrison (2009) and Florian Bieber et al. (2003). Those studies touch on religion as a political matter. In other social science studies (Džankić 2014a; Pavicevic et al. 2009), religion is analyzed, but only in relation to the newly-formed independent Montenegrin ethnic identity or the political divide between the pro-Serb-unionist and the pro-Montenegrin-independence movements. A few studies in Serbian and English deal with the socio-religious context in Montenegro (e.g., Bakrač 2011, 2012; Bakrač et al. 2013) or focus on the local Muslim community (e.g., Kajoshaj 2010; Pačarić 2015), but they are descriptive and deal mostly with the social and legal setting of religion in Montenegrin society.

Only a handful of internationally published studies directly address the majority religion, Eastern Orthodoxy (Kube 2012; Džankić 2013, 2014b; 2016; Šistek 2010; Morrison 2015; Zdravkovski et al. 2014). A common denominator for studies of Eastern Orthodoxy in Montenegro is that they seem to be extensions of Perica's (2002) landmark study and approach to religion. This means that they explain and examine religion through the context of the functionalist and constructivist theories and conceptions of nationalism. A noticeable study that departs from this trail is Alice Forbess's work (2013), which is an anthropological study of the Eastern Orthodox communities in Montenegro. However, Forbess's main focus is not on religion per se, but rather on the connection between religious charisma, the image of heroic clans and the state-building process, as seen from an anthropological angle; religion becomes a charismatic power rather than an explanation for nationalism due to Forbess's focus on the practices of communities and individuals.

A series of studies (Kube 2012; Džankić 2013, 2014b, 2016; Šistek 2010; Morrison 2015; Zdravkovski et al. 2014) seem to base their analyses of religion on the functionalist approach due to the personal relationships between religious community leaders and political parties, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and/or state institutions. This entanglement enabled close personal and institutional connections between the Montenegrin political elite and the local, unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church, as well as between the local Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate, its charismatic leader, Metropolitan Amfilohije (Radović) and the pro-Serbian elite in Montenegrin politics (Morrison 2009). Since these social and political relationships were so visible (see Saggau 2017a), it is an obvious choice for scholars to focus on the relationship between religion and nationalism. A key example is Stefan Kube's (2012) study in which he discusses the sacralization of the state in Montenegro. Kube quickly reaches the conclusion that the competition between the two Orthodox communities in Montenegro (the Serbian and Montenegrin one) can be linked back to competition between a Serbian-oriented nationhood and a Montenegrin one. The issue of religious conflict and the process of sacralization is distilled down to an issue of nationhood and a political question about whether Montenegro should be independent of Serbia. The personal and institutional alliances in Montenegro determined the content of Kube's analysis and overshadowed the concrete religio-social dynamics at play.

The connection highlighted by Kube is correct, but his analysis fails to grasp the whole story. In particular, his description uncritically caters to the nationalist-oriented political elites in Montenegro who seek to portray churches as agents of the nation rather than as religious communities (Saggau 2017a, 13-15). The conclusions made by Kube and others (Džankić 2013, 2014b, 2016; Šistek 2010; Morrison 2015; Zdravkovski et al. 2014) support the image of religion and Eastern Orthodoxy in Montenegro as a symbolic continuation of nationalist and political

in-fighting. Accordingly, religious institutions are deprived of their religious features to become political organizations, religion as a category of meaning is emptied and its beliefs and practices are turned into a national or externally religious system. Such a conclusion seems to take the constructivist and functionalist approach too far and does not consider the cultural and historical contexts. Instead, religion is seen as a phenomenon that can only function within a national political system.

A CASE FROM MONTENEGRO

This section discusses a specific case from Montenegro to reveal how the blurring of the border between religion and nationalism could block a deeper understanding of religion. The case examines the practices and beliefs connected to a specific ritual, known as the *badnjak* [bǎd̩ɲa:k], which is known throughout South Eastern Europe and the Slavic parts of Christendom. This widespread Christmas practice consists of a burning of a log to commemorate the birth of Christ, accompanied by either a local family ritual or a ritual performed by a priest. *Badnjak* was discouraged in Montenegro and throughout Yugoslavia during the communist period, but, since the early 1990s, it has become a central part of the Christmas celebration, especially among Eastern Orthodox believers in Serbia and Montenegro.

Originally in the nineteenth century, the ritual was a family one, in which a log was selected on Christmas day and burned in the evening. In the 20th century, the ritual became a public one that was often celebrated in large Orthodox cities across the Balkans. In Montenegro, a log is burned in front of the Monastery of Cetinje, which is the center of Orthodoxy in Montenegro, and most families from the city attend. This practice might date back to the Montenegrin Kingdom before World War I. Traditionally, the burning of the log is overseen by the local Eastern Orthodox Metropolitan. The ritual can best be described as a large bonfire at which traditional Montenegrin epic songs are sung, accompanied by the *guslar*, a Balkan guitar. It is not a strict ritual and has kept some of the characteristics from the original family ritual. The attendees often engage in small-talk or conduct business and kids play while their parents go back and forth on the streets during the burning of the log. It is very informal, which is typical for outdoor Orthodox gatherings in the Balkans. At the ritual, the priest often gives a short speech or sermon ending with the distribution of hot locally-brewed brandy, wine or tea, along with food, as an informal symbol of the Eucharist.

In the early 1990s, during the rise of Serbian nationalism across the Balkans, the Serbian Metropolitan, Amfilohije, took the seat reserved for the Metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro. Serbian flags and traditional Serbian songs were, therefore, at the forefront of the event. In opposition to Amfilohije, a group of citizens in Cetinje began having their own log burning ritual, just a few hundred meters away, in front of King Nikola's palace, which was the home of the last Montenegrin king. At this *badnjak*, Montenegrin flags were displayed and traditional songs of the Montenegrin clans were sung. As such, the *badnjak* ritual became a public display of Montenegrin citizens' support or opposition to Metropolitan Amfilohije. Since the formation of the canonically unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church in 1993, the *badnjak* at Nikola's palace has been overseen by the leader of that church (Morrison 2015). Today, the ritual is more of a public manifestation of the strength of the two parties, rather than a religious rite and could be better described as a political demonstration—with flags, songs and speeches from religious leaders—taking place around a bonfire. The presence of armed police and occasional confrontations between the supporters of the two churches have also changed the atmosphere of the event. However, regardless of the political

content, the center of the event is still the burning of the log as a symbol of a tree from Paradise, which sparks hope about the birth of Christ.

Kube (2012), Morrison (2015) and Šistek (2010) explain this yearly event and display of Montenegrin and Serbian symbols as a point of departure in the discussion of religion in Montenegro. Kube simply notes (2012, 116, 130-131) that the background for the competing badnjak celebrations is the rebuilding of Montenegrin and Serbian nationhoods. The same point is reached by Šistek (2010, 1), who calls it “a clericalization of nationalism” (as his article’s title) underlining that the clerics are merely seen as agents for two opposing nationalist movements. Morrison (2015, 110-111) notes that the ritual is used by each party to display their belonging to a Serbian and Montenegrin nation, and that the Serbian Orthodox Church claims the event as a “Serbian tradition.” Kube (2012), Morrison (2015) and Šistek (2010) have valid points, but they never dwell on whether the display of national belonging is all there is to say about the event. There are also several open questions: Why is this tradition, place and form used by the nationalist movements? Are the displays only about bolstering the nationalism of the Montenegrins and the Serbians? What is the content of this ritual (practice) and the belief system attached to it? Why is it so important that the two opposing groups recapture the ritual as theirs?

Part of the answers to the question on the central importance of this ritual can be found much deeper in Montenegro’s religious and cultural heritage. Badnjak and Christmas have religious and cultural meanings that reach beyond any other rituals, events or practices in Montenegro. The reason for this dates back to Petar II Petrović-Njegoš (1813-1851), who ruled the land as both its secular and religious leader, as his family had done since the 16th century. Njegoš was also a well-known poet, and his most famous work is the epic, “Gorski vijenac” (The Mountain Wreath, 1847). The work is about his forefather, Danilo I, and the clansmen of Montenegro and tells the tale of how, during Christmas, they “cleansed” Montenegro of all Muslim Montenegrins who did not renounce Islam (the event is often referred to as the Montenegrin Vesper). The tale is told as an allegedly historical event, and it has been interpreted as the event that secured Montenegro as an Orthodox land and paved the way for the region’s independence from the Muslim Ottoman Empire (Roberts 2007, 132-136). The epic has a few lines about badnjak, where the ritual is mentioned as the least a Slavic family could do in order to honor the Christian and Slavic traditions. Njegoš (2007) writes:

*Let flare the Serbian Christmas log [badnjak]
Pain gaily too the eggs for Eastertide;
Observe with care the Lent and Autumn Fasts,
And for the rest — do what is dear to thee! (859-863)*

In the epic, badnjak was the benchmark for being an Orthodox Slav. It became a central cultural cue, since “The Mountain Wreath” was added to the standard curriculum throughout both the royal and socialist Yugoslav state; the epic was considered a source of inspiration for ethnic chauvinism and ethnic cleansing, as well as for thoughts about freedom and liberty (Pavlovic 2001; Wachtel 2004).

Christmas in Cetinje, Montenegro, also holds more recent historical memories. During the 1918 holiday, a group of Montenegrins revolted against the Belgrade army, which had taken control of the land after the collapse of the Austrian Empire and wouldn’t allow the last Petrović king to return to his capital. The uprising in 1918 is known as the Montenegrin civil war, which ended when the Montenegrin rebels were heavily defeated by the Belgrade army. The same year marked the end of Montenegro as an independent country, which meant that the Montenegrin Orthodox Church was dismantled soon after and turned into a part of the Belgrade Patriarchate (Roberts 2007, 324). The Christmas uprising of 1918 and the Montenegrin civil war have significant political symbolism today and are currently used as reference points

in parliamentary discussions between pro-Serbian and pro-Montenegrin officials (Tanner 2017). The Montenegrin civil war is also closely related to current strife between the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate and the canonically unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church, because the latter's status and the debate on its ownership rights to property now belonging to the Serbian Orthodox Church have their roots in the aftermath of the war.

As briefly described above, the cultural and religious meaning of badnjak in Montenegro and in Cetinje, in particular, draws on deep traditions, which explains the unanswered questions in Kube's (2012), Morrison's (2015) and Šistek's (2010) studies. The fullness of the meaning of the ritual is found in the religious and cultural history of Montenegro, which has shaped the scene onto which the nationalist struggles of today are played. This religious history and how it has been retold are central to understanding how nationalism uses the religious system of practices. As Tomkas et al. (2014, 83) note, in reference to Turner (2006), the religious system has a certain depth that political systems—such as nationalism—lack. The religious phenomenon of ritual needs to be understood as a function within certain historical and cultural contexts before its function within the political system can make sense. Christmas in Montenegro is not only a religious event celebrating the birth of Christ, but it is closely intertwined with Eastern Orthodox history and related to the religious and political fate of the region. Christmas in Montenegro marks the birth of Christ, as well as the Montenegrin Vesper, the Montenegrin civil war and the central status of Njegoš. Therefore, it is perhaps the most important holiday for commemorating the Montenegrin past.

TRADITIONALISM, REVIVALISM OR A NEW RELIGION?

The badnjak ritual also points to a socio-religious structure that serves as the basis for other perspectives on religion in Montenegro. Perica (2002) notes that religion in Yugoslavia was more of a public display of belonging than a personal belief kept private. In this view, religion is a public affair that could be defined in functionalist terms as the practices of “belong, behave and belief” (Akongul 2016, 145). Displays of belonging and behaving at public events are religious practices as much as a national ones—and ones that occur regardless of the personal beliefs of the individual participants.

Badnjak displays a certain set of religious belonging and behaving practices that are noticeably separate from national ones. Badnjak, in Cetinje, despite its centuries-old history, is a revived and transformed ritual. The traditional ritual was performed in one place, but it has been transformed into two rituals in the same city by the opposing Montenegrin and Serbian movements, who refuse to perform a united ritual. Thus, the tradition has been disturbed and turned into something new. The newly invented features of the ritual point to the “novelty” of the two Churches involved in these events. Both organizations have experienced significant transformations during the past thirty years: the Serbian Orthodox Church changed from being a marginalized community to a central and influential societal actor, while the Montenegrin Orthodox Church was revived. Therefore, it makes sense to religio-sociologically examine whether these organizations can be considered “new” revivalist religions. Such organizations are often characterized as adolescent and act in similar patterns because they are both new and religious (Barker 2013). Such communities are often small in number, focused on person-to-person interactions and led by a charismatic leader. Organizations of this type are often highly unpredictable and their core members are often very enthusiastic (Barker 2013, 14). The uncanonical Montenegrin Orthodox Church fits well into this category socially due to its small size—approximately 5,000 core believers and a handful of churches—and its relatively recent establishment, but its content should be labeled as “revivalist” (Saggau 2017a, 49-50). The Serbian Metropolitanate in Montenegro, a semi-autonomous organizational part of the Serbian Orthodox Church, has traits that correspond with new religions, such as enthusiastic

core members and a central charismatic leader, but it has many more members than a typical new religion, estimated to around 40 pct. of the population of Montenegro, and a strong and long established infrastructure of churches, clerics, etc. (Saggau 2017a, 35-36, 38-40). To some extent, the novelty of the Badnjak ritual reflects the revivalism present in both the Serbian and Montenegrin Orthodox Churches.

Specifically regarding badnjak, both Churches display the same socio-religious structures. First, each Church has incorporated national songs, flags and symbols into its version of the ritual to highlight the differences between the two rituals and the two communities. The national flags and songs play religious roles—apart from their national ones—because they mark the differences between the two seemingly identical rituals. Second, both the Serbian and Montenegrin flags use traditional crosses in their national flags. The Serbian cross and the Montenegrin cross each signify a different, deeply religious tradition. The Serbian cross is a state symbol for Serbia and was used by its royal house. Traditionally, the cross is golden-yellow, with four Cyrillic “c” letters between its arms. Meanwhile, the Montenegrin cross was the symbol used by the medieval dukes of old Montenegro and the Montenegrin Metropolitanate under the Ottoman Empire. It looks similar to the traditional Maltese cross and is traditionally white on a red background. Each cross also refers to a national symbol of either the Serbian or Montenegrin saints.

In addition, both versions of the badnjak ritual reinforce each other because neither Church can step down and let the other one take possession of the tradition. The two rituals preserve the need for charismatic leaders and enthusiastic core members who will turn up every Christmas. Badnjak, thereby, has become symptomatic of religiosity in the Balkans and reveals how religion has been put to the forefront of the cultural renegotiation of identity in the region. At the same time, the two rituals are basically the same and their function is to secure a path between Montenegro’s former system of religious beliefs and those of its new communities. In that view, badnjak is a religious gateway to history and its function is to answer the very core question of identity and belonging. The ritual in itself holds the numinous power to fascinate and terrify (Otto 1920), which both communities seek to control. The burning of the log is still the center of the ritual and not the national flags.

The badnjak ritual also reveals a historical pathway and highlights the various cultural and religious traditions in use—which are lost when the ritual is only interpreted as a nationalist display. This pathway and the ritual’s numinous power are of great importance to both Churches, but more so for the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church. In the Montenegrin Orthodox Church’s own magazine, badnjak is used as a central point of reference to connect the Church’s recent history with Montenegro’s history and the history of Christendom. In a recent article (Lucindan 2015), the Montenegrin Orthodox Church reports on its badnjak in the Montenegrin city of Kotor. In the article, a speech given at the event by the leader of the church is cited; the leader binds the ritual together with the spirit of Christmas and the birth of Christ. In the speech, Christ is remembered by how he was judged, humiliated and crucified, which, the religious leader comments, is “a similar fate our homeland has experienced, Montenegro!” (Lucindan 2015, 18, Author’s translation). The suffering of Christ is used here as an analogy for the suffering of Montenegro and the Montenegrin Church’s community. In this example, the badnjak ritual is used as a sacred bridge through which the experiences of the community, the historical fate of the state of Montenegro and Christ are bound together. The ritual reinforces the belief that the community’s suffering corresponds with Christ’s suffering. The ritual and the preaching during the ritual not only represent an entanglement of religion and nationalism, but also a binding of the sacred image of Christ, the sacred ritual of his birth and his body (the church) to a specific nation. Thus, the religious system of meaning—here, the sacred numinous power—takes on a national meaning.

RE-APPROACHING RELIGION IN MONTENEGRO

Behind the recent revival of religion in the Balkans, a multitude of nationalization projects are visible, as Pål Kolstø et al.'s (2014) anthology shows. These projects are necessary because the formation of the southern Slavic nations, such as the Illyrian or Yugoslav ones, have failed. The nationalization projects of today provide an opportunity for empirical study and concrete identification of the sacred within nationalism, as well as underlining the differences between the two.

A contemporary example of how the sacred has been nationalized can be found within the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church, which is often very direct in its claims on parochial churches in the heartland of Montenegro. Its claims are often based upon the argument that the temples were built on land owned by a specific Montenegrin clan. The Montenegrins (a broad category), therefore, own the sacred sites, rituals and materials on their land, and the church buildings should either be restored to their Church or at least made the property of the new Montenegrin state (Lucindan 2012a, 32, 2012b, 74-75). In one article, the Church writes, "substantial, original and factual church property in Montenegro is clearly Montenegrin, and not Serbian property" (Lucindan 2013, 46, Author's translation).

This sort of national claim on the sacred—here, churches—could be labeled, as an ecclesiology of kinship, because the organizational and governing structure (the ecclesiology) of the church is based on kinship. This structure seems to reach beyond the modern organization of states and even nationalism. According to this logic, the sacred and physical natures of sites are bound to a specific kinship within a clan; therefore, the sacred has been nationalized through its physical form.

This ecclesiology builds on an argument that claims that it is part of a much more genuine tradition of allegiance in Montenegrin society, than national allegiance. It is said that allegiance to kin and clans—rather than ethnicity and states—is a more "natural" form of loyalty in Montenegrin society (Forbess 2013). The point is not that Montenegro is still a tribal society, but that the sacred plays a vital role in the original clan structure of Montenegro. In this context, allegiance to a church is interpreted as equal to allegiance to family—loyalty through blood to clan and church. Belonging to a clan also means belonging to a specific church. In today's world of politics, this sentiment is transferred from clan and family onto the nation, which, in turn, is based on the archaic structure of governance. Therefore, the nation-state is interpreted as a prolonging of the clan-based Montenegrin state, marking an evolution from allegiance to the sacred (a church) to kin or the clan to modern day nation-states.

What is at play here and in other post-Yugoslav states is not just a new form of an imagined community; sacred sites, rituals and materials are integrated and nationalized into parts of the older societal structure in new ways (e.g., Ivekovic 2002). One central argument, which is often used in Montenegro (see Sekulović 2010) and elsewhere in the broader Eastern Orthodox world, as noted by Payne (2007), is that the nationalized church and its system of beliefs is an embodiment of the local church, which is a theological concept used as the cornerstone of the Orthodox ecclesial structure. Today, the idea of the local church has been adopted by ecclesial and political elites as a type of theological whitewashing of nationalization. Originally, the concept was that the local church was a physical building, a community and an organization, which became integrated into Orthodox Christendom through rituals. The concept of the local church was initially bound to family, because the very idea of "ecclesia" (a congregation) was, in its biblical form, bound to a specific household and its family. This idea also exists in Western Christendom, as Cavanaugh notes (2011, 7). The theological concept of the local church has been transformed into a political or national concept, whereby the local church is stripped of its ecumenical and transnational implication, and the meaning of the term "local"

is interpreted as “national.” Today, the sacred church is integrated into local politics through kin and clans in such lines of argument as the ones used by the Montenegrin Orthodox Church.

NATIONALIZATION OF THE SACRED

Studies of religion in Montenegro and, in particular, those related to badnjak all lead back to the question of how religious social phenomena and praxis can be analyzed without reducing them to merely political or nationalist endeavors. Mainstream studies about religion in Montenegro are not nuanced and thus block the exploration of additional theoretical perspectives, which could expand or nuance the understanding of religiosity, as exemplified in the article’s case-study. Nuances, such as the theological, transnational, social or historical elements that might contradict the reduction of the Serbian and Montenegrin Orthodox Churches into vehicles of national politics, are not presented or reflected in the literature. In fact, the main problem with the traditional theoretical approach to religion in the literature is, as Michel de Certeau argues, the belief that a “*single model* (here, a political one) can *in fact* explain a society in its totality” (Certeau 1988, 120). Such an approach, according to Certeau (1988, 120), builds on an anthropological postulate, whereby a modern society contains both civilized and savage elements, and the civilized elements are given a dominant position and used to categorize or interpret all other elements. In this example, the politics of a state are given a dominant position, as the “essential” element of modern states, and “savage” religion is then categorized according to this (Certeau 1988, 120-122). Given this framework, politics is an essential feature of civility and modernity, and religion is seen as the opposite. Religion is categorized beneath politics, along with economics, culture and urban development. Certeau argues that such an approach is not nuanced, because a society advances through “a plurality of heterogeneous but combined developments” (1988, 121).

One way to build upon Certeau’s critique of the simplification of religion in functionalist theory, could be to re-approach the events, concepts or sites studied without a single analytical agenda, but rather with a dialectical approach. Such an approach must preserve religion as a system of practices and beliefs, but, at the same time, be sensible to how that system spills over to the political system of nationalism. Certeau argues that each system needs to be understood in its own terms—distinct from each other—and then the connection between practices and ideologies (the passage between the two systems) can be examined. The first step in an approach would be formed in relation to the social or personal problems that religion or nationalism tries to solve individually—and how the religious or nationalist practice reflects this. The second step would be to look at how the two systems function together when integrated into a single system. Basically, the argument is that a religious system seeks to solve problems internally, but the religious system could be adopted by (or integrated into) a nationalist system to solve problems in that sphere—such as lack of authenticity, political legitimacy and credibility.

This type of approach could be used to examine Klaus Buchenau’s (2012) well-balanced studies of religion in South Eastern Europe. Buchenau (2012, 61) notes that the former Yugoslav states all experienced an increased “*Sakralisierung der Nation*” (sacralization of nations) during the early 1990s. Buchenau’s concept of sacralization is based on the notion that a nationhood, needs religion to bolster and strengthen its claims of authenticity and historical legitimacy. This concept of sacralization is also used by Milan Vukmanović (2008) in his depiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church’s political role in contemporary Serbian society.

The process of sacralization is a social one, whereby the nation uses religion to create an aura of authenticity. It draws from the sacred wells of religion and re-uses symbols, sites, texts or other materials. National movements and political elites use religion in this way to bolster their power through the use of religion; thus, religion is adopted to solve a national

problem. In his study, Buchenau article (2012) describes how this process took place in Serbia in the crucial period in the 1990s as part of the mobilization for war. The British historian, Adrian Hastings (2007, 187-188), provides a more concrete identification of the inner dynamic of the process by which religion is used to shape national formations. Hastings (2007, 187-188) identifies the core religious factors that could be activated to sacralize a nation. He argues that these factors are the various use of early traditions, events and heritage that go beyond the immediate present. Hastings thus identifies how nationalistic political movements can use religion. This labeling of nationalism use religion in Buchenau's works, as "sacralization", builds on concepts borrowed from the analysis of the differences between political religion and politicized religion, such as the study by Emilio Gentile (2006).

In both Buchenau's and Hastings's theories, the analytical focus is on the integration of religious functions into nationalism; therefore, their studies still preserve the main functionalist method of the mainstream studies of religion in Montenegro. This mainstream functionalistic approach is still that religious phenomena are interpreted as part of a specific form of nationalism or nationhood. The categorization of religion in the mainstream studies still takes its analytical point of departure from nationalism.

A more nuanced picture is created when a reverse analytical strategy supplements Buchenau and Hastings's assertions. This reverse perspective could be labeled as a *nationalization of the sacred*. The emphasis here is on how sacred and religious phenomena exist independently and are only moved into the national realm through the use of political force or power. This categorization originates in the realm of religious practice and moves into the realm of nationalism. The sacred also has forces of its own (e.g., its numinous power to terrify and fascinate) that exist outside of the political realm.

Glenn Bowman (1993) has already coined the term, "nationalization of the sacred," in a study of the conflict in Israel and Palestine—a context with some similarities to that of the Balkans. Bowman argues (1993) that sacred sites can be called on in the imaginative process of a community. Bowman draws heavily on Anderson's (1998) concept of nationalism as an imagined community, but applies it to the process of rebuilding, restoring and occupying a sacred space or material. The sacred (e.g., saints or badnjak) exists in itself, but takes on a new function in political terms when it is called upon by national agents to serve their agenda. From this perspective, religion—characterized by its outlets, including sites, praxis and communities—is itself a phenomenon and not a proxy. Religion has been functioning in human society long before its adoption by nationalist agents; it is crucial to understand and analyze its original function in order to interpret why it is used in nationalism.

To understand the analytical approach based on the concept of nationalization of the sacred, it is important to understand how religious praxis, or belief, is adopted, contested or captured by a national movement and why it makes sense historically, culturally or religiously for social and collective movements to take possession of specific rituals. This line of thinking highlights the transnational potential or universal nature of sites, ideas or practices, which can only be forcefully adopted by a specific system of nationalism. Bowman's approach paves the way for a much needed focus on the transnational historical contextualization of rituals and beliefs.

This dialectical approach, suggested here, could be applied to the case of Petar Petrović Njegoš's Mausoleum, a monument in the Lovchen mountains, which has been studied in detail (Saggau, 2017b). This became the center of a heated debate on its ownership during Njegoš's bicentennial in 2013. The Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate contested the Montenegrin nationalization of the site, because the Montenegrin state had occupied it and prevented the Church from using it as a religious site. In the eyes of the Serbian Metropolitanate, the nationalism of the Montenegrin government blocked the sacred nature of the site. The Metropolitanate justified its position by asserting the site's religious sacred value independent of Montenegrin

culture, politics or nationalism. This is an example of how the sacred nature of a space could be highlighted to prevent the nationalization of the site. In contrast, the Montenegrin government was—and still is—deeply invested in the sacralization of the Montenegrin civil-religion of this sacred site, which is clearly a sacralization of the nation. In the government's view, the sacred site provides a stage for a civil-religious ritual that can bolster Montenegrin nationhood and be used to create a deeper cultural system of references for this form of nationalism. Thus, Montenegrin nationalism drinks from the sacred well of the site in order to borrow its power to make spectators terrified or fascinated.

In this case, two opposite interpretations are displayed. On the one hand, the site is being used by the government to sacralize the Montenegrin nation, while, on the other hand, the site and the ritual of sacralization are contested by Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate as a nationalization of the sacred. In summary, the function of this sacred site is overtaken by the Montenegrin political system and that claim is contested by a concerned religious institution, the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate, which seeks to preserve the site's function within a religious system.

THE HISTORY OF THE NATIONALIZATION OF RELIGION

The nationalization of the sacred is not a new process and has already been thoroughly studied. The nation-building processes throughout Europe and the Western world in the 18th and 19th centuries are filled with relevant examples, as noted by Cavanaugh (2011). During this period, several nation-states slowly assumed parts of religion's former role in these societies, also adopting its sacred sites, symbols and heritage. Many sacred elements slowly merged together with nationhood, so it has become almost impossible to separate them; in Cavanaugh's concluding words (2011), the holy has migrated from church to state.

Perhaps the most apparent example of this in South Eastern Europe is the Greek Orthodox Church, which was founded as part of the contestation of the Byzantine dream of a universal Roman and Christian culture. The nationalization of the Orthodox Church in Greece, which had been part of the Byzantine mainland, contradicted this universalism. Today, the Church is an embedded part of Greek nationhood (Willert 2014). Another example is the emergence of the Bulgarian Exarchate in the 19th century and the subsequent condemnation of "phyletisme" by the Orthodox Council of Constantinople in 1872. Theologically speaking, and regardless of the various historical power struggles between the Bulgarians and the Greeks, this condemnation was targeted directly at the nationalization of religion, which, ultimately, was the end goal of the institutional process that the independence of the Bulgarian Exarchate had put into force (Kalkandjieva 2016, 121). Both examples illustrate institutional processes linked to the formation of nationhoods, revived nations and separate independent states.

Besides institutional mechanisms, nationalization of religion or sacred elements can take other forms. Nationalization can take place in relation to a sacred site, as described by Bowman (1993) and illustrated by the above examination of Njegoš's Mausoleum (Saggau 2017b). This type of nationalization can take several forms, ranging from restoring a church in the image of a new nation to rebuilding the site in order to support a new nation to occupation of the site. Each of these are physical processes that can secure the sacred site within an imagined community. These processes also attest to the fact that the site bears a religious value in itself, regardless of the nation—a value that reaches beyond one nation and has to be cut off or molded in order for one nation to secure the site within its national belief system.

In the former Yugoslav republics, this process of nationalization has not been as coherent and stable as in many other places in Europe. This is largely why to the Yugoslav republics'

late independence from the Ottoman or Habsburgian powers, as well as the shifting formation of nations and republics in the region throughout the 20th century (Jelavich 1983a, 1983b; Lampe 2000). In contrast, Greece and Bulgaria have had more stability and coherence. Today, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church's organization, churches and clergy are considered to be Bulgarian by almost all Eastern Orthodox Churches, unlike during the condemnation of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1872. Meanwhile, the Montenegrin Orthodox Church is officially unrecognized and its validity is contested by almost all other traditional Eastern Orthodox Churches.

CONCLUSION: WAYS OF NATIONALIZATION

As argued above, nationalization of the sacred can be seen across South Eastern Europe. By addressing the nationalization of the sacred, studies of religion will become more nuanced and better able to grasp the depth of religion in the 21st century. This can be done through contemporary studies of a) how nationalization is carried out by political and ecclesial elites, b) which system of ideas and practices is used, c) which cultural and historical contexts are relevant and d) what purpose the nationalization serves. This article has used this approach to examine several cases and has referred to several literature studies already applying this approach. This article has also illustrated four nationalization processes:

1. the use of institutions
2. restoration, rebuilding or occupying sacred sites or buildings
3. recovering or claiming saints or sacred materials (crosses, etc.)
4. the use of other societal structures of governance, such as the ecclesiology of kinship

Milošević's Gazimestan speech at Kosovo Polje in 1989, as mentioned before, is a clear example of several of these processes. The speech was an attempt to use the numinous power of the Kosovo Polje site and the saint Lazar for the mobilization of the Serbs in favor of the Milošević's political agenda. It strengthened the Serbian Orthodox Church and its institutions throughout Yugoslavia and drew heavily on traditions predating the communist era. These processes turned Kosovo Polje into a national monument worth defending; in other words, religion was used as a means of national mobilization by social agents.

The "Balkan idol," as Perica calls the sacralization of nations in Yugoslavia, could only be realized because there were sacred symbols, rituals, ideas and organizations that had been nationalized in advance. The sacralization of nations requires a sacred source. No one is going to kill for the telephone company—the un-sacred nation-state—as Cavanaugh asserts (2011). The state and the nation need the sacred to secure their eternal existence.

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Chapter III: Orthodoxy in Montenegro



Serbian Orthodox protesters demonstrating against the Law on Religion in Podgorica, December 2019.

The following chapter contains two articles, which describe the social, historical and political context of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church (article 2) and the branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro (article 3) today. As pointed out in the state-of-the-art section there is a general lack of analysis of these Eastern Orthodox communities. In order to provide a more accurate analysis of historiographical practice and religious ideology, it is, according to de Certeau, necessary to uncover the “place” of the production. The place should be understood as the social, historical and political context. The following chapter provides a description of this, which will be the foundation for the analytical article in the next chapter.

Article 2: The self-proclaimed Montenegrin Orthodox Church: A paper tiger or a resurgent church?

At a conference on religion and violence held by University of Vienna in Tetovo, North Macedonia, 2015, Professor Martin Rothgangel commissioned me to write a paper on religious education in Montenegro as part of his project *Religious Education at Schools in Europe*. The paper was drafted in 2015-2016 together with Sabina Pačarić and Vladimir Bakrač.¹⁴⁷ I had initially in 2015 realised the lack of basic information about the Orthodox churches in Montenegro, and the work on the paper on religious education in 2015-2016 was a first step in order to make up for this. In early 2017, Vladimir Bakrač and Mirko Blagojević invited me to the yearly conference held by the Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade and the Yugoslav Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (YSSSR) to present my work. I used the occasion to expand on the paper on religious education and sum up my work from 2015-2017 in my presentation. The new paper consisted of a characterization of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church. I presented the paper in Srebrno Jezero, Serbia, on 20th May 2017 and the paper was published in a peer-reviewed form in the book *Religion in Contemporary Society*, edited by Blagojević, in late 2017.

Focus and results

The focus in the paper is to provide basic information about the Montenegrin Orthodox Church, its origin, its members and clergy, foundational documents and its whereabouts. This information is used to discuss what sort of religious community it is and what its position is in comparison with the branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro. The primary results are firstly the characterization of this church, which did not previously exist, and secondly a discussion of the combined revivalist and new religious form of the church. The paper concludes that the church is an elitist project (a strategic one to use de Certeau's concept) and that it only challenges the Serbian Orthodox Church on paper and in the debate about national identity in which the church is one of an array of Montenegrin nationalist organizations and parties formed in the 1990s.

Subsequent research

¹⁴⁷ Saggau, Pačarić and Bakrač. "Religious education in Montenegro". 2020.

Following this paper, the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro is explored and described in detail in the next article, no. 3. Article 2 was later read and commented on by clergy from the Serbian Orthodox Church, who among other things made me aware of the close connection between the Serbian Orthodox Church's theological school in Cetinje, Montenegro, and the Serbian school system mentioned in the following article, no. 3. The clergy also pointed out that the cult of Vasilioslavlja (mentioned on page 43 of article 2) is not devoted to the Vojislavljević dynasty, which is a major house analyzed in article 4, but that Vasilioslavlja is a reference to the Slavic and not so frequently used name Sveti Vasilije Ostroški for St. Basil of Ostrog (1610-1671). Vasilioslavlja means holy Vasilije and not holy Vojislav.



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The self-proclaimed Montenegrin Orthodox Church

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THE SELF-PROCLAIMED MONTENEGRIN ORTHODOX CHURCH – A PAPER TIGER OR A RESURGENT CHURCH?

Abstract: During the early nineties, a so-called nationalized and traditional Orthodox community has been revived in the republic of Montenegro. This community calls itself the Montenegrin Orthodox Church and claims to be the representative of a resurgent form of the traditional Orthodox Church in Montenegro, which according to themselves vanished in the formation of Yugoslavia in 1918. Since 1993 they have therefore tried to claim local traditions, customs and places as part of their revitalized “Montenegrin” version of Eastern Orthodoxy.

Up until now the research on this community has been limited and has only focused on the – often violent – struggle between this community and the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral. It is difficult to grasp the reach and extent of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church in these studies – is the community a paper tiger or an actual existing and thriving church? This study will focus on a selection of religio-sociological key findings on this community in order to provide a more nuanced description of them. The emphasis will be on this community’s existence and a discussion about the degree to which the transformation of Montenegrin society and the independence of the Montenegrin state at large have contributed to the formation of this organization.

Key words: Montenegro, religion in Montenegro, Orthodox Church, nationalization on religion, religion post-communism.

Society and religion in Montenegro

During the dissolution of Socialist Yugoslavia and the subsequent civil wars in the late eighties and nineties, the religious and social landscape in the republic of Montenegro changed. This change was first and foremost visible in the ethnic composition of the majority of the Slavic speaking population.¹ Until the early nineties, the majority of the Slavic speaking popula-

¹ In the following article “ethnicity” and “nationality” will be used as translations of the Serbian word “narod”. This is a simplification, because the meaning of “narod” is much wider and more fluid, see Kolstø, 2014.

tion identified themselves as being Montenegrins and only small minority saw themselves as either Serbs or Yugoslavs. This changed during the nineties as a significant proportion of Montenegrin citizens began to identify themselves as Serbs while the self-identification as Yugoslav slowly vanished. This change was not due to any major migration or other sort of external changes in the country's demographical composition, but was rather a sign of the political turmoil and change in the republic.

Table 1: Percentage of total population of Montenegro identifying themselves as Montenegrins, Serbs and Yugoslavs

	1981	1991	2003	2011
Montenegrins	68.50%	61.86%	43.16%	44.98%
Serbians	3.32%	9.34%	31.99%	28.73%
Yugoslavs	6.46%	4.25%	0.00%	-

Source: Montestat

The period from 1986 to 1999 when dissolution and civil wars shaped new states in the Balkans a distinct Montenegrin nationalist movement began to rise. This movement found fertile ground in the Montenegrin society in the early nineties – as other nationalistic movements did throughout the Balkans. The national movement's primary objective was a detachment of the former Socialist Republic of Montenegro from the Serbian state. The independence of the Montenegrin state was crucial, according to this movement, in order to preserve the distinct Montenegrin national identity from its Serbian counterpart. At the same time, the rise of Serbian nationalism also influenced Montenegrin society. Several Serbian nationalists argued that the Montenegrin majority population and the Orthodox population were Serbs, thereby denying that the Montenegrin identity was something more than a mere *toponym* (referring to the name of a place). A large group of Slavic-speaking Montenegrin citizens therefore began to identify themselves as Serbs rather than Montenegrins. These two-opposite movements heavily politicised the question of Slavic-speaking Montenegrin citizens' ethnic identity (Morrison 2010, Džankić 2013, 2016).

During the same period, as several social scientists remarked, religion once more became a central hallmark and sign of a national identity (Lampe 2010). The question of national identity therefore also became a question of religious belonging. This manifested itself in the intertwining between the Serbian nationalist movements and the Serbian Orthodox Church, which Klaus Buchenau aptly describes as a "sacralisation of the nation" (2012). Montenegrin nationalists therefore identified the local branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, known as the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral, from hereon the MML, as the main opponent of Montenegrin independence. The Montenegrin nationalists accused the MML of being

the stronghold of Serbian nationalism in Montenegro.² A key point in the Montenegrin nationalist political program therefore became to counter the influence of the MML in Montenegro. A step towards this goal was the formation (or the so-called revival) of a Montenegrin Orthodox Church (mng.: "Crnogroska Pravoslavne Crkve", from hereon CPC) in 1993. The Liberal party played a major role in the formation of this church according to themselves and most external observers (Morrison 2009). Until 2000, the CPC was registered as a non-governmental organization and simply called the "The Religious Community of Montenegrins of Eastern Orthodox Confession" (mng.: "Vjerska zajednica Crnogoraca istočnopravoslavne vjeroipovesti"). Along with the formation of this organisation, the Liberals also helped to establish a whole branch of Montenegrin political and cultural institutions, such as "The Cradle of Montenegro" (founded in 1993, mng.: "Matica Crnogorska") and the Dukljan Academy of Science and Arts (founded in 1999, mng.: "Dukljanska Akademija Nauka I Umjetnosti"). The formation of these "pro-Montenegrin" organizations coincided with a watershed in Montenegrin politics in 1996–97. The former monolithic socialist party split into two groups, one pro-Montenegrin and the other pro-Serbian. The pro-Montenegrin party was formed under leadership of then Prime Minister Milo Đukanović, and has remained in control of the government since 1996 (Morrison 2009). Đukanović and his government endorsed the pro-Montenegrin organization, including the CPC, as part of his campaign for Montenegrin independence that culminated in a referendum in 2006 after which Montenegro became an independent republic.

These political and cultural transformations in the Montenegrin republic were also noticeable in its religious demographics as table 2 shows.

Table 2: Religious communities in Montenegro (adherents as a percentage of the total population)

Religious community	1953	1991	2003	2011
Orthodox	45.84	69.12	74.23	72.07
Islam*	17.65	19.18	17.74	19.11
Roman Catholic	4.81	4.41	3.54	3.44
Atheist	31.46	1.6	0.96	1.24

Source: Bakrac 2012, p. 116

² The Montenegrin territory is at the present time part of two other Serbian eparchies as well, but the MML is the dominant voice for the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro – and hence the MML will be used as a label for the Serbian Orthodox Church within Montenegro.

* Originally the category of Islam and Muslims were separated in the official census, but the Islamic Community strongly rejected this division and their reaction resulted in the merging of the categories and an official apology from the Statistics Agency.

Montenegro's religious demographics changed remarkably from the eighties until the last census in 2011. The major change was that the largely secular and non-religious majority population became mostly religious within a few years, which was a trend throughout the Yugoslav republics. According to a study, only 45% of the total population in all Yugoslav republics in 1984 declared that they were religious believers (Perica 2002). Seven years later in 1991 this number had risen to 91.6% in Montenegro (Montestat). The change is mainly due to the close connection between religion and national identity which is characteristic of the post-Yugoslav period in the Balkans (Bakrač 2012). The revival of religion in Montenegro was similar to the changes seen in Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia (Bakrač & Blagojević 2013, Morrison 2009, Buchenau 2012). The CPC was born out of this religious revival process and it is regarded to have been at an early stage in the nineties as a manifestation of growing national self-awareness amongst Montenegrins (see Bieber 2003, Šistek 2010, Kube 2012, Jelena Džankić 2014 & 2016).

Studies of the CPC

The CPC has been studied in a few social scientific articles (Morrison 2009, Šistek 2010, Kube 2012, Jelena Džankić 2013 & 2014a & 2014b & 2016 and Troch 2014). The main findings throughout these studies are that the CPC is – in various wording – a Montenegrin nationalist organization that promotes the idea that Montenegro has a separate culture, language, ethnicity and religion. Most of the studies are based on newspapers and online articles and a few site visits. All of the mentioned studies do not deal with the concrete social-religious formation of the organization in detail. This is mostly because it is not the subject of their studies, but it nevertheless leaves a blind spot. A second noticeable thing in these studies is that they deal with the CPC as a homogenous organization that has remained unchanged throughout the post-Yugoslav period. Finally the focus of most of the studies is on the time before and during the crucial stages of the Montenegrin way to independence. The has left the period after 2006 unexamined. In the following, the CPC will be described differently and hopefully this will provide a more nuanced picture of it. The first and foremost aspect that needs to be dealt with in order to determine the CPC's social-religious role in Montenegrin society is the determination of a few basic structures of the organization. These structures are basic things such as the location of the churches, the demographics of the community, the major events and conflicts the CPC has been involved in and what the community thinks of itself. This will provide a point of departure into a discussion of the CPC's place in Montenegrin society.

This study is mainly based on my own field-work, interviews and site visits in 2011, 2013 and 2014, combined with the CPC's own publications,

such as its constitution and its ecclesial magazine *Lučindan*. To some extent, other materials such as articles from the Magazine *Matica Crnogorska* and data from local NGOs and scientific papers will also be used to support the observations.

The foundation of the CPC

The CPC was founded in Cetinje in 1993 in the days around St. Luke's day (18. October) and St Petar's death day (31 October). The foundation of the CPC took place in Cetinje and not in the capital of Podgorica, because Cetinje is the cultural capital of "Old" Montenegro and was, until the fall of the Montenegrin Kingdom in 1918, the city where its royal family resided. The city was originally founded by the noblemen Ivan Crnojević around a monastery where the Orthodox Metropolitan of Zeta (later Montenegro) took residence after the Ottoman invasion in the 16th century. The region around Cetinje (called Katunska nahija) is, according to the 2011 census, inhabited to a large extent by people who identify themselves as belonging to the Montenegrin ethnicity and who vote for the parties that support Montenegrin independence. The CPC is claimed to be a revival of the Orthodox Church organization that existed in the historical Kingdom/Principality of Montenegro until it was absorbed into the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1920 after Montenegro became a part of the new Kingdom for Slovenes, Croats and Serbs in 1918. The dismantling of the Montenegrin Kingdom and church is a highly controversial subject in Montenegro, where pro-Montenegrins claim that both things were done illegally by the Belgrade government and its army (see Sekulović 2010). During the period of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro (from 1945 to roughly 1989), there were a few instances where the Orthodox clergy in Montenegro expressed the wish to form a local Montenegrin Orthodox Church as the case was in Macedonia. The Serbian Orthodox Church continually denounced these claims and argued that the wish had been nurtured by anti-Orthodox attitudes from the communist regime (Alexander p. 169, 180). The wish to form an independent (called autocephaly) Montenegrin Orthodox church is therefore not a new invention.

The CPC's churches and religious sites

According to various sources, the CPC has an estimated 10–15 churches and at least one monastery in Old Montenegro. The sources range from the CPC's Wikipedia page, their magazine *Lučindan*, my own fieldwork and Jelna Džankić's studies (2016). It is estimated that there are between 571 and 650 Orthodox churches in Montenegro and the MML owns the rest as well as at least 60 monasteries in the Montenegrin territory (Džankić 2015, p.

123, Buchenau 2003, p. 110). Most of the CPC's churches are found around the village of Njeguši near Cetinje. Njeguši is the birthplace for the clan of Petrović-Njegoš, who ruled Montenegro from the 17th century until 1918. The precise number of churches and monasteries is uncertain because the CPC frequently use ordinary houses (and refers to them as churches) or open fields as places for religious services (Buchenau 2003). A few of the churches are old religious buildings, said to belong to the clans of Njeguši or Cetinje, while others are converted or restored buildings.

Until now the CPC has only built one new church, which is found in Cetinje and named after Ivan Crnojević. The CPC does, however, lay claim to a number of buildings currently owned by the MML, and have tried on several occasions to forcefully take possession of them. Most of these disputed buildings are in Old Montenegro and especially in the city of Cetinje. The CPC has also, without any confrontation so far, laid at least a cultural claim to an Islamic and a Roman Catholic site. The Catholic site in question is the man-made island and the church on it devoted to the Lady of the Lake (mng.: "Gospa od Skrpjela") in the bay of Kotor. This site is devoted to a local holy woman and she is venerated in a ritual performed by the local inhabitants of the bay. The Islamic site in question is the shrine on the mountain Rumija devoted to a saint venerated by several Orthodox churches as well as the local Catholics and Muslims. Each year a local ritual is performed by all communities in order to venerate the saint. The CPC sees these two sites, along with the historical persons and the ritual connected with them, as genuinely Montenegrin and therefore a part of the CPC.

The CPC's clergy and ecclesial organization

According to the CPC itself, its clergy consists of three *vladikas*, ten priests and one deacon (mng.: "trojicu vladika, deset svještenika i jednog đakona", Lucindan 2009, p. 77). Compared to this the MML had at least an estimated 60 priests and 160 other forms of ecclesial personnel in 2003 (Buchenau 2003) and the numbers have probably risen since then. However, it should be remarked that Alexander Stella (1979) reports that in 1979 the total numbers of MML priest (18) was equal to the number of CPC clergy today.

Noticeably, the CPC calls its bishops *vladikas* and not *episkop* or *metropolitans* in its more informal texts. The title of *vladika* means ruler and is often translated to bishop-prince. The Metropolitan of Cetinje from around the 16th century used the title to designate the double nature of his office as both a secular and religious leader. The title of *vladika* is only used loosely and in the official "constitution" of the CPC (Ustav Crnogorske Pravoslavne Crkve, 2009) the religious "leader" of the CPC is referred to as the Archbishop of Cetinje and the Metropolitan of Montenegro (mng.: "Arhiepiskop Cetinjski i Mitropolit Crnogorski", Paragraph 9, 2009). This title is very similar to the head of the MML. The CPC's hierarchical order begins

with the Metropolitan and has six additional levels ranging from the bishop's council to parish councils. Beside the hierarchy of the clergy, the line of management from the council of the Metropolitan down to each parish church is also established (Paragraph 7, 2009). The constitution of the CPC explains in details the scope of the church's works. It ranges from what could be characterized as traditional Christian work, such as formal procedures of election of bishops (Paragraph 16.17–18, 2009) and more general Christian work, such as "*keep and defend the purity of Christian Orthodox teachings on faith and morals*" (mng.: "Čuva i brani čistotu hrišćanskoga pravoslavnoga učenja o vjeri i moralu", Paragraph 16.6, 2009) and maintaining internal unity (Paragraph 16.3). In addition to this traditional Christian service, the CPC also defines its work as preserving, protecting and devoting attention to the Montenegrin ecclesial and historical materials, saints, texts etc. (Paragraphs 16.8, 17.23–24, 18.2–5, 2009). The CPC is divided up into the following dioceses/episcopates (mng.: "episkopije", Paragraph 23):

- The Archbishopric of Cetinje, consisting of the Katunska nahija.
- The Episcopate of Duklja, consisting of the capital of Podgorica, the city of Danilograd and the ruins of the city of Duklja.
- The Coastal episcopate, centered in the city of Kotor and entailing all of Montenegro's coastland (the Littoral).
- The Episcopate of Ostroški – Niksic, centered in the city of Niksic and its upland. The episcopate lays claim to the monastery of Ostrog, which is currently owned by the MML.
- The Episcopate of Bjelopoljska, centered in Bijelo Polje and including the northern Montenegrin municipalities.
- The Diaspora Episcopate.

One can see that the CPC's internal division follow the borderline of the republic of Montenegro and most of the episcopates are built around the division of municipalities of Montenegro. This is in grave contrast with the MML, which only covers Old Montenegro and the coastland (the Littoral). The northern and western parts of Montenegro are included into other Serbian eparchies (episcopates) – namely the "Mileševska" and the "Budmilje and Niksic" eparchies, which also include territories in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia. The Budmilje and Niksic eparchy was restored in 2001 and the Mileševska eparchy in 1999 (Džankić 2016, p. 143).

Furthermore, the constitution of the CPC also contains a section on the criteria one has to fulfill in order to become a bishop. This indicates the ideal form a senior member of the CPC clergy should be like. The constitution states that a bishop in the CPC needs to be at least 30, have a higher theological education and be devoted to the church and the people/nation (mng.: "crkve I naroda", Paragraph 24.5). He needs to be born in Montenegro and be a citizen (this does not apply to a bishop of the diaspora). The

episcopal office is thus reserved for Montenegrin citizens who are devoted to serving the people/nation.

Who are the members?

There are no official records nor a standardized national census providing a precise estimate of the number of members or Orthodox believers that adhere to the CPC. One could assume that there is a close correlation between being a member of the CPC and identifying oneself as a Montenegrin (Džankić 2014). The members of the CPC could therefore be limited to the group of people in Montenegro that identify themselves as Montenegrins. This is 45% of the total population, which is roughly 300,000 persons according to the 2011 census (Montestat 2011). This is the absolute maximum number of persons that the CPC could appeal to within Montenegro.

A qualified estimate of the total number of members could be found in the empirical research on the political landscape of Montenegro conducted by the Montenegrin Center for Democracy and Human Rights (Centar za demokratiju i ljudska prava, shortened to CEDEM). Over the past decade, CEDEM has continuously conducted two to three minor polls each year. These polls include from time to time questions regarding the religiosity of Montenegrin citizens. Two of their polls, from 2009 and 2015, show the percentage of Montenegrin citizens that identify themselves as members of the either the CPC or the MML (see table 3, CEDEM).

Table 3: Percentage of respondents that belong to the MML or the CPC

	MML	CPC
2009	52.20%	21.70%
2015	52.30%	15.60%

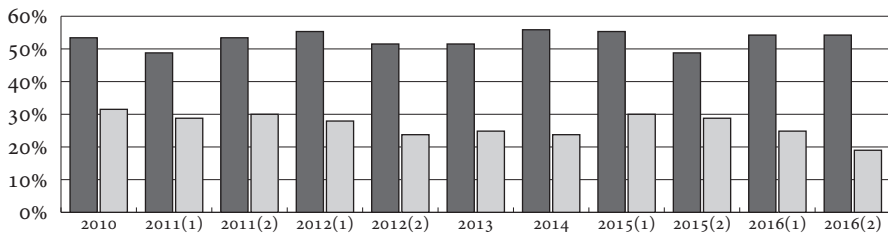
Source: Centar za demokratiju i ljudska prava, Montenegro

These two polls indicate that the Orthodox Christians in Montenegro, which make up 72% of the total population according to the 2011 census, are divided between the MML and the CPC. The majority of the population (52–53%) which is roughly two thirds of all Orthodox believers, attest that they belong to the MML, while the remaining minority, which is between 16–22% of the total population and approximately a third of Orthodox believers in Montenegro, belongs to the CPC. If these polls are crossed with the 2011 census, they thereby indicate that almost 50% of those Montenegrin citizens that identify themselves as ethnic Montenegrins, do not support the CPC but the MML. This information suggests that half of Montenegrins connect their national identity with their religious affiliation, while the other half doesn't. The two polls indicate therefore that approximately 150,000 Montenegrins in Montenegro are members of the CPC. This number

seems, however, to be an overestimation considering the size of the clergy and the number of churches belonging to the CPC. This overestimation could be based on the fact that the respondents had to choose between the CPC and the MML, which forced them to take a stand that they might not have taken otherwise. The polls were also conducted with a minor group of respondents (aprox. 1,000 persons) and might therefore not precisely reflect the scale of the CPC. Furthermore, the polls might not show the actual number of members but rather the size of the population that passively supports the CPC without actively engaging in CPC activity.

This estimation flickers a bit further when one takes another line of observation from CEDEM into account. CEDEM has also asked on a regular basis if Montenegrin citizens "trust" in specific institutions, such as the parliament, the military, the MML and the CPC. This provides a long series of observation displayed in figure 1.

Figure 1: Percentage of respondents that "trust" in the MML and the CPC from 2010 to 2016



Source: Centar za demokratiju i ljudska prava, Montenegro

The median is 52.7% for the MML and 27.6% for the CPC for all observations from 2010 to 2016. The median reveals that, statistically speaking, 27.6% of the total population "trust" the CPC as an institution. This could be interpreted as support. This percentage of supporters is not far from the estimation of the number of members in CEDEM's other polls. This underlines perhaps that table 3 shows the percentage of passive supporters of the CPC rather than its actual members.

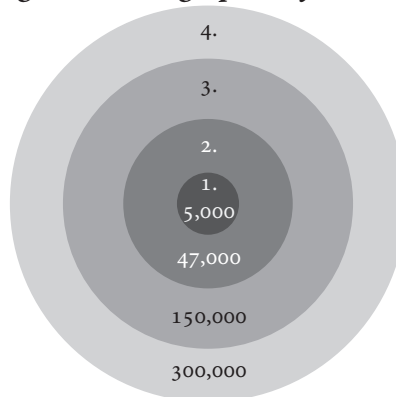
A correlation to CEDEM's polls is another poll from 2011 which was designed by a research group (Kolstø 2016). This 2011 poll indicates a somewhat different picture. In this poll, less than ca. 16% of the ethnic Montenegrin population identify themselves with the CPC. This is far less than the estimation from CEDEM. In contrast to this small group, the majority of ethnic Montenegrins, which is 58%, would rather describe themselves with the rather bland label of "Eastern Orthodox". The 58% thereby signal that they belong to neither the MML nor the CPC. This 2011 poll therefore estimates the total number of CPC members around ca. 47,000, if it is crossed with the 2011 census. A conservative estimate may therefore be that ca. 47,000

persons are firm and loyal members of the CPC, while at least 150,000 people in Montenegro sympathize with the CPC on some level.

A further correlation to these numbers is found in the budget of the CPC from 2009. Here, the CPC's treasury informs that 4,265 payments have been made to the CPC. (Lucindan 2009, p. 69): 2,800 from legal entities and 1,465 from physical persons (mng.: "2.800 pravna lica i 1.465 fizička lica"). It is not made explicit what those two labels cover, but a qualified guess is that *fizička lica* is literally a single person donating and that *pravna lica* covers families, clans, villages or organizations of some sort. This provides enough information to assume that at least 4,265 persons have made the choice to donate money to the CPC. This group – combined with the clergy and other officials – could be considered as the core base of believers for the CPC.

In total, the sources mentioned above could be used to estimate the total size of the CPC. First and foremost there seems to be a base of firm and active believers comprising approximately 5,000 individuals. Secondly, there is a group of ca. 47,000 persons that belong to the CPC, which is 16% of all ethnic Montenegrins. Thirdly, around ca. 150,000 persons in Montenegro somewhat sympathize with the CPC. The size of this last group is perhaps the most difficult one to determine. The polls from CEDEM suggest that the group is between 16 and 30% of the total population. Finally, there are ca. 300,000 persons in Montenegro to whom the CPC could appeal to. The numbers mentioned above are estimations based on the demographics of Montenegro. It should be noted that the number of firm believers might have been higher during the formation of the CPC. Morrison reports that 15,000 people showed up to the foundational celebration of the CPC in Cetinje in 1993 (2009, p. 131). These 15,000 must have been strong supporters of the CPC and could be characterized as the core members of the early CPC.

Figure 2: Demographics of the CPC



Key: 1: The firm believers; 2: Those that identify themselves with the CPC; 3: Those that sympathize with the CPC; 4: Those that the CPC can appeal to

The recent history of the CPC

The CPC was formally founded in 1993, but has existed roughly since the All-Montenegrin National Synod in 1991 and functioned as an NGO until its official recognition in 2000. Below is a list of the most significant events in the recent history of the CPC.

Table 5: List of events relating to the CPC 1991–2013

Year	Event
2013	October: Celebration of Njegoš
2010	20 January: Clash at Church of St. John the Baptist in Bajice
2008	October: Meeting with the Ukrainian, Bulgarian and Moldavian non-recognized churches
2007	18 April: Clash between CPC and MML supporters at Cetinje monastery
2005	May: The MML build the controversial Rumija church
	Easter: The CPC receives greetings from the Prime Minister of Montenegro.
2000	January: Official recognition by the Montenegrin state
	17 January: Clash between CPC and MML supporters at Donji Kraj church
1997/98	The election and elevation of vladika Dedic/Mihailo
1996	The death of the first vladika, Abramovich
1993	31 October: The founding of the CPC on St. Petar's death day
	12 July: Clash between CPC supporters and a Serbian armed militia on St. Petar's day in Cetinje
1991	6 January: The All-Montenegrin National Synod
	January: The first badjnak

The recent history of the CPC is centered around two crucial periods. The first one is the early nineties (1991–1993) where the CPC became established as a spearhead for the Liberals and Montenegrin nationalists in their reaction towards the MML. A central event was the bloody St Petar's day, where a Serbian armed militia started shooting at a Montenegrin demonstration in Cetinje. This event convinced many locals in Cetinje that the MML stood in the way of the Montenegrin nationalist movement and that consequently the CPC needed to be founded in order to counter the MML (Morrison 2009). Following its foundation in 1993, the CPC struggled to become an established community and put its organization into place. A significant amount of energy was expended to secure the transferal of the office of Metropolitan from the first vladika Abramovich to the second vladika Mihailo.

The second crucial period for the CPC began in 2000 when the confrontation between the MML and CPC was put to the test. The recognition of the CPC in that year became a point of departure for a CPC-lead

campaign which sought to take back all Montenegrin shrines built before 1920. This period culminated in 2007 shortly after the referendum without the CPC being able to overtake any shrines owned by the MML. The CPC leadership seemed to have hoped that Montenegrin independence would pave the way for their control over the central churches and monasteries in Montenegro. Instead of being welcomed by the Montenegrin authorities, they were, in stark contrast to their expectations, confronted by a Montenegrin police force protecting the MML on 18 April 2007. Following 2007, the CPC has been stabilized and institutionalized with a new constitution, the rebuilding of churches and a continual presence at official state events, such as the celebration of Njegoš in 2013.

This timeline is to a large extent reflected in the writings of the church and their supporters. The majority of texts defending the church in pro-Montenegrin magazines, such as the *Matica crnogorska* or the CPC's own publication *Lučindan*, are dated from around 2000 and up until a few years after the 2006 referendum.

The cultic and ritual praxis of the CPC

In general, the CPC invokes Christian language, holidays and rituals as part of the clergy's praxis which is described in details in the magazine *Lučindan*, such as Metropolitan Mihailo's greeting to the CPC at Easter (Lučindan 2013). To the extent that is visible in its outlet, the CPC should be characterized as a Christian community. There is, however, often a paucity when it comes to biblical references, which is perhaps more due the lack of deep theological training than an expression of a theological stand. It is hard to determine if this form of Christianity is a deep commitment to the Christian faith or simply a structural and cultural garment for the community.

Beside the traditional Christian structures, rituals and holidays, the CPC's praxis is based on a revivalist interpretation of what Montenegrin Christendom should be like. An example of this is the use of the title *vladika* rather than the title of bishop or metropolitan. *Vladika* invokes a local tradition of Christian rule, rather than the long episcopal succession expressed in the title of bishop.

The CPC's main national characteristic is also found in the so-called "sainted Montenegrin cult" (mng.: культу Црногорославља), which consist of a list of saints that the CPC venerates in particular. These saints are especially bond to the history of the Montenegrin lands and the former medieval states of Duklja and Zeta. However, two of the saints are also venerated by the MML and other Orthodox churches. The CPC describes the essences of these saints as the fight for (Montenegrin) freedom and they are used as ideal-figures exemplifying the Montenegrin's right to an independent state (Lučindan 2009, p. 37). The five most central are as follows:

Table 6: List of national saints

Name of cult	Historical person	Historical period	Known for
Vladimiroslavlja	Jovan or Ivan Vladimir, unknown family – perhaps Vojislavljević	Early medieval 990–1016	First ruler of the Montenegrin area. First locally known saint.
Vasilioslavlja	Vojislavljević – A line of rulers, the best known of which are Stefan, Mihailo I and Constantine Bodin	Early medieval 1034–1186	The ruling dynasty of independent Duklja. First local Slavic independent royal house – ousted by the Serbian house of Nemanjić.
Stefanoslavlja	Probably Stefan Piperski	Ottoman period Unknown birth – 20/21 May 1697	Local Montenegrin saint – founded the Čelija piperska monastery in Brda outside Podgorica.
Ivanoslavlja	Ivan Crnojević	Late medieval 1465–1490	Lord of the Zeta – Montenegrin state, founder of Cetinje and the Cetinje monastery.
Petroslavlja	Petar I Petrović-Njegoš	1748–1830	Sainted vladika of the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty of Montenegro. Modernized Montenegro and known as Petar of Cetinje.

Source: "Uloga Svjешtenstva", *Lučindan* 33, 2010, p. 83

This national characteristic of the CPC is also found in their calendar of religious celebrations. According to the CPC, their church celebrates most of the Christian and Eastern Orthodox holidays, such as Christmas, the Epiphany (19 January), the prayer to the Theokotos (14 October) and so on. The special CPC holidays are the following:

Table 6: List of specific national holidays

Name	Date (Julian/ Gregorian)	Refers to	Celebrated at
St. Basil of Ostrog	12 May / 29 April	The venerated founder of the monastery of Ostrog (near Danilograd)	Ostrog monastery
Holy Stefan Piperski	2 June / 20 May	The venerated founder of the monastery of Piperski (near Podgorica)	Piperski monastery

Holy martyr Vladimir of Duklja	4 June / 22 May	Jovan or Ivan Vladimir	Mount Rumija and city of Bar
Holy and just Ivana Crnojevića	4 July / 21 June	Ivan Crnojević	Cetinje monastery and churches
St. Peter from Cetinje, the Wonderworker	31 October (calender unknown)	Petar I Petrović-Njegoš	Cetinje monastery
Lučindan	18 October (calender unknown)	Luke's day	
Badjnak	Christmas (Julian calendar)		Cetinje main square
Petrovodan	29 June (calender unknown)	St. Petar I Petrović-Njegoš' birthday	Cetinje monastery

Source: "Praznici", *Lucindan* 37, 2010, p. 50

Noticeably, four of the local Montenegrin cults are turned into holidays and another one is added. One central feature of all the celebrated holidays is that the person venerated is bound to a very specific geographical and often physical space (e.g. a monastery). Most of these places are today controlled by the MML. The CPC underline, through their veneration, their claim on Montenegro's physical heritage through a spiritual argument (Saggau 2017a). One of the most central holidays and rituals is the badjnak. The badjnak is a local ritual – used throughout Eastern Europe. It is centered on the burning of a large Yule log (or sometimes just a bonfire) at Christmas Eve. Every year the MML and the CPC each hold a badjnak only a few hundred meters apart. The MML burns its logs in front of the monastery in Cetinje, while the CPC burns its logs in front of the last Petrovich-Njegoš palace in a central square in Cetinje. During the badjnak, nationalist songs are sung by both crowds and they wave Serbian or Montenegrin national flags. The reason the CPC continues to hold on to the date of the Badjnak is not only just a yearly provocation towards the MML. Christmas has a cultural history of its own in Montenegro. Three key historical events occurred at Christmas in Montenegro that made the holiday into a national and cultural event that transgresses the limited symbolism of Christianity.³

³ The holiday is the center of Petar II Petrovich-Njegoš' (1813–1851) epic about his forefather vladika Danilo Petrovich-Njegoš. In the epic, Danilo leads Montenegrin Orthodox believers as they slaughter the Montenegrin Muslims that refuse to convert on Christmas. The so-called "cleansing" of Montenegro is a mythological (or some argue real) tale of Montenegrin freedom from the Muslim. In addition to this tale, the Montenegrins have on two other occasions risen to arms during Christmas. First and foremost in a Montenegrin national uprising during the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918 in a so-called civil war. The second occasion was during Montenegro's occupation by Italian forces during the Second World War.

A religio-social mapping of the CPC

So far this article has dealt with the basic structure of the CPC which provides some insights into the organization. In the following paragraph, these findings will be supplemented with a religio-social mapping of the CPC within Montenegrin society. Such mapping is based on a country's legal norms and its political discourse, which constructs structures through which the religious organizations can act. Such structures could be described as belonging to specific models describing the relationship between church and state. Silvio Ferrari, a professor of law and religion, maps such structures into three governing models. The first model is that of a *separation system*, where the state and religious communities are separated from each other – such as in the French laicity system. The second is called a *concordat system*, which is built on explicit agreements between state and church, such as in Spain. And the third system is called a *national church system* with established national churches, such as in Denmark or England (Ferrari 2002).

In the Montenegrin context, the relationship between the state and religious communities is not well described and there isn't a comprehensive legal framework in place. Various parties and religious communities strongly disagree on the matter and thus no new laws pertaining to religion have been passed since independence in 2006 despite a few failed attempts. The relationship between the state and the religious communities is therefore rather loose and only vaguely prescribed in the constitution and some minor by-laws on religious education, culture etc.

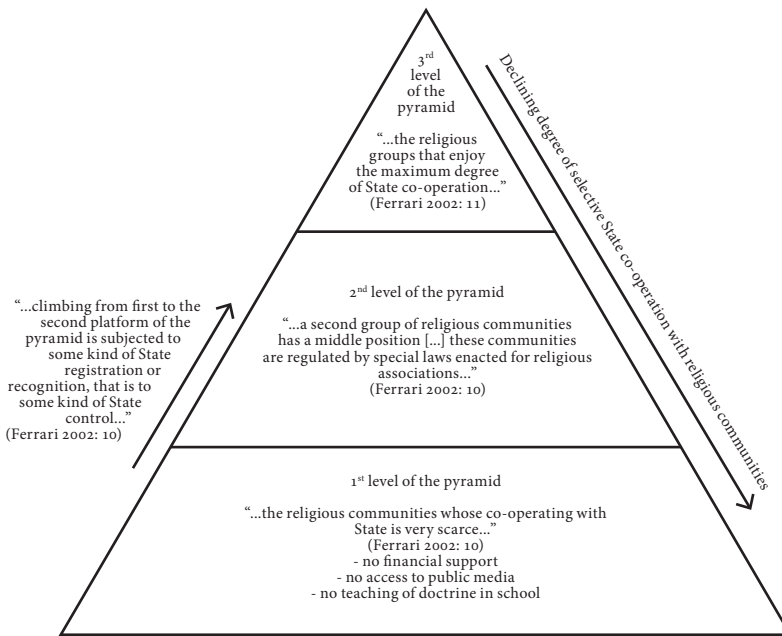
Montenegro's constitution (Ustav Crne Gore 2007) from 2007 is based on a Western model. Article 46 states that there is freedom of religion in Montenegro and that all "religious communities shall be separated from the state" (article 14). Article 14 explicitly declares the state to be secular. This is to some extent softened in other paragraphs where the constitution allows religious communities and individuals to exercise and express their religion as well as establish religious organizations with the support of the state. Religious organizations are also allowed to maintain contact with other religious organizations outside of Montenegro, such as the papal church. The by-laws on religion require that the religious communities register at a local police office, which will inform the Ministry of Interior about the registration. Being registered entitles organizations to own property, hold bank accounts and receive a tax exemption. There are twenty registered religious communities at the present time (International Religious Freedom Report 2015).

The Montenegrin state could, according to Ferrari's models, best be characterized as a separation system on a general level, where church and state have nothing to do with each other. However, the content of the some of the constitution's articles, some of the Montenegrin by-laws and the agreements between the state and some of the religious communities, points to the fact

that in practice the Montenegrin state formulates explicit agreements with religious communities.⁴ This suggests that on a practical level, the Montenegrin church-state relationship is rather a concordat system according to Ferrari's models. This mixture of models seems partly to be the unintended side-effect caused by the lack of a comprehensive legal system for religion.

To further qualify the characterization of the relationship between church and state, Ferrari also introduces a "pyramid of priority" (see fig 3). The pyramid depicts the degrees of relations to and cooperation with the state. It reveals a compartmentalisation of religious communities in a religious landscape. The basic logic of the pyramid is that religious communities can increase their cooperation with the state, which in turn will increase their influence and positional power while at the same time subdue them to greater state control (Vinding 2013).

Figur 3: The Silvio Ferrari pyramid of priority of selective state co-operation



Source: Vinding, 2013, p. 44

The pyramid could be applied to the Montenegrin context to shed some light on the positions of the various religious communities in relation to the state. Close to the state are in fact the Muslim, Roman Catholic and Jewish

⁴ See for example *The General Law on Education (Opšti zakon o obrazovanju i vaspitanju 2013)* and the formal agreement between the Roman Catholic Church and the Montenegrin state (*Catholics Temeljni ugovor Crne Gore i Svete Stolice 2011*). See Saggau, Pacariz & Bakrač, 2017.

communities in Montenegro. They inhabit the third level of the pyramid. These three communities have been able to form a direct agreement with the state about their rights, responsibilities and the resources that are available to them. Each of them is a minority religion and this status has perhaps provided them with the close link to the state. The Montenegrin government has been keen on preserving and protecting minorities in order to qualify for inclusion in the EU, and also as the government has heavily relied on the (non-Serbian) minority parties in parliament for support. The relation to the (non-Serbian) minorities has not been a major or controversial issue in Montenegro. The state's relationship to these minority religions must be understood to have undergone a process of general formalization after independence.

Most of Montenegro's other religious organizations including the CPC are to be classified in the second level of the pyramid. These organizations are registered and are allowed to own land and practise their religion, but none of them have a formal agreement with the state. Finally, the MML could be described as being between the second and the first level of the pyramid: on the one hand the MML are registered and exist under the same laws as the CPC, but on the other hand there are several unclear relations, especially when it comes to for example the right to property, religious education and the movements of clergy members between the former republics of Yugoslavia. Several high profiled cases, a series of lawsuits and accusations have, since the early 2000s, tainted the relationship between the current government and the MML (Morrison 2009, Radio Slobodan Evropa 2016). The degree of cooperation between the state and the MML could at best be described as minor and, likewise, the MML is only to a minor degree governed by the Montenegrin state. The MML is, however, subordinate to the Serbian Orthodox Church and therefore partly governed by the Serbian state in matters such as the education of priests etc. (Metropolitane 2013). Montenegro is still a young state and its legal framework is therefore still dynamic. The current government under the leadership of the Democratic Party of Socialists (mng.: Demokratska partija socijalista – hereon DPS) and the Montenegrin state are very much overlapping. Many state officials are party members. The individual relationship between various religious communities and high-ranking members of the DPS therefore forms the pyramid. This is unlike other states where these relations are much more formalized. The relations between the state and the communities – especially when it comes to the MML and the CPC – would very much change, if the opposition came into power.

In order to understand the CPC's place in Montenegrin society, one has to recall the two major religio-social characteristic of the CPC. They have first of all since their foundation been narrowly identified with the Montenegrin nationalist movement in all its aspects. The base of members is in Old Montenegro and this base only covers those that identify themselves

as “ethnic Montenegrins”, that is to say between 16 and 50% of all Montenegrins. Secondly, the CPC is therefore connected to pro-Montenegrin nationalist parties, such as the Liberals or the Social Democratic Party (mng.: *Socijaldemokratska partija*), and not directly to the DPS. This position partly explains why they inhabit the second level rather than the third in the pyramid of priorities. The CPC is not close enough to the DPS in order to obtain a status as a national church, and the DPS are very well aware that a substantial part of the electoral base (mainly moderate Montenegrins) are not members of the CPC. On the other hand, the DPS needs to recognize the CPC on some level because the DPS has historically relied on the Liberals and the Social Democratic Party to remain in power (Morrison 2009, p. 141). In contrast, the MML is identified as a branch of a Serbian cultural organization, which according to the DPS is alien to the Montenegrin state. This links the MML to the various Serbian-based opposition parties, which the DPS regards as its opponents. The MML and the DPS thus don't fully cooperate, which was put to the point in the discussion over the Lovćen site during the Njegoš jubilee in 2013 (Saggau 2017b).

This pyramid and state-models could be used to illustrate the dynamics in concrete situations like. The controversial Easter greetings to both the MML and the CPC by the DPS prime minister Đukanović in 2000. Traditionally, the head of the state would only greet the MML on Easter in the same manner as greetings are sent to the Muslim or Roman Catholic communities during their religious festivities. The seasonal greeting in 2000 was in contrast sent to both communities and was the first official greeting from a head of state to the CPC (Buchennau 2003). Shortly afterwards, it was followed by the official recognition of the CPC. The MML reacted harshly over this positive treatment of the CPC (Šistek 2010, p. 127). This event illustrates how the CPC moved up in the pyramid from the first to the second level expressed in the greeting and the recognition. They moved from being an unrecognized NGO into being a regulated religious community. The CPC became – on a social-religious and juridical-state level – an equal to the MML. The MML's harsh reaction was against the state's endorsing of the CPC rather than the greeting itself. It was against the juridical and societal equalization. The MML was not removed from the list of greetings, but kept their position in the pyramid. However, they were forced to share this position with the CPC and their positional power in the Montenegrin society became threatened.

The institutional form of the CPC

The CPC's place and role in Montenegrin society is partly determined by how its members, its supporters and its opponents view the organization. In the following paragraph, these perspectives on the CPC will be treated.

The core believers and most ardent supporters view the CPC as an ecclesial organization characterized by Christian liturgy, priests, worships and canon laws. Several writings, such as in Goran Sekulović article "*Crnogorska identitetska prava i slobode*" (2010), argue that the CPC is an Eastern Orthodox Church and that it is a natural prolongation of the "Mother" church of Montenegro from before 1920. Their main arguments and their implications in a theological sense are treated elsewhere (Saggau 2014), but they leave very little doubt about their view on the CPC. Likewise the views of the MML and other pro-Serbian organizations, newspapers etc. on the CPC are quite clear. In short the MML views the CPC as a tool for the Montenegrin nationalist movement used in order to challenge the MML's status in Montenegro. The metropolitan of the MML, Amfilohije Radović, has written a short text called "*The Church as the Pillar and Stronghold of the Truth – The Question of Autocephaly and the Church*", which expounded this position on a theological level. Remarkably, most studies of the CPC reach the same conclusion as the MML (see Morrison 2009, Šistek 2010, Kube 2012, Jelena Džankić 2013 & 2014a & 2014b & 2016, and Troch 2014).

Booth perspectives on the CPC reveal elements of its form. Its members and close supporters treat the organization as a church in a religio-sociological sense. On the other hand, as the mapping showed, the CPC plays a cultural-political role for the Montenegrin nationalist movement that the MML criticizes the CPC for. However, these two views on the CPC do not reveal all of its features because they are crafted either in positive support or a negative response.

In contrast it might be more fruitful to understand the CPC organization religio-sociologically as a "new" revivalist religion. This does not mean that their content is new, but rather that they are a new religious organization and therefore act as such. Eileen Barker, a religio-sociologist, points out that adolescent religious organizations act almost in similar patterns, because they are both religious and new (2013). The most noticeable characteristics are that they are small in numbers, that their interactions are on a face-to-face level and that they are centered around one leader (often charismatic). They are highly unpredictable and their core members are (as many first-generation religious) very enthusiastic (Barker 2013, p. 14). The CPC holds all these traits, positions and attitudes that are characteristic for new religious movements. The CPC is small, centered around one leader and its members are very enthusiastic. Its members often argue in a traditionalist, a nationalist or a revivalist pattern, which are often bound together and inseparable.

With Barker's point in mind, it makes therefore perhaps much better sense to describe the CPC as a religious organization characterized as both new and revivalist. On one hand, its "newness" defines its size, its form of organization and its core members. On the other hand, its "revivalism"

defines the reuse of Montenegrin cultural and religious heritage, which appeals to Montenegrin citizens characterized as nationalist or traditionalist.

A paper tiger or a resurgent church?

As the above socio-religious description and discussions point out, the CPC exists and enjoys to some extent the backing of the parts of the Montenegrin population. The CPC is still a minor community with only few churches, a minimum of ecclesial organization and clergy as well as a few faithful believers. It is hard to determine the extent of the impact of the community on the life of everyday Montenegrins, but it's safe to say that the CPC is very much embedded into the social life of Old Montenegro, the heartland of Montenegrin nationalism. Alice Forbess (2013) and Aleksander Zdravkovski and Kenneth Morrison (2014) note that especially in the period after the referendum in 2006 there has been a blooming of Montenegrin cultural awareness in Old Montenegro. The use of Montenegrin symbols, flags and songs has been predominant at social events. In that sense the CPC is part of a resurgent cultural and religious praxis for this group and in that area – which partly explains why its churches and claims to churches are limited to this area. Its place in this resurgent cultural movement is the background for its revivalist form of Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

The CPC has to some degree been successful in claiming a religious role in the new state. This role is secured through a status as a religious community in Montenegro, but this position does at the same time not really challenge the MML. Therefore the CPC's threat to the MML is still just a paper tiger, because physically, demographically and financially the MML overshadows the CPC. It is only on paper that the CPC can challenge the MML without the full backing from the DPS and subsequently the state. Such backing would require overwhelming support from the Montenegrin majority to the CPC, and that seems highly unlikely according to the polls. The DPS is therefore not interested in challenging the MML seriously on behalf of the CPC, because it is too risky both financially, politically and could endanger the peaceful coexistence between Serbs and Montenegrins in the state. The DPS favors to maintain the status-quo. Most analysts have labeled the CPC as a nationalist agent rather than a church (Šistek 2010) and have called the community "ein Elitenprojekt" (Kube 2012, p. 130). This is true in that sense that the CPC only appeals to an elite group of Montenegrin nationalists, but, as the demographics show, a larger group of Montenegrins do sympathize with the project. The CPC's religious praxis appeal to a small but key group of Montenegrins that shape the large frame through which Montenegrins interpret their culture, history, language, religion and ethnicity. This does not mean that the large group of Montenegrins would in the long run becomes members of the CPC, but rather that they live and understand themselves in relation to the supporters of the CPC. It is one-sided

to only portray the CPC as nationalistic, because it also contains traits of being a revivalist, new and even traditional form of religion. The CPC contains all of these features due to the cultural and religious context it draws on. The CPC is a nationalist organization, which its cultic praxis points towards, but this is not the whole picture. The veneration of national saints and holidays reveals both the nationalism, the revivalism and the traditionalism at play when Montenegrin culture, places and historical persons take prominence in the CPC.

Interestingly, the recent history of the CPC mirrors the social and political changes Montenegro has been through since the collapse of Yugoslavia. The birth of the CPC out of the turmoil of the civil war in 1991–1995 foreshadowed the watershed in Montenegrin politics in 1996, where the DPS elite set out on the road towards independence. The point of no return politically and religiously came in 2000, when the DPS leader both renounced the union with Serbia and greeted the CPC as an equal to the MML. The road towards independence was paved. And finally, the period since the declaration of independence has been used on stabilization of the Montenegrin state and the CPC.

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Article 3: The revival of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro from 1990

Following article 2, I began to gather further information about the branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro. I visited a selection of sites on field visits in 2018 and 2019, as well as observed a range of rituals, parades, liturgies, etc. I met with members of the Church in Cetinje, Ostrog, Kom and Bar. During 2018-2020, a heated debate about the law on religion in Montenegro took place, which uncovered additional layers in the media of the Church. Professor Vladimir Bakrač, who helped me and joined me during my field site visits in Montenegro, invited me to submit my work from 2018-2019 to *Sociološka Luča* – a journal of sociology in Montenegro – in the summer of 2019. The paper was published in a peer-reviewed form in late December 2019. In this paper, I tried to follow the development of the branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro since 1990.

Focus and results

The focus in this paper is on the branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro's development from 1990 in the Montenegrin republic that was a constituent state in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and from 2006 in the independent republic. Essential to this analysis was also a historical account of the church's development in the history of the region today called Montenegro, in order to identify the break and overlap with the broader history of the Serbian Orthodox Church. A way to uncover this was to compare the desecularization of Serbia after communism, described by Mirko Blagojević, with the same process in Montenegro.

The paper's main result is an account of the revival process of the Orthodox community in Montenegro, which so far has scarcely been documented.¹⁴⁸ Secondly, the key result is the comparison with the same Orthodox revival in Serbia, showing that there are significant breaks and different developments between Montenegro and Serbia. Most noticeable is the alienation between the ruling elite of Montenegro and the church hierarchy from 1996 onwards, in direct opposition to the case in Serbia where they are closely associated. In the case

¹⁴⁸ As noted in the state-of-the-art section most studies use the same rituals in order to make their point. The majority of empirical findings about Orthodoxy in Montenegro are in Bakrač. "Religioznost mladih u Crnoj Gori i njihov odnos prema nekim moralnim vrijednostima", 2011; Forbess. "Montenegro versus Crna Gora". 2013; Džankić. "When Two Hands Rock the Cradle". 2009; Morrison. *Montenegro*. 2009.

of Montenegro, this alienation endangers and threatens to halt the revival process of the church exemplified in the law on religion from 2019.

Subsequent research

The study notes a few central points about the relationship between the state and the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro during the revival process, which play a major part in the analysis in the following chapter and conclusion – see especially articles 5 and 7. The relationship between the state and the church is a decisive factor, which determines the scope of the historiographical form for both Orthodox communities. I was invited to Lund and Belgrade in the spring of 2020 to expand and explain my analysis of the Eastern Orthodox communities in Montenegro's relation to the state and the – at that time – current controversial law on religion from December 2019. Both conferences were postponed due to the pandemic, but I hope to be able to follow up on articles 2 and 3, in the context of the YSSSR in Serbia in late 2020.



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The revival of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro from 1990

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THE REVIVAL OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN MONTENEGRO FROM 1990

OŽIVLJAVANJE SRPSKE PRAVOSLAVNE CRKVE U CRNOJ GORI OD 1990. GODINE

APSTRAKT Nakon pada komunizma 1989. godine, vjerske zajednice širom Istočne Evrope obnovljene su i oživljene. Isti razvoj se može vidjeti i u Crnoj Gori, gdje su procvjetale i tradicionalne i nove vjerske grupe. Taj razvoj bi se mogao nazvati desekularizacijom bivših komunističkih društava. Ovaj rad istražuje oživljavanje jedne od glavnih vjerskih grupa, Srpske pravoslavne crkve (SPC) u Crnoj Gori, sa ciljem da se isprati i identifikuje njen razvoj nakon pada komunizma. Ovaj rad predstavlja raspravu o tome da li je oživljavanje SPC dovelo do desekularizacije crnogorskog društva na isti način kao što se to desilo u Srbiji.

Ključne riječi: Istočno pravoslavlje, Srpska pravoslavna crkva, Crna Gora, religija, odnos države i crkve

ABSTRACT After the fall of communism in 1989 religious communities has across Eastern Europe been rebuild and revived. The same development can be seen in Montenegro where both traditional and new religious groups has flourished. This development could be called a desecularization of the former communist societies. This paper investigates the revival of one of the major religious groups, the branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC), in Montenegro in order to track and identify the development in the particular community after the fall of communism. The purpose of the investigation is to discuss, if the revival of SOC has led to a desecularization of the Montenegrin society in the same manner, as the case is for Serbia.

Key words: Eastern Orthodoxy, Serbian Orthodox Church, Montenegro, Religion, State-church relationship.

The two newly erected Serbian Orthodox Cathedrals in Bar and Podgorica stands as strong symbols of the revival of the Church since the fall of communism. Alongside these massive buildings at least 600 churches and monasteries has been rebuild or build. The numbers of believers and supporters paint a similar picture. From 1990 until today, there has been an increase in support and approx. 50 pct. of the total population of Montenegro supports the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro. However, these symbols and numbers does not reveal, if the Montenegrin society has transformed from a largely atheistic society into a desecularized one. The current constitution still proclaims the state as secularized and religion is not allowed in public schools or institutions. It seems like the major structures of the state has not been affected by the revival of religion.

This article seeks to investigate the current state of secularization in the Montenegrin society with particular emphasis on the Orthodox majority population and the Serbian Orthodox Church's branch in Montenegro – the Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral and the two other Eparchies (from hereon under one as SOC).

A major part of this investigation is a historical, social and political clarification of the revival of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro from the late 1980s onwards. The article is divided into four sections. The first section is a short introduction to sources, methods and concepts. The second section outlines the historical background of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Montenegro. The third and major section is focused on the revival of the SOC, which leads to the concluding discussion of the desecularization of Montenegro post communism. The final section's discussion point is in the direction of the current debate about the new draft law on religion in 2019, which will only briefly be touched.

Method, source materials and main concepts

The approach to the sources and materials behind this paper is two-folded. First and foremost is the paper based on a religio-organizational mapping (Vinding 2013) of the SOC in Montenegro through field observations and informal on-site talks. This approach has been used to shape a social and historical cartography of the field – geographically, politically, socially, materially and religious – that the SOC in Montenegro inhabits. The results from this investigation are presented in the second and third section. The second approach has been a qualitative assessment of statements and communiques from the SOC supplemented with other public available materials. In combination, the field observations and the source materials has been used to describe and map the revival of the SOC in the Montenegrin society as a base to discuss the level of desecularization of the Montenegrin state.

Observations and sources

The field observations used as a base for this study has been collected in Montenegro in 2013, 2014, 2018 and 2019. The main observations are field notes describing the location and setting of churches, monasteries and other types of religious buildings, as well as the rituals and symbols attached to the sites. Secondly I have conducted informal discussions with local clergy members, NGOs and academics on the subject of religion in Montenegro. The discussions are not used as source materials directly in this study, but instead it has been used as guidance through the field and the public available sources. The sources referred to in this study are mainly information published by the metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral and their ecclesial news service *Svetigora* (Serb. Holy Mountain). The sources range from news article, communiques or various volumes printed by the Svetigora press. The sources from

SOC has been supplemented by other external sources from newspapers, the government or other types of media outlets.

Main concepts: religion and desecularization

The definition of religion is always a problematic one and entails many discussions and blind ends, as Detlef Pollack and Gergely Rosta (2017: 34–49) notes. Within the empirical study of religion in sociology, a functionalistic or pragmatic definition has often prevailed, because it creates some objective and outwards criteria to be used. This provide a base for a working definition, which allows the separation of different forms of human activity. The classical functionalistic definition is that religion should be seen in a broader societal context. Religion plays a role in societies as a system of belief, a base for identity creation – belonging – and finally how human behaves in certain situations. Each aspect of a religion is seen here as bound to human social active, identity creation, the formation of communities and finally the determination of right and wrong behavior. Such a definition has it flaws (se Pollack and Rosta 2017: 44–46), but will be used in this paper in order to distinguish between religion and secularization as well as between different form of religion (Islam, Orthodoxy and Catholicism etc.).

Closely connected to the empirical definition of religion is the idea of secularization. It is a main theory and finding of sociology of religion in the 21th century. Several studies showed how urbanization, industrialization, globalization and other modern transformation of societies would eventually affect the adherence to traditional religions and churches and led to the demise of religion. This is called the „secularization“ theory and idea of a „post-Christian Europe“, which seem for long certain, but has in the past twenty years been challenged substantially – both in Western and Eastern Europe were religion have reemerged on the societal scene (Pollack & Rosta 2017: 66–67). In the case of Serbia, Mirko Blagojević (2008) has noted that the Serbian society and other post-Yugoslav one has been characterized by the reemergence of religion and a line of changes in the population’s attitude towards religion. Blagojević notes that:

The tendency manifested itself in several ways: as a reaffirmation and a revitalization of the church, as a retraditionalization and a retotalization, as a revival of religion and church and the return of the holy, even as a reconquista and a religious renaissance. Sociologists were in favor of terming this tendency „desecularization“ (Blagojević 2008: 39)

This tendency is according to Blagojević not a short expulsion of religious fewer, but rather a:

a relatively stable and steady attachment of people towards religion and the church, and as a very tight intertwining of the religious (ecclesiastical) and the political (social), the process, which certain religious and social scientists tend to regard as clericalization of the contemporary Serbian society. (Blagojević 2008: 39)

At the heart of Blagojević analysis of the desecularization is a series of closely link features that points to or reveals to what extent a society has been affected by the revival of religions. Blagojević (2008: 41–43) highlights the following features as crucial:

1. The extent of religious (de-)monopolization or marginalization
2. The separation of the church and the state
3. The social significance of a religious community and if it is „politicized“
4. The adherence to conventional religious beliefs
5. The attendance to religious and church rituals

This description of the main features of desecularization will used as a point of departure for the final discussion of the level of desecularization of the Montenegrin state and society in broad terms.

Historical background

This part of the article will shortly contextualize the Serbian Orthodox Church's history in Montenegro, before returning to the main discussion of Orthodoxy in Montenegro. This contextualization provide a broad idea about the position of Orthodoxy and the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Montenegrin society.

In general Eastern Orthodoxy in Montenegro is a central part of the country's historical and cultural legacy. The Montenegrin predecessor states were governed for centuries as one of Europe's few theocratic states, which is one of the many reasons for the close historical relationship between the state and the Church before the communist takeover.

Christianity in Montenegro dates back to Roman or Byzantine times in the fifth century. From the eighth to the tenth century, Slavs slowly migrated to the Montenegrin coastline and hinterland, which were under Byzantine control. Slavic magnates assumed the leading positions and were elevated to governors or princes under the tutelage of Byzantium or the emerging Bulgarian Empire – and became slowly Christianized. A Slavic dynasty, the Vojislavljević, succeeded in fighting off Byzantium and the Bulgarians and thus formed a short-lived Christian Slavic kingdom, Duklja. In 1089, Constantin Bodin Vojislavljević (ca. 1072–1108) was elevated to king and the Bishopric of Bar was promoted to an archbishopric under the Catholic Church. The kingdom, however, crumbled after Bodin's death in 1108, paving the way for the Serbian dynasty of Nemanjić that formed the Serbian medieval kingdom controlling most of today's Montenegro. A local Eastern Orthodox Church was founded in Serbia under St. Sava (1174–1236), a brother of the first Serbian king. The Eastern Orthodox Church sought to counter the Latin influence along the coast and therefore established the Eastern Bishopric of Zeta with its seat at a monastery on Prevlaka Island. In 1346, the Serbian Archbishopric was elevated to a patriarchate and in turn, the Bishopric of Zeta turned into a metropolitan seat (Fine 1991: 36–38).

Following the defeat of the Slavic rulers and magnates by the advancing Ottoman and Venetian armies, the metropolitan seat was moved from the coast to the mountain, first to the Monastery of Kom and later to newly founded one in Cetinje. Ivan Crnojević (1442–90), the Duke of Zeta, founded the city of Cetinje in 1482 and a monastery, which since then has been the center for Eastern Orthodoxy in Montenegro. The clans of the Montenegrin Mountains resisted Ottoman control and were from 1516 onwards led by their Metropolitan, who also became their military leader since the Battle of Lještoplje in 1604. The Metropolitan became known as the *vladika*, assuming both secular and religious power. Formally, the Metropolitan was under the rule of the Serbian Patriarch of Peć, which was brought down in 1766 after several failed Serbian uprisings (Roberts, 2007: 116). The Metropolitans of Montenegro were since then often consecrated in Russia, which became a close ally to the Montenegrin rulers. The Metropolitan office was held by the Petrović-Njegoš clan from 1697 until 1855, when the Petrović-Njegoš heir chose to become prince so he could marry and thus left the ecclesial office to others. However, the prince and king of the Montenegrin Principality from 1855 onwards held great powers over the metropolitan seat, which was effectively a prolonging of the state (Roberts, 2007: 218).

In 1885, Metropolitan Mitrofan Ban (1841–1920) assumed office and was also consecrated in Russia and not Serbia, despite the fact that the Serbian Belgrade Patriarchate has just been formed. At the beginning of Mitrofan Ban's tenure, the Orthodox Church of Montenegro consisted of two Dioceses, 159 parishes with roughly 200 churches and 15 monasteries. The Montenegrin Mountain state was internationally recognized in 1878 and incorporated several provinces from the crumbling Ottoman Empire. It expanded to include new territories won in the Balkan Wars of 1912–13 amongst which was the historical seat of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarch in Peć and Decani in today's Kosovo. The Orthodox Church in Montenegro founded a new diocese under Bishop Gavriilo Dožić (1881–1950) to oversee all the new Northern provinces (Pavlovich, 1989: 141–42).

The Montenegrin Kingdom succumbed in the First World War and the Orthodox Church of Montenegro was subsequently dismantled in 1920 in order to be incorporated into the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate of Belgrade in the same manner as Orthodox Churches throughout what was about to become Yugoslavia. Bishop Gavriilo Dožić had in 1920 just become Metropolitan of Montenegro, which he remained until 1938 when he became Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church until his death in 1950. Gavriilo Dožić's elevation from Bishop of Peć to Metropolitan and later Patriarch reveals the close integration of the Orthodox Church in Montenegro into the Serbian Orthodox Church after the formation of the Kingdom of Croats, Slovenes and Serbs (later Yugoslavia) in 1918–20. Montenegro was abolished as a province within Yugoslavia in 1921 and the region was incorporated into the larger municipality (oblast) of Zeta. The Metropolitan seat persisted in the period.

When Nazi Germany invaded Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941, Patriarch Gavriilo Dožić sought refuge in Ostrog in Montenegro where he remained until he was arrested by the Germans on 23 April after which he spent the rest of the war in prison. He refused to co-operate with the Germans during the war and was therefore allowed to reassume office by the communist authorities after the end of the war. The Metropolitan of Montenegro from 1939 to 1945, Joanikije Lipovac, was not so fortunate. He was executed by the communists for collaboration (Stella 1979, 10), and was later canonized by the Serbian Orthodox Church in 2001 as a neo-martyr. In 1945, after the end of the war, Arsenije Bradvarević (1883–1963) was promoted to the office of Metropolitan of Montenegro, which he held until 1960. He was imprisoned by the communist authorities from 1954 and the church was consequently leaderless until 1960. The metropolitan seat was under great pressure and 3.547 hectares of land were confiscated during the Agrarian Reform of 1945–48 all the while Montenegrin separatism was encouraged to the clergy by the local authorities. In 1957, serious unrest spread among the clergy in Montenegro. They were too few, too poor and not very well educated, and had been left without a Metropolitan. The Patriarch visited the metropolitanate in June 1957 to meet with the leaders of the newly formed Socialist Republic of Montenegro in order to end the unrest. The government promised to improve things (Stella, 1979).

The imprisoned Metropolitan Arsenije was succeeded by Danilo Dajković in 1960 (1895–1993), and his tenure lasted from 1960 to 1991. Dajković, a Montenegrin by birth, had to face an immense challenge with few priests and a church falling apart. There were 184 parishes in Montenegro and only 18 full-time priests were able to serve the community according to figures from 1973. His powers were extremely limited and in 1971–72 the significant chapel devoted to the Vladika Petar II Petrović Njegoš' at Mount Lovćen was destroyed by the local authorities, who replaced it with a modernist mausoleum. There were no monks left in Montenegro in 1973 and several historical and symbolic monasteries fell into ruin (Stella, 1979: 302).

The revival of Serbian Orthodoxy

Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Metropolitan Radović Amfilohije (1938–) took office in Montenegro in 1991. He faced a challenge much similar to his predecessor, but he arrived at a watershed. As Blagojević (2008) has highlighted, religious communities across Yugoslavia became revitalized during this intense period – perhaps most noticeable in the SOC that assumed a stronger position in Serbia and those republics with a majority of Slavic speaking Orthodox population. Amfilohije has become one of the leading figures in this revitalization – not only in Montenegro, but across the lands in which the SOC are present.

A major outwards sign of this change is that around 50% of the population of Montenegro has backed the SOC since the early nineties (Saggau,

2017). Vladimir Bakrač's studies of religion in Montenegro (2012, 2011) shows that the number of believers are as well on the rise from the 1950s till 2011.

Table 1: Religious communities in Montenegro (believers in total of population in %)

Religious community	1953	1991	2003	2011
Orthodox	45,84	69,12	74,23	72,07
Islam	17,65	19,18	17,74	19,11
Roman Catholic	4,81	4,41	3,54	3,44
Atheist	31,46	1,60	0,96	1,24

Source: Bakrač 2012, p. 116

A recent study (Džankić, 2014) indicates that the Orthodox population of Montenegro is divided into three different „camps“. At the surface 2/3 support the Metropolitan and the SOC, while 1/3 supporting the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church founded in 1993. However, a poll suggest that almost 58% identify themselves as just „Eastern Orthodox“ without a national name (Serbian or Montenegrin), which indicates that they are perhaps not that occupied with the national affiliation of their local church they traditionally use. A conservative estimation is that around 50 pct. – roughly 300.000 – of the total population of Montenegro adheres to the SOC.

The revitalization of the SOC in Montenegro followed the same trajectories as other religious communities. An indication of this trend is found in Bakrač's (2011) study, which indicates that around 60 pct. of all Montenegrins accept all teaching of their religious community and almost 90 pct. think that one should believe in God. Bakrač' and Blagojević's other study (2013) indicates however, that the attendance to religious services and other sort of religious activities is not at the same high level. It is rather well below 50 pct. for all communities and especially for the Orthodox were very few attended Liturgy weekly. It seems to be that religion is a mode of „belonging“ rather than a mode of „behaving“. In the total numbers, the level of belonging has sky-rocked: numbers of believers rose from 45% of the total population of Yugoslavia in 1985 (Perica, 2002) to 91,6% of the Montenegrin population in 1991. The trend has as well affected the two other „traditional“ (as they are called in the old Montenegrin constitution prior to 2006) communities, The Muslim community and the Catholic Church. As table 1 show, the revitalization was not in a rise of adherence, but more in outwards activity and public practice for these two communities (see Pačarić, 2015)

The following section will go into details about the revival of the SOC in Montenegro, focusing on the revival of various parts of the SOC and how its position in the Montenegrin society has changed since 1991.

The role of the Metropolitan in Cetinje

The Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral as well as the SOC in general in Montenegro are first and foremost associated with the current Metropolitan Amfilohije, who has an immense influence in the Church and in Montenegro. In every aspect of the Church, he has played a crucial role – in different fields such as theology, politics, education and rebuilding of the church's infrastructure in Montenegro. In order to understand the revival of the SOC in Montenegro, one needs to understand Amfilohije, his background and his role in SOC and the Montenegrin society.

Amfilohije is a well-trained theologian. He took his Master of Theology at Belgrade's theological faculty in 1962 and studied abroad, both in Paris at the famous St. Sergius institute, Bern, Rome and Greece. One of the leading conservative Serbian theologians of the twentieth century, Father (later St.) Justin Popović (1894–1979), taught Amfilohije and influenced both his theology and his political views on Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbian politics and history in general (Buchenau, 1999: 11–15; Louth, 2015: 147). Amfilohije's theology can best be described as an Orthodox neo-conservatism influenced by the Neo-Patristic school (Paris-school) and he inherited ideas about slavophilism, sobornost, patristism, svetosavlje from Nikolaj Velimirović (1880–1956) and Popović (Buchenau, 2006). His views on theology and politics are aligned with what has often been characterized as the „pro-Russian“ wing of the Serbian Orthodox Church that sees Russia as a close spiritual and political ally and is skeptical of the „decadent“ West. An essential part of his academic and ecclesial life has been bound to Kosovo. Amfilohije was a leading member of the young and up and coming generation of theologians of the SOC in the 1980s. During this period he took part in the reawakening of the Serbian national continuous. He was one of the 21 priests that signed the plea for Kosovo in 1982. Years later he signed the letter of support for Kosovo in 1985. Both documents were essential in the renewed focus on Kosovo amongst the Serbs. Amfilohije took as well upon him a role in the Balkan Wars of the 1990s, and was characterized as one of the three leading members of SOC determining its position during the Milošević years (Tomanić, 2001).

However, the Metropolitan has often shown a pragmatic approach to political issues outside of Kosovo and to the language of the liturgy, and therefore doesn't fit into a strict characterization of the conservative wing of the Orthodox Church. An example is his support for the Montenegrin Prime Minister Đukanović during his and Montenegro's initial alienation from the Milošević regime in 1996–97 paving the way for Đukanović's control of the state apparatus (Morrison, 2009: 134–135). But Amfilohije's relation to Đukanović and his various governments is complex. Today Amfilohije is seen by many pro-Montenegrins as a controversial figure speaking for Serbian nationalism and threatening Montenegrin statehood. Đukanović and Amfilohije have become alienated from each other (Ramet, 2006: 264–268). In opposition, many Serbian-oriented Montenegrin citizens, parties and newspapers regard Amfilohije as

beacon for SOC and a protector of the Serbian cause in Montenegro (Morrison, 2009). A quick media search in Montenegrin Medias will quickly reveal that Amfilohije name and statements often reach the front pages and more than once has been the center of national attention or controversies in both Montenegro and Serbia. The current debate on a new law on religion in 2019 being a case in point.

Passing on the tradition: organization, education and media

During Amfilohije's tenure the organization, media outlet and the continual efforts of SOC to pass on its tradition through education has been strengthened. In this section the focus will be the on these parts of the Church.

The Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral led by Amfilohije is the main Orthodox Eparchy or Diocese in the state of Montenegro. It is divided into seven organizational units. These are a sort of Deanery, which in Serbian are called „Archpriests“ (Serb.: Arhijerejski protoprezviterijat) each led by their own Presbyter, Deacon or Archpriest. Besides the Metropolitan there exist two other Serbian Dioceses or Eparchies in the Montenegrin state. One of them is the Eparchy of Budimljansko-Nikšićki (Budimlje-Niksic) centered around the cities of Berane and Nikšić, which was made independent of the metropolitanate in 2001 and has been led by Bishop Joanikije (Јоаникије) since 2002. This eparchy covers most of the northern parts of Montenegro. The other is the Eparchy of Mileševa, seated in Prijepolje in Serbia, which was restored in 1992, but includes just a few parishes in the Montenegrin border region. It is currently led by Bishop Atanasius. Since 1991, the SOC in Montenegro has been reorganized to create a more linear network and relation between priest, monks, bishops and other offices, which is partly done in order to function more smoothly with a greater number of clergy. The revival of the two „old“ Eparchies beside the metropolitanate is partly due to the same reason, but does as well reveal a symbolic „resurrection“ of bishoprics long gone. A practical side is that the number of high-ranking SOC clergy in Montenegro has risen.

In relation to the Church's educational efforts in Montenegro the actives are threefold. The church run a network of Sunday schools, a religious secondary school, and apply constant political pressure on the state in order to have religious education introduced in Montenegrin schools. In Montenegro „education is secular“, as the 2013 Montenegrin General Law on Education (Mng. Opšti zakon o obrazovanju i vaspitanju 2013) states in article 5. The metropolitanate has been advocating for a more traditional religious education system in which each denomination is allowed to teach pupils about their parents' faith. The government has so far refused this (Ramet, 2006). SOC runs a secondary school in Cetinje, next to the seat of the Metropolitan. This school was reopened in 1992, after being closed down during communism, and is today the main center for Eastern Orthodox education in Montenegro. It holds close ties to the Serbian Orthodox Church and is one of nine of this type of „theological school“ (Serb.: *Bogoslovija*) that are run by SOC. The school is a part of the

Serbian school system and it is therefore under the supervision of the Serbian government's office for churches and religious communities (Saggau et al 2020). The students' educational qualifications can be used inside Serbia and provide access to the theological faculties at Serbian Universities. On several occasions, the school, its pupils and teachers have been harassed and the school damaged by opponents of the SOC in Montenegro. (Saggau et al., 2020).

The metropolitanate also founded their own information center called „Svetigora“ (Holy Mountain) named after the sacred waterfall at the Morača monastery. This center publishes both information letters and books on issues pertaining to the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro. In 1998 the information center launched its own radio station and its website is today the main source for all communication from the metropolitanate. Svetigora has become the central coordinated outlet for the metropolitanate and SOC in Montenegro.

The rebuilding of the Metropolitan

A major part of the revival of the SOC is the rebuilding and renovation of churches and monasteries. According to biography of Metropolitan Amfilohije, his tenure has been „the most important architectural epoch in the history of these areas“ (Svetigora, 2019). In the book *Renewal and construction of monasteries and temples in Montenegro 1990–2010* (Svetigora, 2010) a detailed guide of the renovations is available and it is estimated that 569 church buildings have been restored. According to the church, the figure has today risen to 650.

Perhaps the two most central and visible of these building projects are two new cathedrals, the first of which was built in the capital Podgorica and opened in 2013, and the second in the port city of Bar, which was inaugurated in 2016. These two major buildings have become symbols of the SOC's visible strength in two central cities and are often used for open-air services. Likewise, the metropolitanate restored several central monasteries, many of which are now once again populated by monks. According to the church, the metropolitanate alone has 23 monasteries for women and 34 for men without counting the two other Eparchies in Montenegro. An essential part of this ever-growing religious infrastructure are the monasteries of Cetinje and Ostrog, which are regarded as the most sacred. Cetinje, which is the metropolitan's seat, is where the casket of the canonized Montenegrin Metropolitan and ruler Petar I's is open for the public and a large museum with many religious artifacts can be visited. The main artifacts are from the Montenegrin Metropolitans, but the museum also has other historical artifacts on display such as the Cetinje Octoechos, which is a printed Orthodox liturgy and one of the first Cyrillic scripts ever printed, dating from 1494. In Ostrog, the home of the canonized St. Basil of Ostrog or St. Vasilije (Sveti Vasilije Ostroški 1610–71), the metropolitanate has enlarged the lower parts of the monastery and made the upper part more accessible so that it can welcome a larger crowd of pilgrims. Ostrog is regarded as one of the sacred places in Eastern Orthodoxy and draws pilgrims from the entire Orthodox world.

Besides these two centers, monasteries like Ćelija Piperska, Ždrebaonik and Donji Brčeli in central Montenegro, Stanjevići and Podmaine monasteries near Budva and the ones on Lake Skadar (Kom, Beška, Moračnik, Vranjina, Kosmač) as well as many others, such as Dajbabe outside the capital, have been rebuilt or restored, and also draw pilgrims and tourists alike. These sites all play a part in attracting more pilgrims (and funds) thus enlarging the religious, cultural and political power base of the metropolitanate. This has also entailed a modernization of monastic life, which is visible in the renovation of the isolated monastery Kom that now has its own solar plant, souvenir shop and speedboat. Other more traditional parts of monastic life have been revitalized as well, such as being able to provide for oneself. In Donji Brčeli, the monastic buildings are surrounded by fruit and vegetable gardens in order to feed the clergy. The traditional production of local honey and wine are often also a part of monastic life and provide sources of income when the produce is sold to pilgrims and visitors.

Several hundreds of minor churches have been restored. Some of this restoration has been strongly criticized by Montenegrin nationalists and the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church. The main criticism levied against the metropolitanate is that the many renovations are destroying the authentic



Twin churches in Raičevići village, Njegushi, March 2018. Author's photo.

Montenegrin part of the shrines. An example of this is the events in Tivat in Kotor Bay in 2018–2019, where the metropolitanate renovated the baptistery in the Monastery of Holy Archangel Michael in Prevlaka Island. This renovation became a governmental issue in 2018–2019 and on 2 April 2019, police officers, a demolition crew, clergy members and Montenegrin nationalists met face to face in front of the monastery. The standoff ended without the demolition of the renovated baptistery taking

place, but on 4 April 2019 the minister responsible published an open letter in which he declared the renovation illegal (Montenegrin Government, 2019).

Another contested area is the churches of the Njegushi region (the villages of Raičevići, Kopito, Njeguši, Erakovići, Dugi Do, Vojkovići, Vuči Do,

Kućišta). Njegushi is the historical home of the Petrović-Njegoš rulers and one of the Montenegrin nationalist movement's strongholds. There are several old churches in the villages of Njegushi and the metropolitanate has renovated some churches while the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church has put up metal signs in order to stress their ownership of other churches. The twin churches in Raičevići clearly bear such a sign. Despite the pro-Montenegrin sentiment of the local population, the Metropolitan holds frequent services in the area, but the ownership and access to the churches are disputed. A peculiar case in point is the village church Sveti Đorđe in Erakovići just across the street from Njegoš', Montenegro's famous poet and ruler, childhood home. The church bears a sign claiming the church as a Montenegrin Orthodox One, while other sources speak of it as SOC's property. Despite the controversy over the church, the church was abandoned, on the brink of ruin and the Iconostasis falling apart when visited in 2018. It seemed unused. The dispute seems to be more on paper than on the actual property in this case.

The revival of communities and rituals

Alongside the rebuilding of churches, cathedrals and monasteries as well as the strengthening of religious infrastructure, the metropolitanate has also revived and instituted Orthodox rituals across the country. These rituals have become the central place for the believers to meet and for the clergy to maintain their societal position. The rituals serve both to strengthen the community and as visible signals to broader society stressing the renewed role of the Metropolitan.

One of these new rituals is the commemoration at St. George's Church (Sveti Đorđe) in Momišići on a hillside in the capital. On 26 March, the Metropolitan serves a liturgy commemorating the death of 40 children and two priests that were burned alive by the Ottoman forces in 1688 as retribution for the Montenegrin clan's killing of Ottoman troops. These neo-martyrs were canonized in 2012 and the church was restored in 1995 (Novosti, 2012). The church is rather small so the main part of liturgy takes place outside of the church and on the street in front of it. In 2018, more than a hundred people attended the liturgy. In events like this, the renovation of the



A parade for St. Jovan Vladimir in front of St. Jovan Vladimir Cathedral, Bar, 4 June 2019. Author's photo.

church, the commemoration of the deaths and the revival of the ritual pertaining to them all reinforce each other.

The most extensive ritual revival and rebuilding is related to St. Jovan Vladimir (d. 1016) and the area around the port city of Bar. In the eighties, locals revived a ritual devoted to Jovan Vladimir in which the Andrović family from the village of Velji Mikulići carried a holy cross to the top of Mount Rumija on Pentecostal day. The ritual had been discouraged by the communist authorities between 1959 and 1984. But from the early nineties, the ritual was extended and gathered an increasing number of people with the help and participation of the Metropolitan. In 2005, the metropolitanate built a small metal church at the top of the Rumija, a controversial building which led to the so-called „Rumija affair“ between the state and the various religious communities (Kuburić, 2014, SOC, 2005). In short, several national and religious groups has claims on Rumija and the government tried to maintain a balance by simply decaling the site unfit for buildings, which means that the metropolitanate's church should be dismantled. It is after almost 15 years still standing and being a visible symbol of the SOC's ability to claim public space in Montenegro.

The celebration of Jovan Vladimir reached its height in 2016 when the new cathedral in Bar was opened and devoted to him on the 1000 year anniversary of his death. Prominent members of other Eastern Orthodox Churches took part in its inauguration, as the case was with the Cathedral in Podgorica back in 2013. Since 2016, there has been a yearly liturgy in Bar with the revealing of the Andrović cross and a parade with icons through the city on 4 June veneration Jovan Vladimir (Svetigora, 2016). Part of the expanding celebration of Jovan Vladimir are newly revived liturgies held on 7 July at the former episcopal seat in the city of Šas ruins and at the Prečista Krajinska monastery ruins. Both sites were essential parts of Jovan Vladimir's historical realm, but are today ruins in predominantly Albanian and Muslim areas. The local inhabitants see Metropolitan Amfilohije's liturgies as intruding on premises that belongs to them. Jovan Vladimir is also celebrated by the Albanians as one of their saints, and he is even held in high regard by the local Muslims. Consequently, in July 2018, the Metropolitan was met by Albanian protests in Šas (SOC, 2018).

The ambiguous relationship to the state

The relationship between the Montenegrin government and the SOC in Montenegro is a complex one. The legal framework for SOC in Montenegro is flawed and the metropolitanate are not formally recognized by the state, but only dealt with at a practical level (Venice Commission, 2019). The current framework for religious communities in Montenegro dates back to 1977, and the only very broad legal umbrella for the religious organizations could be found in constitution from 2007. The Constitution states that there is freedom of religion in Montenegro (article 46) and that all „religious communities shall be

separated from the state“ (article 14). Velibor Džomić, the head of the Metropolitan’s legal council, notes in his analysis (2009) of the legal framework for religion in Montenegro that it is only through a vast series of other types of laws, on holidays, schools etc., that religious communities is dealt with. SOC has often called for a clarification of the framework and the relationship with the state – especially on issues, such as the right to property and restitution, religious freedom, autonomy and self-determination of churches (Šijaković, 2009). The Montenegrin government has in 2016 and again in 2019 proposed two new draft laws on religion that has been heavily criticized by the metropolitanate. Negotiations in parliament and with the SOC about a new framework is currently held in the fall of 2019.

The uncertainty of the religious framework and the metropolitanate’s legal position has been the center for a series of conflict between the government, SOC and pro-Montenegrin movements, NGO’s and the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church. The majority of conflicts are about property rights and the recognition of SOC or the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church (see (Morrison 2009: 128–134; Morrison et al. 2014, Šistek, 2010; Saggau, 2017; Ramet 2006: 264–268). Two of the major conflicts pertain to the construction of the metal church on Rumija (Pavicevic et al., 2009) and the reconstructions of the baptistery in in the Monastery of Holy Archangel Michael in Prevlaka Island outside Tivat in 2018–2019. Another line of conflicts has been about SOC’s clergy’s right to mobility and residence permit, which has been intensified in late 2018 where the SOC claimed that more 50 members clergy has been either dismissed from the country or not allowed entrance (Orthodox Christians web, 2018). There has as well been clashed between the Metropolitan and the government about the recognition of Kosovo’s independence. In many of these clashes, Metropolitan Amfilohije and high-ranking members of the state (president or prime minister) has been in direct confrontations, which has even led to a trial against the Metropolitan for „hate-speech“.

A desecularized Montenegro?

As showed in the previous section, the SOC in Montenegro has without doubt been revitalized in the past thirty years in all its aspects. But if we return to Blagojević’s (2008) concept of desecularization it becomes clear that this revitalization has not led to a desecularization of the state as such. The state and the church is still separated and religion is still denied a place in the government, the public school system and other central aspects of administration. No religious community has been able to „monopolized“ religion in the public space in the same manner as the SOC has in Serbia, which partly can be explained by the constant confrontation between the government and the SOC as well as the rivalry between SOC and the unrecognized Montenegrin church. However, the SOC has by all means returned to the broad society as a major cultural and political player, and is a significant institution supported by half of

the total population. In terms of the SOC's more internal affairs, the religious infrastructure has been strengthened and the adherence of its members to traditional religious beliefs increased since 1991. This is perhaps not as significant in the numbers of attendance to weekly Liturgy, but at mass rallies, open air ceremonies and a wide range of church activities the number of attendance is high. It is hard to imagine the filled streets of Bar during the procession of Jovan Vladimir in June or the long line of pilgrims at Ostrog during the communist period.

In conclusion, the state of Montenegro is perhaps not desecularized in the same manner as in Serbia, but the civil society is. Religion and noticeably the SOC has returned to political life and taken an open and public visible role, such as in Serbia. There are many reasons behind this development in Montenegro as several studies have showed (Morrison, 2009; Šistek, 2010; Saggau, 2017; Ramet, 2006; Džankić, 2014), such as the continuation of the ruling elite in Montenegro from 1989 and onwards as well as the gradually alienation between the elite in Serbia and Montenegro leading to the Montenegrin independence in 2006. A central reason might also be the pluralization of religion in Montenegro and the internal divisions amongst the Orthodox community, which has hinted the monopolization of religion in Montenegro and thereby halting the desecularization of the state. There has been no obvious „state“ religion, such as in Serbia, North Macedonia and Croatia and therefore no creation of a state sanctioned framework for a majority religion. The direct opposite has happened in form of the lack of any homogenous and transparent framework for religion, despite the revival of religion in civil society.

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Chapter IV: Analysis of Orthodox historiographical practice and religious ideology in Montenegro

This chapter contains the four main analytical articles of this thesis. Each article revolves around the analysis of a certain saint, and the cult and places related to them. Article 4 focuses on what I have called the cult of Duklja, which contains rulers from the Vojislavljević, Balšić and Crnojević dynasties from the ninth to the fifteenth century mainly revered by the Montenegrin Orthodox Church. Article 5 follows with a focus on the cult of Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrović-Njegoš (1813-1851) and its major site, the Lovćen Mountain. The article analyzes the Serbian Orthodox Church's – mainly Metropolitan Amfilohije's – contestation of the current monument and the church's claim on Njegoš. Article 6 doesn't focus narrowly on a cult, but rather on the relationship between Eastern Christianity and war. This is done through an analysis of Metropolitan Amfilohije's interpretation of the history of St. Petar I Petrović-Njegoš (1784-1830). The analysis provides insight into the historiographical religious ideology of Metropolitan Amfilohije. The final article 7 focuses on the cult of St. Jovan Vladimir (d. 1016) and four sites related to his cult. These four sites and the infrastructure of memory attached to them are studied as a form of historiographical practice.

Article 4: The Return of Duklja: The Montenegrin Orthodox Church's Recasting of History

This article was initially presented at the XXI World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) at Erfurt University on 23-29th August 2015. The paper bore a similar title and was during 2016 made into an article, which was significantly revised in 2018/19 after peer-review and discussions with the editors. The article became part of the anthology *Coping with Change – Orthodox Christian Dynamics between Tradition, Innovation, and Realpolitik* (2020), which was edited by Vasilios N. Makrides and Sebastian Rimestad.

The article contains my first substantial work on the content of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church's notion of their past and its ideological roots. The work was originally preliminary to this thesis and contributed to the shaping of its approach towards historiography and nationalism. The original paper built on informal talks with members of the church in 2013 and 2014 in Montenegro and subsequent analysis of their church magazine. In the 2018-2019 redrafted version, substantial new sources were added and its analytical framework was sharpened.

Focus and results

The main focus of this paper is on the content of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church's claim on an ancient and medieval root for their church. A series of articles from the church's magazine are analyzed in order to distill what their claim on the "Duklja" past contains, and these claims are then historically assessed. The final part contains a discussion of the historiographical root for the notion of the Duklja past, in which it is concluded that the church has revived a certain Montenegrin national notion of self deriving from the inter-war period after the fall of the Kingdom of Montenegro. In the conclusion, the article highlights how the Montenegrin Orthodox Church is working through a process of differentiation in which all that is "Serbian" is rejected from the "genuine" Montenegrin. The long rule of the Serbian kings over medieval Montenegro is argued to be violent and oppressive, despite the fact that Eastern Orthodoxy and many of the most important monasteries in Montenegro were founded during this period.

Subsequent research

Following this paper, articles 2 and 3 were written, which deal with the empirical and social form of the church. The deeper theological reasoning and the concrete process of differentiation as a form of practiced historiography will be further discussed in chapters V and VI. A complete picture of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church's approach to and interpretation of history would

have needed a more complete section on the church's interpretation of the theocratic rule of the prince-bishops (vladika) of Montenegro, who ruled Montenegro from the sixteenth to the end of the nineteenth century. However, the basic historiographical interpretation of the "Duklja" and "Vladika" periods is similar.

Sebastian Rimestad & Vasilios N. Makrides (eds)

Coping with Change

Orthodox Christian Dynamics between Tradition,
Innovation, and *Realpolitik*



PETER LANG

The Return of Duklja: The Montenegrin Orthodox Church's Recasting of History

Emil Hilton Saggau

A picture printed in 2012 in *Lučindan*, the Montenegrin Orthodox Church's (henceforth MoOC) magazine, shows a religious procession. In it, two men carry icons of two local medieval magnates and behind them walks Metropolitan Mihailo, the head – or “Vladika” – of the MoOC (secular name: Miras Dedić).

This picture shows a central religious transformation, which started in the early 1990s within the Montenegrin state. Montenegro has been the scene for the revitalisation of a MoOC after a bitter feud between pro-independence Montenegrins and the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral (in Serbian: *Mitropolija Crnogorsko-Primorska*) during the breakup of Yugoslavia. The MoOC has tried to transform, adapt, and rewrite the history of Montenegro to fit into its claim for an independent religious status detached from the Patriarchate of Belgrade and the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC). This reshaping is partly based on the revival of a “Dukljan” religious identity linked to the medieval Slavic state known as Duklja (in Latin: *Dioclea*),¹ which is claimed to have been religiously and culturally independent from the Serbian medieval state known as Raška. This claim is bluntly put across in the picture as the two icons depict Prince Jovan Vladimir and Count Ivan Crnojevići, who were both rulers of the historical region of Duklja. In the picture, they are elevated into sainthood and portrayed as the cultural and religious medieval pillars of the MoOC's “Dukljan” identity.

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1 The state Duklja, known in Greek as Διοκλεία and in Latin as *Dioclea*, was originally a Roman city, founded outside the current Montenegrin capital Podgorica in the Zeta valley. An archbishop resided in the city Dioclea that was destroyed during several wars between 700 and 1000. The last recorded bishop left the city after its destruction in 980. The Archdiocese of Diocleia is today a titular Metropolis in the Eastern Orthodox Church under the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, currently held by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware. See Vojislav D. Nikčević, *Monumenta Montenegrina – Arhiepiskopije Duklja i Prevalitana* [Montenegrin Monuments – The Archbishopric of Duklja and Prevalitana], Podgorica 2001, 240–242.

Article 5: A Shrine for the Nation: The Material Transformation of the Lovćen Site in Montenegro

In October 2013, during my field visit at the end of my master, I visited the Lovćen site. A few days after my visit, the then prime minister of Montenegro (now president), Milo Đukanović, headed a celebration of Njegoš at the very same site. It sparked my interest. Clergy members from the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro discussed the subject with me in 2013 and forwarded materials on the issue, which became the key sources for this article. The sources touch on the larger discussion of Njegoš's heritage which was discussed in detail by Andrew Wachtel.¹⁴⁹ At the Nordic Conference for Sociology of Religion held in Copenhagen in 2014, I presented my initial analysis of the site. The analysis discussed the materiality of the site and the steps that had been taken in order to secularize it. The paper was in 2015 submitted to the journal *Material Religion*, but rejected due to its focus on secularization. The reviewers suggested that it was rather a competing form of religiosity in which nationalism played a great role. The paper was rewritten and submitted in 2017 to the *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, who published it the same year with minor remarks.

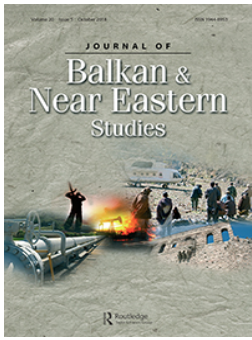
Focus and results

The focus is mainly the site of Lovćen and its material transformation, but this focus points back to the wider discussion about Njegoš, his legacy and literary works, at its height in 2013. In this context, the Lovćen site becomes the place from which the subject of the cult of Njegoš and its establishment in the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro is unpacked. This is mainly due to the highly loaded content of Metropolitan Amfilohije's letter to the president of Montenegro about the site. In this letter, he expounds on both the material form and deeper ideology in the debate concerning Njegoš. The letter and debate are a strong example of what de Certeau calls the practice and religious ideology of historiography – and the analysis, together with the one in article 7, brings major insights into the material or practiced form of historiography in the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro.

¹⁴⁹ Wachtel. "How to use a classic: Petar P. N. in the Twentieth Century". 2004; Wachtel. *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation*, 1998.

Subsequent research

This study was my first material analysis, and was then later followed by the one in article 7, which shares many of the same theoretical characteristics. The debate concerning Njegoš, his cult and his legacy could easily have been the subject of an entire thesis. I have chosen for that not to be the case, because much has already been written about it, and because other places and saints in Montenegro are important as well. However, I discovered how little has actually been written about Njegoš's theology – and it is often very poor. In article 6 and the discussion that follows in chapter VI is my initial attempt to bring Njegoš back into the larger debate about Eastern Orthodox Theology. A debate he rightfully belongs to as one of the great Orthodox writers of the Romantic era much like Khomyakov.



A Shrine for the Nation: The Material Transformation of the Lovćen Site in Montenegro

Emil Hilton Saggau

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A Shrine for the Nation: The Material Transformation of the Lovćen Site in Montenegro

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ABSTRACT

Mount Lovćen holds significant cultural, political and religious symbolism in Montenegro, especially due to the fact that the mountain is the last resting place of the prince-bishop and national poet Petar II Petrovich-Njegoš (1813–1851). In the twentieth century the grave of Njegoš has undergone profound material transformations. Each of these transformations has led to heated debates about the site's religious and national significance. During 2013, in the context of the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Njegoš' birth, the debate flared up again. This article approaches the recent discussion over the site through an in-depth and fieldwork-based study of the sacralization and the religious reinvention of the Lovćen mountain and monument. The abrupt material, semantic and practical transformations of the site in the twentieth century suggest a profound process of sacralization, which this article seeks to examine. This study of the case of Lovćen provides new insight into political contestation of identity from the point of view of material religion, and allows us to nuance our understanding of the relationship between nationhood and religion as it is materialized in monuments, places and memories in Montenegro since the independence of the country in 2006.

Introduction: Lovćen—the Black Mountain

In October 2013, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Montenegro's former ruler, bishop and poet Petar II Petrovich-Njegoš (1813–1851) was celebrated. A central element in this celebration was a speech by the prime minister of Montenegro, Milo Đukanović, in front of the grand mausoleum devoted to Njegoš on the top of Mount Lovćen. The event became a demonstration of the mausoleum's place in the ongoing cultural and religious negotiation of the national and religious consciousness of the Montenegrin population between the state and the local branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro.¹ The government and the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro have been locked in a decade-long strife over the national and religious character of the Montenegrins for decades. In short, the strife is over whether or not the Montenegrins are a separate culture, nation, ethnicity and even Orthodox community or a part of the greater Serbian nation, ethnicity, culture and Orthodox Church. On the one side the government—along with other NGOs—supports

Article 6: The beast from the abyss – a contemporary Serbian Orthodox historiographical response to war

In 2015, I participated at a conference on religion and violence held by University of Vienna in Tetovo, North Macedonia. I gave a paper on the Eastern Orthodox approach to violence and war, which used among others a text from the Metropolitan Amfilohije on war and Montenegro's history as an example. My text was later published in an anthology edited by Ednan Aslan.¹⁵⁰ In 2017, during the YSSSR conference outside Belgrade, I had a lengthy discussion with Yuri Stoyanov, who had published a thorough analysis of Orthodox texts on violence and war along with a new introduction and translated materials.¹⁵¹ I found that my initial analysis needed further development. In the summer of 2017, I gave a lecture on the subject at a seminar on war and Christianity hosted by my advisor Carsten Selch. A major part of the participants were former chaplains, who had been stationed with Danish troops in Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia during the wars in the 1990s. This lecture and discussion with the chaplains and Selch became the point of departure for this paper, which was published in October 2019 in *Studia Theologica – Nordic Journal of Theology*.

Focus and results

The focus in this article is mainly the Serbian Orthodox Church's position on war discussed in close relation to the so-called Cyrilian interpretation of war. This position was expressed in Metropolitan Amfilohije's text published shortly after the peace in Bosnia in 1995. Amfilohije's text is remarkable as a theological text, but very representative of his general work. The text is not only about war, but it reflects on the theme through a discussion of Montenegro's history. The text is therefore perhaps one of the prime examples of Metropolitan Amfilohije's historiographical ideology. The primary results of this article are therefore the analysis of Amfilohije's perception of history and how it is related to not only the Serbian Orthodox tradition, but the Eastern Orthodox tradition in general. It is first of all characterized by being a neo-patristic synthesis (answering today's questions by turning back to the Fathers of the

¹⁵⁰ Saggau. "Eastern Orthodox positions on violence". 2017.

¹⁵¹ Yuri Stoyanov. "Eastern Orthodox Christianity." In N. Hartwell, G. Reichberg, and H. Syse (eds.). *Religion, War, and Ethics: A Sourcebook of Textual Traditions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 164–234.

Church), and secondly, by its deployment of a classic hermeneutic strategy from the mystical teachings of the Church Fathers and Amfilohije's predecessor Njegoš.

Subsequent research

The results of this research are the background for the contextualization of the modern Serbian Orthodox historiographical ideology within its own tradition and the Eastern Orthodox one, discussed further in chapter V. The initial results were discussed with Andrew Louth in Cambridge during a conference in 2019, who suggested among other things the need to take the modern Serbian theologian St. Justin Popović into account. Popović's work, which is essential to understand his pupil Amfilohije, is not taken into consideration in this paper, and this is the paper's major weakness. In chapter VI the relation between Njegoš's, Velmirović's, Popović's and Amfilohije's approaches to history is expanded upon.



The beast from the abyss

Emil Saggau

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The beast from the abyss

A contemporary Serbian Orthodox historiographical reflection on war

Emil Saggau

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The dissolution of Yugoslavia in the nineties brought a series of armed conflicts, civil wars and outright war to the Balkan Peninsula. The Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) was entangled in these conflicts. The SOC's involvement in these wars has sparked an academic discussion about the role of religion, especially that of the SOC, in these conflicts. This discussion has so far mainly been social scientific in its scope and preoccupied with nationalist movements and political elites, and has therefore not sought to investigate the SOC's own reflection on the war. Secondly the discussion of the SOC's role has been on some level detached from the broader discussion of Christianity's relation to war and violence. This article will provide an in-depth study of a selection of Serbian Orthodox reflections on war and its relationship to Christian, and in particular Eastern Orthodox, tradition, bringing forth ways in which parts of the SOC views war and violence.

The cover of Serbian journalist Milorad Tomanić's book *The Serbian Church and War* features a picture of a Serbian clergyman holding a machine gun. The picture was one of the iconic images from the Bosnian War (1992–95). The picture is an extreme embodiment of how closely the Serbian Orthodox Church (from here on SOC) was entangled in the war in the various former Yugoslav republics, as Tomanić's book describes in detail. In Tomanić's book, the SOC Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral, Amfiliohije Radović, is pointed out as one out of three metropolitans who played a central role in SOC's involvement in these wars. Radović, being a highly trained theologian, a high-ranked metropolitan and a key figure in SOC, has reflected on his and SOC's role. This first-hand account provides deep insights into a contemporary

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Article 7: Hallowed be thy war helicopter – forging and forgetting the past

The initial idea for this article was developed in a paper to a Ph.D. class with the title “Administrations of Memory” organized by Sara Dybris McQuaid in December 2017. Following the discussion at the class, the theoretical groundwork was established and further supporting material was gathered in Montenegro in April 2018 and June 2019.

A paper was presented in the spring of 2019 during an internal seminar on church history at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen. It was slightly adjusted and presented again at a League of European Research Universities conference on theology at Cambridge University in September 2019. The article was redrafted in Autumn 2019 and submitted to the *Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* in early 2020.

Focus and results

This article’s initial focus was on the cult of St. Jovan Vladimir and the Rumija tin church. Following the Ph.D. class in 2017, I chose to approach the case through memory studies, because it seemed like a cult of remembrance. The field observations, however, drew my attention towards the neglected sites in the area, which also belonged to the historical cult of St. Jovan Vladimir. I therefore developed an interest in the reasons, practical, sociological and religious, for why some sites were rebuilt and others neglected. This is the focus of this paper.

This article concludes that there are a few decisive factors that make or break the creation of a cult and the places attached to it. It is not a question of which sites are most holy or have historically been the center of a cult. It is rather other factors, such as topography, demography and the political landscape, that become decisive. As such, this article is this thesis’ major contribution, together with article 5, to the study of historiographical practice.

Subsequent research

In this study, I became aware of the multitude of receptions of St. Jovan Vladimir – and not only within religious texts spanning across several different church cultures in the Eastern Orthodox world, but also in popular Serbian culture as well. The entire history of the St. Jovan Vladimir cult and the reasons and patterns behind its spread and reception across nationalities and even religions is still a largely undiscovered territory. Furthermore, it is clear that the history of Suacium is almost undiscovered as well, and the archeological survey of the site has raised more questions than it has answered. I hope to look further into this with the Montenegrin cultural heritage institutions one day.

Hallowed be thy war helicopter Restricted due to copyrights

Forging and forgetting the cult of St. Jovan Vladimir in contemporary Montenegro

Abstract: After the fall of communism, the Serbian Orthodox Church has been revitalized and begun a series of constructions of memories of past events, personas, sites and shrines in order to reestablish its position in the post-Yugoslav republics. One of these memories is devoted to the cult of St. Jovan Vladimir (d.1016) and the sites associated to him in Southern Montenegro. This article analyze the forging of a new memory of Jovan Vladimir in its material form in the Serbian Orthodox Church as well as the forgetting and erasure of rivaling memories. The reconstruction of memories and place-making of Christian communities is taking place across Easter Europe today and the purpose of this study is to identify the key-factors determining the breaking and making of such a project.

The focus is in particular the place-making of four key sites closely related to the cult. All four sites has been trans-national and trans-religious, which has been contested in the creation of a Serbian Orthodox memory of the cult of St. Jovan Vladimir.

Keywords: Eastern Orthodoxy; Serbian Orthodox Church; Montenegro; Place-making; Material Religion; Memory studies

Introduction

On 31 July 2005 two war helicopters belonging to the Serbian controlled military of the remaining Yugoslav federation crossed Montenegrin airspace carrying parts of a tin church. On the ground a procession had climbed the mountain of Rumija beforehand in order to make it to the peak and prepare a foundation for the tin church on the bricks of an older ruin church. Around noon the parts was assembled and the local Orthodox metropolitan gave his blessing of the church and celebrated liturgy carrying the century old cross of St. Jovan Vladimir. The church of holy trinity devoted to Jovan Vladimir had then been rebuild with the help of the helicopters. A resurrection of the church a local folk poem had foretold.¹

The event in itself was spectacular. The peak of Rumija is hard to access and the building of the church only came about with the borrowed war helicopters. However, the newly erected church was not greeted as a blessing by the local government and by other religious communities in the area.

¹ A youtube video has been published by the metropolitante in 2011 of the event, see Metropolitante. *Holy mountain Rumija* (serb. Света планина Румија). 2011. A youtube video. Retrived 19.10.2019 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3bhoOtz4pY>

Chapter V: The practice of contemporary Orthodox historiography

Michel de Certeau identified the close link between religion, history and social practice as a triangular relationship, as noted in chapter II.¹⁵² The social practice is in his analysis the external evidence of a religious community's social identity and religious order. Historiographical practice is "the sociocultural localization of religious ideologies", which means that a practice is a social, cultural and physically located phenomenon visible in materials, rituals and symbols.¹⁵³

The practice of the religious historiographical ideology of the Orthodox communities in Montenegro after 1989 has been one of the cross-sectional point of focus in this thesis. This chapter is an attempt to bind the various discussions and findings on the social practice of the religious communities, discussed and laid forth in the articles, together in a broad theoretical definition of and conclusion on historiographical practice. This will be the base for a contextualization of the findings within the broader development in the Orthodox commonwealth, here mainly in North Macedonia and Bulgaria, with a final look at Ukraine. This assessment and discussion will provide grounds for reflection on historiographical practice in Orthodoxy in Eastern Europe more generally in the era after communism.

Summary of analytical conclusions

The following section is a short recap of the main findings and discussion in the articles of this thesis concerning historiographical practice.

Article 1's main conclusion, of relevance here, is that religious practice amongst the Orthodox communities in Montenegro should not simply be reduced to a form of political practice. It seems to be well grounded that religion, and in particular Orthodoxy, has become a social marker of identity for both Serbs and Montenegrins. However, this social form of identity is not strictly bound to or simply reducible to national identity. The example of the Badjnak is illustrative. This Christmas feast draws on various commemorative lines, which are not bound to the debate about

¹⁵² Spiegel. "Revising the Past / Revisiting the Present", 2007, p. 1.

¹⁵³ Certeau. *The Writing of History*. 1988, p. 134.

nationalism or the notion of national self. The ritual's meaning is found in Montenegro's deeper history (p. 43-46), its events, persons and even the broader Slavic custom of log burning (the Badjnak). The practice of the Badjnak ritual is today presented as a national confrontation in most studies, but this is only possible because the ritual is *already* highly symbolic and traditional. The ritual is a proto-national material, which religious and nationalist movements can draw upon. The ritual exists before its nationalization and reveals other religious ideological forms than merely the national one. The Slavic Badjnak ritual, with its own history and the history of the Christmas cleansing and uprising in Montenegro, are part of an older Slavic Orthodox order. An order – or in de Certeau's words – a sociocultural localization of religious ideology, which determines where and how national identity can be brokered. On these grounds, I argue in article 1 that the strategic infrastructure or religious order is already in place in Montenegro. Places, rituals and symbols, together are a point of departure from where the national movements can be formed. The national movements need to “nationalize” the sacred, as Glenn Bowman argues. This can only be done when there is something to nationalize. This is a social and political process in which the former strategic infrastructure of the Orthodox system of beliefs (the sacred sites, persons, icons and so on) needs to be taken over and turned into national sites and persons, partly stripped of their religious significance.

It is crucial to note that the examples from article 1 are first and foremost examples, which underpins some of Andrew Hastings's points that proto-national materials were in existence before the rise of nation-states.¹⁵⁴ Article 1 ends with the conclusion that the process of nationalization could occur through (p. 52):

1. Institutionalization.
2. Restoration, rebuilding or occupying sacred sites or buildings.
3. Recovering or claiming saints or sacred materials (crosses, etc.).
4. The use of other societal structures of governance, such as the clan structure called the ecclesiology of kinship.

¹⁵⁴ Hastings's main argument is that there were several structures in existence before the rise of nationalism, which can explain how and why particular forms of nations are shaped like they are. The religious order or theology is one of those proto-national structures that could be used. See Hastings. *The Construction of Nationhood*. 1997, p. 124-145.

Articles 2-3 follow, but only contain little information of relevance to the characterization of the historiographical practice of the Orthodox communities in Montenegro. In article 2 there is a description of particular saints and feasts of the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church (from hereon MOC), which provides an overview of the main points of “localization” of historiography for the MOC (p. 41-44). Article 3 contains a similar description of the restoration of a series of monasteries and churches, as well as further descriptions of two renewed rituals within the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro (from hereon SOC) (p. 18-21). The descriptions in articles 2 and 3 are basic socio-political descriptions of the communities, but they provide an overview of cases, and some of these are discussed in detail in the analytical chapter IV. The cases mentioned in articles 2 and 3,¹⁵⁵ but not dealt with in detail are the following:

- The SOC’s reconstruction of Ćelija Piperska Monastery and the SOC and MOC’s debate over ownership of St. Stefan Piperski (d. 1697).
- The confrontation between the MOC and SOC over churches and monasteries in the old capital of Cetinje, such as the Vlaska Church or St. Petar’s I monastery.
- The SOC revival of the cult of St. Basil of Ostrog or St. Vasilije (Sveti Vasilije Ostroški 1610-71) and its major sites in Ostrog and Niksič.
- The reconstruction and repopulation of the monasteries on Lake Skadar (Kom, Beška, Moračnik, Vranjina and Kosmač), known as the Montenegrin “Holy Land”, which to some extent is described by Alice Forbess.¹⁵⁶
- The SOC’s reconstruction of the Donji Brčeli Monastery and the tomb of Stephan the Small (Šćepan Mali – known as The False Tsar).
- The SOC’s reconstruction of the Monastery of Holy Archangel Michael in Prevlaka Island, home to the first Montenegrin Orthodox bishop.
- The MOC’s and SOC’s ownership of the churches in the Njegushi region, home to the Njegoš dynasty.

¹⁵⁵ The selection of cases for analysis in chapter IV is based on access to sources, sites and rituals. As an example, it was not possible to access the monasteries on Lake Skadar and in Ćelija Piperska during field sites visits in 2018 due to extremely bad weather. In contrast, access to Momišići and Donji Brčeli was possible in 2018 and 2019, but the number of useable sources found there was low.

¹⁵⁶ Forbess. “Montenegro versus Crna Gora”. 2013.

- The SOC's commemoration of the 40 neo-martyrs at St. George's Church (Sveti Đorđe) in Momišići.

In chapter IV the conclusions about the four forms of nationalization from article 1 are to a large extent applied in article 4-7. This form of nationalization is argued to be a historiographical practice that builds on the localization of religious ideology or order. In being so, it is not solely a political form of practice, but a religious one as well, because it is a social form of identity. The structures seem to be the same despite the different purposes.

In *article 4*, the analysis focuses on how the unrecognized MOC tries to recover and claim the saints of "Duklja", which are mainly from the ruling houses of Vojislavljević, Balšić and Crnojevići (p. 229). This is an example of the third form of historiographical practice in which a societal structure (founding and ruling dynasties) are nationalized. Following the analysis, I argue in article 4, that the localization of the saints is based on a specific historical notion of what the Montenegrins are (p. 241-242). Article 4 thereby exemplifies how a deep religious and historical order, a Montenegrin historiographical notion of self, takes on an outward social and material form in the practice of the MOC today. A practice in which the community seeks to take control of saints through the production of texts, rituals, icons and the building of churches (such as the church devoted to Ivan Crnojevići in Cetinje, p. 242).

Article 5 follows suit, but with a focus on the Lovćen mountain and the sanctification of Njegoš within the SOC. The major social practice studied here is the SOC and the Montenegrin government's process of restoration, rebuilding and occupying of a sacred site (Lovćen) and attempt to claim a saint (Njegoš). This particular case resembles that of the Badnjak, because once again an older historical and religious order dating from the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty (16-19th century) determines the structures in which modern-day religious and national identity is brokered. The site, the physical appearance and even the forming of the icon and statues of Njegoš become an outlet of the reinterpretation of the former history of the area. In this case, the reception of Njegoš and the reformulation of his heritage in history become first and foremost expressed as physical material either as the older chapel or the new monument. The material reception of Njegoš is illustrated vividly by Metropolitan Amfilohije's graphic letter to the Montenegrin president, which even speaks of Njegoš as shackled to the new monument (p. 500-502).

Article 6 departs from this line of inquiry, and instead focuses on the historiographical religious ideology used by Metropolitan Amfilohije in his interpretation of war and Petar I Petrović-Njegoš's (1748-1830) reign. Petar I is a well-established saint in the SOC, which seems to be the reason for the lack of need to readdress the SOC's claim on him and his legacy. His metropolitan seat and monastery is the home of the SOC in Montenegro in which his casket, body, icons and other materials are on display. Unlike the three other articles, the control of the site, materials and person is therefore not disputed in the same way. This is perhaps why his reign and person are used by Metropolitan Amfilohije as a narrative in which a certain historiographical order is expressed. This religious ideology is further discussed in the next chapter.

Article 7 returns to the issues at hand with an analysis of the SOC's rebuilding of an infrastructure of memory in southern Montenegro devoted to the cult of St. Jovan Vladimir (d. 1116). The focus is here the localization of the cult at four different sites and a discussion of why certain sites are chosen to be restored above others. The article thereby underpins the first three forms of the practice of historiography noted in article 1. The institution of the SOC rebuilds the cult through the occupancy and building of material outlets at two different sites. Along this rebuilding, parades, already noted in article 3, icons and specific crosses play a vital role. All of these materials and the rituals are part of the reinstated social religious identity of the church in which Jovan Vladimir plays a crucial role.

In summary, the articles deal with following forms of practice of historiography:

Article number	Focus on specific outlet	Historical site, ritual or person in question	Form of practice	Institutions in question
1	Ritual	Badznak in Cetinje	Recovering sacred sites and rituals	MOC & SOC
2-3	Rituals and sites	See list above (St. Stefan Piperski, etc.)	Recovering or claiming sacred sites,	MOC & SOC

			persons or rituals	
4	Rituals, icons, texts, sites and buildings related to persons	Vojislavljević, Balšić and Crnojevići houses and churchs	Claiming sites and saints	MOC
5	Site and building related to one person	Petar II (Njegoš)	Occupying sacred sites	SOC & Montenegrin Government
6	Person	Petar I	Maintaining control	SOC
7	Rituals, texts, materials, sites and buildings related to one person	Jovan Vladimir	Maintaining control, occupying sacred sites, restoring rituals and materials, and claiming a saint	SOC

Returning to de Certeau, it is striking how all forms of historiographical practice are deliberative processes of differentiation and demarcation. The sociocultural localization of the religious order is a way to delimit a social group and claim ownership over a particular historical tradition – a deep religious and historical structure. De Certeau argued that “current events are the real beginning” of history.¹⁵⁷ This is certainly true for the cases discussed above.

¹⁵⁷ Certeau. *The Writing of History*. 1988, p. 11.

Towards a definition of Orthodox historiographical practice in Montenegro

Historiographical practice is, according to de Certeau, the making of an infrastructure of order, which governs and structures everyday practice. This structure is made out of physical materials, such as church buildings, icons, crosses, etc., performed through rituals and put into language through text, preaching, etc. Historiographical practice is a fact that can be observed in the form of concrete material, the performance of rituals or the discourses of texts. As such it is bound to the social world and is an outlet of a form of religious order, which is either affirmed, challenged or reinterpreted. This structure needs constant supervision or it will be neglected or fall to pieces. The overarching structure is made by the authorities of a given institution, such as the high-ranking clergy of the SOC, who supervise and reinterpret it constantly. It is therefore not entirely equal to the way everyday Montenegrins practice their form of religion and national belonging, but, according to de Certeau, it is the religious and cultural structures, which set the scene for the day-to-day space.

The structures in place are materials which can be revived or neglected. The majority of cases in this thesis, show how neglected religious materials belonging to a bygone Orthodox order prior to communism have survived and are now reinstated after 1990. The revival is a social form of the reinterpretation of historiography and it takes on different forms itself. The main ones studied here are the restoration, rebuilding or occupying of sacred sites or buildings and recovering or claiming of saints or sacred materials (crosses, etc.). These materials are the building blocks for a larger infrastructure for a certain religious order, which here is called a historiographical religious ideology. The physical reconstruction of churches and the reinvention of rituals are the “the sociocultural localization of religious ideologies”. The form, content and structure of these particular religious orders in Montenegro are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

In conclusion, the practice of historiography is dependent on a series of differentiations, which articles 4, 5 and 7 note. Sites, stories and materials have to be claimed, forgotten or reinterpreted as alien in order for a new infrastructure to rise. The Serbian Nemanjić rule, as an example, needs to be remembered as alien and threatening by the MOC in order to pave way for their narrative of an independent Duklja. This narrative neglects the fact that the Nemanjić were crucial to the construction and renovation of key sites, such as the monasteries on Lake Skadar. The reconstruction of a new infrastructure is also not a process internal to one organization, but it is formed on the materials available, such as the Badjnak ritual noted in article 1, and in constant rivalry or dialogue with other parts of society, as noted in the conclusions of article 5 and 7. Finally, a set of features determines the construction of these

localizations of religious orders, as described and discussed in article 7. These are geography, topography (visibility), demography, the history of the sites, their political and economic importance, and finally their entanglement and positions in connected religious or national narratives.

Comparison with the developments elsewhere in the Orthodox commonwealth

The conclusions concerning the historiographical practice of the Eastern Orthodox communities has so far been limited to the two communities in Montenegro analyzed in this thesis. De Certeau's observations, which initially concerned the Western European form of history and religion, seem to be applicable beyond these confines and in particular to many Eastern Orthodox communities. It seems plausible that throughout today's formerly communist-controlled Eastern Europe, in which the Eastern Orthodox communities have been revived, several Orthodox institutions have attempted to rewrite and rethink their history in a similar manner. This reinterpretation of history might follow the same historiographical lines.

A defining factor in Montenegro is that the revival of the religious communities and the renewed historiographical practice coincided with the political changes of Yugoslavia. A similar political transition and return of traditional religious communities to society at large is a common feature for many Eastern European states. In many of these states the Orthodox Churches have also been the subjects or agents for the further nationalization of the church, as Vasilios Makrides notes in an article from 2013.¹⁵⁸ The nationalizations in the former Eastern bloc do on the surface display similarities with what is discussed and analyzed in this thesis. The following section is therefore an attempt to enlarge the scope of the enquiry and make some more general points of observation regarding the contemporary historiographical practice of Eastern Orthodox communities throughout Eastern Europe. In doing so, it might highlight a more general form of historiographical practice of the Eastern Orthodox Churches after communism. This comparison is mainly done on the basis of other scholars' work on the particular cases in question and so is it to a large extent dependent on the validity of their conclusions.

¹⁵⁸ Vasilios N. Makrides. "Why are Orthodox Churches Particular Prone to Nationalization and Even Nationalism?". *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 57 (3-4), 2013, p. 325-352.

North Macedonia – the history of the Archbishopric of Ohrid revisited

Aleksander Zdravkovski and Kenneth Morrison argue that there are many similarities in the current struggle between the unrecognized Macedonian Orthodox Church and its Serbian counterpart in North Macedonia, and the parallel conflict in Montenegro between the Montenegrin and Serbian churches discussed in this thesis.¹⁵⁹ From an academic point of view, the similarities are also noticeable in the studies of both countries, which are often strictly social scientific and rarely go further than the conclusion that the Macedonian Orthodox Church is an extension of Macedonian nationalism and an integrated nationalist institution – similar to the conclusions about Montenegro.¹⁶⁰ The difference between Montenegro and North Macedonia when it comes to their churches is, however, noticeable. The unrecognized Macedonian Orthodox Church was created with great interference by the local authorities and even the leader of Socialist Yugoslavia in 1950s and 1960s. The Church unilaterally declared itself autocephalous from the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1968.¹⁶¹ The Macedonian Orthodox Church is therefore today, practically speaking, the major religious institution for the Orthodox population who also identify themselves as Macedonians (64 pct. of the total population of North Macedonia). This is in contrast to Montenegro, where state interference in the current conflict was relatively late (2000) and did not entail significant resources to the unrecognized church – perhaps this is why the Serbian Orthodox Church has managed to persevere its position as the major religious organization in Montenegro. The ecclesial positions of the churches today in Montenegro and North Macedonia are quite opposite in terms of resources and adherence, but they are alike on a structural level. In both countries a branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church is pitted against a local unrecognized Orthodox Church.¹⁶²

The construction of the modern form of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and its historiography is a process that began before the fall of communism – and therefore the process

¹⁵⁹ Zdravkovski and Morrison. “The Orthodox Churches of Macedonia and Montenegro”. 2014.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. See also Todor Cepreganov, Maja Angelovska-Panova and Dragan Zajkovski. “The Macedonian Orthodox Church”. In Lucian Leustean (ed.). *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Routledge, 2014.

¹⁶¹ An extensive description of the debate between Macedonians and Serbs can be found in Stella. *Church and State in Yugoslavia since 1945*. 1979. p. 249-289.

¹⁶² For a full and thorough analysis of the question of autocephaly comparing the cases of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Bulgaria, see Šljivić and Živković. “Self-Ruled and Self-Consecrated Ecclesiastic Schism as a Nation-Building Instrument in the Orthodox Countries of South Eastern Europe”. 2020.

of differentiation from its Serbian counterpart (as well as Bulgarian and Greek) is older than the similar process in Montenegro. In Montenegro, there might be a deeper and older tradition for independence during the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty (16-19th century) in comparison with North Macedonia, but the current discussion about Montenegrin independence is still a more recent one than the one in North Macedonia. This is also visible in the continual division between pro-Serbs and pro-Montenegrins in Montenegro, which is hardly the case in North Macedonia where most Slavic-speaking people identify as Macedonians and as Macedonian Orthodox. In North Macedonia, there are hardly any Serbian Orthodox communities or local Macedonians who identify as Serbs, according to most polls. As Ljupcho S. Risteski and Armanda Kodra Hysa note, many parts of the nationalization program of the independent Macedonian state, now North Macedonia, hasn't involved the Church nor targeted the Serbs. The major rivals of the revived national identity of Macedonia are to a higher degree Greece and Bulgaria, which historically also controlled the North Macedonian region far longer than any Serbian-dominated state. The long centuries of Greek Byzantine and Phanar rule, as well as the two Bulgarian medieval empires and Bulgarian rule during the World Wars, dominate the region's history. The period under the Serbian medieval empire and Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia is far less influential and much shorter. The symbolic struggles in North Macedonia over national symbols (the flag), sites (Ohrid) and persons (Alexander the Great, Tsar Samuel or Mother Theresa) are struggles with Greece, Albania and Bulgaria, and are mainly connected to state and national formation rather than ecclesial institutions.¹⁶³

This does not mean that there is not a process of localization of the religious order and an acute sense of historiographical practice within the Macedonian Orthodox Church. It is, however, not as pressing and confrontational as in Montenegro. A closer look to the Macedonian Orthodox Church reveals that national element are a strong feature of the Church's social identity, as Nenad Živković notes in his unpublished master's thesis and a recent article. In the Macedonian ecclesial narrative, the differentiation from the Serbs is crucial, but there seems to be a need as well to distance the Macedonians from the Greeks, the Bulgarians and even the

¹⁶³ Ljupcho S. Risteski and Armanda Kodra Hysa, "Strategies for Creating the Macedonian State and Nation and Rival projects between 1991-2012". In Pål Kolstø (ed.), *Strategies of Symbolic Nation-building in South Eastern Europe*, London: Routledge, 2014, p. 165-200.

Albanians. A sort of multi-differentiation of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, which is not present in the bipolar ecclesial struggle in Montenegro.¹⁶⁴

The issue of the localization of the religious order and differentiation is most visible in the case of the Ohrid monastery (St. Naum Monastery), its legacy and the recent schism within the Macedonian Orthodox Church. Ohrid was the ecclesial center created by St. Clement and St. Naum of Ohrid, pupils of St. Constantine-Cyril and St. Methodius, in the eighth and ninth centuries.¹⁶⁵ The monastery later became home to the medieval autocephalous Bulgarian Church during the reign of the Bulgarian tsars in 934 until it was finally abolished under Ottoman rule in 1767. The center was both Slavic and Greek and is said to be the place where the Slavic alphabet was invented. The Macedonian Orthodox Church claims to be the true descendant of the Ohrid church, and thereby denies the pan-Slavic, Bulgarian, Serbian and even Greek influence and control over the Ohrid church.¹⁶⁶ The history of Ohrid, St. Clement and St. Naum is therefore also where the Macedonian Orthodox Church's manifestation of its conception of itself as independent in rivalry with the Greek, Serbian and in particular the Bulgarian Church, is most visible. The Bulgarian Church also sees itself as the true heir to the medieval Bulgarian Church in Ohrid and the tradition of St. Clement and St. Naum, and thereby poses a greater "symbolic" threat to the Macedonian Church than its Serbian counterpart.

In the particular case of Ohrid, the historiographical practice of the Macedonian Orthodox Church fits the pattern identified in Montenegro in which long gone sites, saints and institutions are claimed as constituent historical parts. Unlike in Montenegro, this is not done in

¹⁶⁴ I owe a great deal of gratitude to Nenad Živković and his unpublished thesis "Religious Politics, Nationalism and Inter-Orthodox Relations in Macedonia after 2002 – The Aftermath of the Niš Agreement". Erfurt: Erfurt University, 2014, which has been my main inroad into the North Macedonian case. See also Nenad Živković, "Surrendering to Public Pressure – The 'Macedonia Orthodox Church' and the Rejection of the Niš Agreement in 2002". In T. Koellner, (Ed.). *Orthodox Religion and Politics in Contemporary Eastern Europe*. London: Routledge. 2019, p. 215-232; Nenad Živković. "The Macedonian Question in the Serbian Orthodox Church". In Vasilios N. Makrides and Sebastian Rimestad (eds.). *Coping with Change – Orthodox Christian Dynamics between Tradition, Innovation, and Realpolitik*. Erfurter Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des Orthodoxen Christentums. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, Vol. 18, 2020, p. 209-231.

¹⁶⁵ Fine. *The Early Medieval Balkans*. 1991, p. 124-125.

¹⁶⁶ Gjoko Gjorgjevski. "Macedonian Orthodox Church in the Context of Balkan and European Orthodoxy". *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* Vol. 37: Iss. 4, Article 2, 2017.

opposition to one counterpart, but rather to a range of counterparts – primarily the Bulgarians. However, the scale and intensity of the conflict are, despite the larger number of opponents, lower. The Macedonian Church has tried to re-connect with the Bulgarian Orthodox Church on several occasions lately.¹⁶⁷ It was even in union with the Pimen part of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church during the Bulgarian Church's schism in the 1990s, which was also the case of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church until the death of Metropolitan Pimen (Enev) in 1999. So, despite the need to claim these sites and deny the Bulgarian influence, it has not led to an intense church conflict between the Macedonian and Bulgarian clergy. This might be simply because the Bulgarian Orthodox Church of today does not officially claim North Macedonia and its Slavic population as a constituent part. The Macedonian Church is therefore not in an open battle for “souls” and “land”, but only for recognition and a legitimized canonical status.

Currently, the only real battle for “souls” began in 2002, when the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Macedonian Orthodox Church tried to renegotiate their relationship and thereby allow the Macedonian Church to return to a canonical Orthodox status. The deal fell through, due to the Macedonian bishops and synods' refusal to change the name of their official church to the Archbishopric of Ohrid after severe criticism from Macedonian public opinion and the government.¹⁶⁸ In the aftermath of the failed deal, a local Macedonian bishop, Jovan, accepted the deal and was appointed by the Serbian Orthodox Church as the new autonomous Archbishop of Ohrid in 2002. Archbishop Jovan and his breakaway church were quickly met with severe pressure from the state and his “mother” church. He has since been imprisoned several times and his church is continually harassed.¹⁶⁹ The Archbishopric of Ohrid and the conflict surrounding it provide a point of departure into the inner workings and forms of historiography practiced here in this more Serbian-oriented church structure on Macedonian soil. A key place in which the structures of history are expressed, is Archbishop Jovan's “Brief History of the Ohrid Archbishopric” (Serbian: Кратка историја на охридската

¹⁶⁷ Živković. “The Macedonian Question in the Serbian Orthodox Church”. 2020, p. 224-225.

¹⁶⁸ Živković. *Religious Politics, Nationalism and Inter-Orthodox Relations in Macedonia after 2002*. 2014, p. 53-67.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 67-76.

Архиепископија).¹⁷⁰ The Ohrid Archbishopric seeks to recreate in this text a renewed Orthodox infrastructure around Ohrid in which the close connection between Macedonia and Serbia is preserved, but most crucial is the line of succession from the first Slavic bishops of Ohrid to Jovan's own time, which is the main narrative. A striking feature of Archbishop Jovan's writing is the balance with which national and ethnic categories are presented. The question of Macedonian ethnic independence is hardly dealt with, and the differentiation from Bulgarians and Greeks are minor. Instead, mutuality is stressed and the universality of the Church is a key focus. The balanced character of the narrative seems to be due to it not being intended as an address to Macedonians exclusively, but one also meant for the other canonical Orthodox Churches, which are called upon to recognize their shared history in the narrative of Ohrid. It is strikingly transnational. A central document backing Archbishop Jovan's version of the history of Ohrid after 2002 is the compilation of documents called *For the Kingdom to Come* (Serbian: *Заради идното Царство*), which is a book published by Jovan's church with letters and addresses, etc. from the Archbishop. The book was published bilingually in Serbian and English for a broader audience.¹⁷¹ It seems to be transparent that the Archbishopric calls for support from abroad, and so the archbishop and his church's vision of history is an inclusive and transnational one. The differentiation is toned down, but the claim to legitimacy and authority is only held up by the use of the Ohrid name, site and heritage in rivalry with the Macedonian Orthodox Church. Hidden beneath the transnational and inclusive narrative is a sharp jab at the archbishop's opponents in the Macedonian Orthodox Church. They are indirectly painted as bishops clinging on to the national name – ethnophyletism, as the heresy of putting nationality before church is called in the Orthodox world. Another Serbian memory attached to the very name of Ohrid, is that of Nikolaj Velimirović (1881-1956), the Serbian metropolitan of Ohrid from the 1920s onwards. Velimirović's liturgy and hymns in *Prologue from Ohrid* from 1926 is highly influential in Serbian Orthodoxy. The name of Ohrid, as an ecclesial center, is therefore an

¹⁷⁰ Archbishop Jovan (Vraniškoski). *Brief History of the Ohrid Archbishopric* (Serb.: Кратка историја на охридската архиепископија). Elena Vitanova and Valeria Kjulumova (trans). Ohrid: Ohrid Archbishopric, 2008. [retrieved at http://poa-info.org/en/history/archbishopric/history_of_the_ohrid_archbishopric.pdf 28.07.2020]

¹⁷¹ Borjan Vitanov (ed.) *For the Kingdom to Come* (Serb.: Заради идното Царство). Elena Vitanova and Valeria Kjulumova (trans). Ohrid: Ohrid Archbishopric, 2005. [retrieved at <https://www.poa-info.org/mk/izdavastvo/knigi/kingdom2.pdf> 28.07.2020]

integrated part of the Serbian Orthodox Church of today, which partly explains the stakes of the game for the Serbian Orthodox Church. Ohrid is also central for the Serbian Orthodox Church as the first home of a major Slavic ecclesial center. They go hand in hand.

Turning back to the Macedonian Orthodox Church, which is still the majority church in Macedonia, the new Archbishopric is mostly just ignored, especially after almost all the Ohrid Archbishopric's property was seized by the state. But there are several other processes of localization or a new form of Macedonian Orthodoxy at play. Ohrid does of course play a major role, in particular due to the saints, St. Clement, St. Naum, St. Cyril and St. Methodius, who all are to some extent claimed as Macedonians. As a professor at a Macedonian Orthodox institution writes: "The Ohrid Archbishopric was restored as the Macedonian Orthodox Church in accordance with the well-established church tradition and practice by other Orthodox churches".¹⁷² In such a statement the Macedonian Church's historiographical practice of claiming the saints and sites of Ohrid follows a pattern that can be recognized from Montenegro. The heritage of Macedonia is seen as strictly Macedonian, denying the pan-Slavic presence. In addition to this, similar to the SOC's neo-martyrs in Montenegro, the Macedonian Orthodox Church has begun to sanctify local ecclesial figures. An example of this is Father Gabriel (civil name Mijalce Parnadziev, 1926-1990), who was elevated to sainthood in 2017 on the fiftieth anniversary of the Macedonian Orthodox Church's declaration of autocephaly. St. Gabriel is closely connected to the Lesnovo Monastery, which was founded by another St. Gabriel of Lesnovo (11th century). The older St. Gabriel is often regarded as a Bulgarian hermit, but through the Macedonian Church's process of sanctification of the newer St. Gabriel of Lesnovo, the elder one is now more closely associated with the Macedonian Orthodox Church. The old monastery of Lesnovo is in this process also claimed.¹⁷³ This historiographical practice of claiming sites and saints in the case of St. Gabriel and Lesnovo resembles to a high degree the one practiced by both the MOC and SOC in Montenegro.

The Macedonian Orthodox Church has the opportunity to follow that road of practiced historiography, because there are several historical materials and sites in Macedonia

¹⁷² Dejan Borisov. "Road to the Restoration of the Ohrid Archbishopric". *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*: Vol. 37: Iss.4, Article 4, 2017. P. 52.

¹⁷³ Ilija Velev. "The Thousand-Year Spiritual Tradition of Lesnovo Monastery in Macedonia", *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*: Vol. 37 : Iss. 4 , Article 7, 2017.

that could be the bricks in a larger narrative. Metropolitan Theodosius (Vasil Iliev Gologanov, 1846-1926), exarch of Skopje from 1885, and the Macedonians who fell in the Ilinden uprising in 1903 in Macedonia, could be the next in line for sanctification by the Macedonian Church, if the pattern from Montenegro is followed. The deeper structures of the Macedonian ecclesiastical revival is the reaffirmation of Macedonian independence in Socialist Yugoslavia, which until now has gone hand in hand with ecclesial independence.¹⁷⁴ The historical background to the formation of both the Macedonian republic and church in socialist Yugoslavia was that the previously formed Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek nation-states all claimed Macedonia on the eve of the Balkan wars and in the First World War. These claims and the subsequent wars in the twentieth century made the modern Macedonian process of differentiation necessary much sooner than the Montenegrin – but, as discussed above, the national symbolic construction of Macedonian ethnic identity is not entirely church-bound. The process is a sort of multi-differentiation in contrast to the bipolar one in Montenegro. The church is not as needed in Macedonian nationalism as it is in Montenegrin nationalism. However, the state does still intervene on behalf of the church and imagined nation in matters, such as the establishment of the Serbian-oriented Archbishopric of Ohrid. The history of the Macedonian Church is a continual state matter, but just not as acutely as in Montenegro. In the Macedonian case, the Serbian-oriented Archbishopric of Ohrid illustrates another form of historiographical practice, which is the formation of institutions as outlets of historical interpretation. The newly formed Archbishopric draws on the historical legacy of Ohrid as a source of legitimacy and authority. It thereby mirrors the Montenegrin Orthodox Church, which is also a recent institution, that likewise claims its legitimacy and authority based on a claim of being the descendant of a certain long gone historical institution.

Bulgaria – the homecoming of national neo-martyrs

The ecclesial disputes and issues at hand in former Yugoslavia differ from the broader post-communist Orthodox world of Eastern Europe. Yugoslavia, with the late dismantling of the framework of the socialist federation in the 1990s, became a hotbed for national and ecclesial rivalry in the breakaway nations, such as Montenegro and Macedonia discussed above. Outside of Yugoslavia, almost all the traditional Orthodox nation-states of the nineteenth and twentieth

¹⁷⁴ Stella. *Church and State in Yugoslavia since 1945*. 1979. p. 249-289.

centuries have remained quite stable since the end of the Second World War with the exception of the regions that had formerly been a part of the Soviet Union, such as Ukraine and the Baltics. The relative stability of Greece, Bulgaria and Romania in the 1990s stands in contrast to Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia, which might perhaps have also made a contemporary reshaping and revival of a national Orthodox historiography unwarranted outside of Yugoslavia. On the other hand, these more stable states have experienced the same political transformation away from communism or authoritarianism as the Yugoslav republics, which might have opened the same window of opportunity for the Orthodox churches. A suitable case for a discussion of this is Bulgaria, which has substantial elements and structures in common with the other Balkan states of Yugoslavia. Bulgaria has been a nation-state since its creation in 1878 and through the period of Moscow-oriented communism, much in contrast to Yugoslavia. As noted in the state-of-the-art section, there exist a few works by Carsten Riis, Daniela Kalkandjieva and others, whose research focus is precisely on the relation between state, nation and church in the historiography of Bulgaria.¹⁷⁵ These works provide suitable roads into the question about how historiography has been practiced in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and Bulgarian society after communism, and whether these patterns depart from what has been noted in this thesis on the Orthodox churches in former Yugoslavia.

One of the major works on Bulgarian Orthodox history is Carsten Riis's doctoral thesis (dr.habil) from 1999, which exists in Danish and in a slightly modified English version. In it, Riis discusses historiography and religion in Bulgaria, with a particular emphasis on the Ottoman period and its following consequences. The main argument in Riis's thesis, which is also dominant in the work of James Hopkins and Daniela Kalkandjieva, is that national and ecclesial independence are closely tied together, which is primarily seen in historiography from the eighteenth century onwards. The two main paradigms of these national historiographies are, according to Riis and Hopkins, a "theory of catastrophe" and a "theory of continuation". The second theory, that of continuation, is in short a narrative in which the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is the guardian and safe-keeper of the Bulgarian nation throughout history. This paradigm stresses a continual close link between state, nation and church from the conversion of Khan Boris I in 965, across the Ottoman period until the creation of the Bulgarian nation-state.

¹⁷⁵ A short overview of research on the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and history can be found in James Lindsay Hopkins. *The Bulgarian Orthodox Church*. New York: Boulder, 2009, p. 4-6.

Hopkins, who follows the trail of Riis, traces the continuation theory in Bulgarian historiography back to the work known as *Slavo-Bulgarian History* from 1762, by the Bulgarian monk Paisii of Hilendar (1722-1773). Paisii's main argument is that the Slavic churches of Ohrid and Tarnov were independent Bulgarian churches.¹⁷⁶ Following Paisii, the first major modern work on the Bulgarian Church was written by Marin Drinov (1838-1906) in 1869, which centers on the ecclesial development of the Bulgarian Orthodox Churches during the time of the medieval Bulgarian Empires.¹⁷⁷ According to Riis, Drinov's work was written to support the claim for Bulgarian ecclesial independence in the Ottoman realm prior to national independence in 1878, as a continuation of Paisii. The connection between state and church, exemplified by Drinov, became the major historiographical paradigm of history in Bulgarian academic and ecclesial works on Bulgarian history. As Riis portrays it, this tradition of historiography has continued almost uninterrupted from 1869 until today, even during the communist period the tradition was intensified in the late 1980s with an increased emphasis on the connection between national identity and religion. The major reason for this increased focus in the late 1980s was not a need to delimit the Orthodox nation from other rival Orthodox nations, but rather to marginalize the Muslim minority of Bulgaria, which became a key feature of the late communist political campaign of national reawakening from 1985 onwards.¹⁷⁸ Kalkandjieva notes that the "Bulgarian Orthodox Church [...] is widely used in Bulgarian historiography as a notion that de facto embraces several historical entities", which underlines the predominance of the continuation theory that disregards the differences between the medieval church of Boris I in the 970s and the renewed Bulgarian Patriarchate after the Second World War.¹⁷⁹ Riis especially points to Dimitar

¹⁷⁶ Hopkins. *The Bulgarian Orthodox Church*. 2009, p. 63-80.

¹⁷⁷ Riis. *En osmannisk arv*. 1999, p. 140; see also Marin Drinov. *Historical synopsis of the Bulgarian church from its beginning till today* (Bulgarian: Поглед върху произхождението на българския народ и началото на българската история. Пловдив-Русчук-Велес). Vienna 1869 [retrived at <https://archive.org/details/istoricheskipe00dringoog/page/n15/mode/2up> 28.07.2020]

¹⁷⁸ Riis. *En osmannisk arv*. 1999, p. 42-47; see also A. Eminov. *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria*. London: Routledge, 1997.

¹⁷⁹ Daniela Kalkandjieva. "The Bulgarian Orthodox Church". In L. Leustean (ed.). *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Routledge, 2014, p. 114-139; Daniela Kalkandjieva. "The Bulgarian Orthodox Church" In L. Leustean (ed.). *Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Southeastern Europe*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2014, p. 164-202; Daniela Kalkandjieva. "The Bulgarian Orthodox Church at the Crossroads: Between Nationalism and Pluralism". In A. Krawchuk A and T. Bremer (eds.). *Eastern Orthodox Encounters of Identity and Otherness*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 47-68 for a detailed and balanced assessment of the Bulgarian Orthodox Churches history and the devolvement of Bulgarian nationalism.

Angelov as a modern proponent of that theory after the fall of communism, and critically discusses in his thesis both Angelov's influential Bulgarian monograph and his summary of the book in an English article on Bulgarian history from 1992.¹⁸⁰

In Angelov's historiographical narrative, the Bulgarian Church has not needed to be demarked in opposition to another so-called Orthodox Church after communism, as is the case in North Macedonia and Montenegro. Bulgaria has rather been differentiated within its own "national" context – a differentiation separating Bulgarian Muslims and Christians. Bulgaria's long centuries under Ottoman control with the Christian church as the main guardian of the nation, is the main theme in this contemporary historiography, in which the main conflict of Bulgarian history is portrayed as one between Orthodoxy and Islam rather than between different Christian communities.¹⁸¹ Hence, unlike in Montenegro and North Macedonia, the differentiation has not targeted other national Christian communities, but has instead focused entirely on a different religion, which it tries to mark out as something alien to the (imagined) nation. In a way, this has also occurred in Yugoslavia between Catholics, Muslims and Orthodox Christians.

This differentiation between Christians and Muslims in Bulgarian historiography is closely bound to the theory of "national catastrophe", which is identified in Bulgarian historiography in detail by Michiel Kiel and further discussed by Riis.¹⁸² In short, this historiographical theory of disaster is mainly related to the Ottoman period, which is seen as a

¹⁸⁰ Riis. *En osmannisk arv*. 1999, p. 211-224; 236-240; see also Dimitar Angelov. "The Bulgarian Nationality in the 9th-19th centuries. Factors and conditions of developments". *Bulgarian Historical Review*, vol 20, 1992. P. 13-27. The continuation theory is widespread in the Orthodox countries in the Balkans and is critically discussed by P.M. Kitromilides. "'Imagined Communities' and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans". *European history Quarterly*, 1989, p. 149-152.

¹⁸¹ Perhaps with exception of the Greek Orthodox, which in Bulgarian historiography are often portrayed quite negatively due to the Greek pressure on the Bulgarians in the late Ottoman period and the Greek-speaking Ecumenical Patriarchate's opposition to the creation of a Bulgarian-speaking Orthodox Church in the 1870s-90s. This is however not a conflict about whether or not the Bulgarians and Greeks are the same nation, but rather a conflict of jurisdiction, church hierarchy and the right to a native-speaking church. See Kalkandjieva. "The Bulgarian Orthodox Church". 2014, p. 179-180.

¹⁸² Riis. *En osmannisk arv*. 1999, p. 88-93; Machiel Kiel. *Art and Society in Bulgaria in the Turkish Period – A Sketch of the Economic, Juridical and Artistic Preconditions of Bulgarian Post-Byzantine Art and Its Place in the Development of the Art of the Christian Balkans, 1360/70-1700: A New Interpretation*. Maastricht: Assen, 1985.

period of national Orthodox catastrophe for the Bulgarians that almost led to the disintegration of the nation, state and church. During this “Ottoman yoke” the Orthodox Bulgarian nation sought refuge in the ruins of the churches and monasteries from where the national awakening could begin. This narrative of national disaster is a central part of the national mythology and a key argument justifying the national reawakening in the nineteenth century, which is also visible in former Yugoslavia, Greece and even Russia. An underlying premise is that the church became the fortress of the nation from which a continued line runs from the medieval period until today. In both the continuation theory and the catastrophe one, the difference between the Islamic tradition with its Muslim settlements in Bulgaria and the “indigenous” Bulgarian Orthodox is stressed. The differentiation process is therefore not an inner Orthodox one or even an inner Slavic one, but one between different religions. This need for religious differentiation between Orthodox and Muslims might also explain why particular Bulgarian neo-martyrs killed by the Muslim Ottomans take center stage in Bulgarian historiography.¹⁸³ Kalkandijeva notes that it was not only the Bulgarian neo-martyrs, but also ancient Bulgarian martyrs and saints, such as St. Ivan of Rila (876-946) and St. Petka of Tarnov (13th century), which played an important role in the construction of a Bulgarian national movement in the nineteenth century.¹⁸⁴ Neo-martyrs and nationalized saints from the Ottoman period exist across South Eastern Europe, but their prominence in the different contemporary churches differs. In Bulgaria they are the center of attention, because they highlight the difference between Islam and Christianity. The revered neo-martyrs of Bulgaria slain by the Ottomans are symbols of the difference between Islam and Christianity, and so they underpin and support a historiographical narrative in which the Bulgarian Muslims are not indigenous. The practice of veneration of these saints supports and underlines the Orthodox Bulgarian Christian religious ideology as the supreme order.

Overall, the Bulgarian Orthodox historiography seems to be much more stable across the last three centuries and less in need of a revival than in its Yugoslav sister churches. The process of nationalization of sites, such as the monastery of Rila, and saints, such as St. Petka or the neo-martyrs, had already taken place in the nineteenth century. The notion that the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is the center of the Bulgarian nation has stood almost unchallenged since then, and its internal debates are limited to discussions about whether or not the

¹⁸³ Riis. *En osmannisk arv*. 1999, p. 158-182.

¹⁸⁴ Kalkandijeva. “The Bulgarian Orthodox Church”. 2014, p. 169.

Macedonians should be considered Bulgarians or the extent of the damage caused by Greek interference in Bulgarian ecclesial matters has been.¹⁸⁵ There seems to have been no need to readdress the connection between nation, church and state in Bulgaria following communism, which might have to do with the strikingly nationalist character of the late Bulgarian communist regime.¹⁸⁶ The stability of the nation-state and the prior construction of a nationhood during the second and third Bulgarian kingdom (1879-1945) and later in the communist era has made a historiographical process of renewal unwarranted. The contrast between the relative ethnic homogeneity of the Bulgarian state and the multiethnic character of the Yugoslav state seems to have been a key factor. Contributing to this is the close cooperation between the Bulgarian church and the communist regime, which led to there not being a Bulgarian intellectual “diaspora” within or outside of the country. In contrast, the Serbian Orthodox Church built an opposition to the communist regime in Yugoslavia through the works of Velimirović and Popović, further discussed in the next chapter, which also led to there being more than one single dominating national historiographical narrative.

This stability of the Bulgarian historiographical narrative was perhaps most acutely highlighted in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church’s schism (1992-2015) where a part of the church broke away, declaring itself the true Church. The schism, led by Metropolitan Pimen (1906-1999), was mostly politically motivated and in opposition to the Bulgarian patriarch Maxim (1914-2012), whom was suspected of being heavily involved in the communist-controlled spy network during the communist era.¹⁸⁷ One might expect that this schism might have led to a

¹⁸⁵ Riis. *En osmannisk arv*. 1999, p. 290-297. The debate about the so-called “Macedonian question”, which concerns the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian claim on Vardar or North Macedonia, ceased to dominate Bulgarian politics after the Second World War during which the fascist-oriented Bulgarian regime had tried to establish Bulgarian control of North Macedonia with disastrous consequences. See L.M. Danforth. *The Macedonian Conflict. Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995. Kalkandjieva notes in “The Bulgarian Orthodox Church”, 2014, p. 193-195 that the “ideal” border of Bulgaria in the late nineteenth century overlaps with that of the revived Bulgarian Exarchate and the St. Stefano treaty of 1878, which includes the Ohrid church and most of modern-day North Macedonia. Paisii’s interpretation of the Ohrid church as a Bulgarian one is echoed in these political claims on the territory around Ohrid.

¹⁸⁶ Riis. *En osmannisk arv*. 1999, p. 41-79.

¹⁸⁷ Riis. *En osmannisk arv*. 1999, p. 189-224; Janice Broun. “The Bulgarian Orthodox Church: the continuing schism and the religious, social and political environment”. *Religion, State and Society*, 32:3, 2004, p. 209-245; Hopkins. *The Bulgarian Orthodox Church*. 2009, p. 233-238.

renewed assessment of the ecclesial history of Bulgaria and a reassessment of the relations between church, nation and state, but this was not the case. The conflict focused on what consequences there should be for those within the church hierarchy that had failed to sustain the Christian ideal. However, the conflict did not raise a renewed form of historiography or change the perception of the past according to Hopkins.¹⁸⁸ This underlines the fact that even the major political transformation of the Bulgarian state away from communism did not alter the interpretation of Bulgarian Orthodox history or create a renewed form of historiographical practice. A major reason for this, as noted above, seems to be that the church's position in the Bulgarian nation and state was not altered or challenged during the communist period in the same manner as in Yugoslavia. The process of nationalization, as discussed in article 1, had already taken place in Bulgaria in the late nineteenth century without any new need to renew it in a manner like that of the Serbian Orthodox Church. However, many of the same processes were at play during the construction of the Bulgarian national notion of itself and its church in the nineteenth century as in the former Yugoslav republics of today. Paisii's work on Bulgarian history, the revival of saints, martyrs, sites, etc., in Bulgaria is the same form of historiographical practice. It is noteworthy that the Serbian state and the Serbian Orthodox Church in the nineteenth century followed the same pattern as the Bulgarians, as Bojan Aleksov describes.¹⁸⁹ Over the course of the twentieth century, these two Orthodox nation-building projects evolved quite differently. The Bulgarian one was almost unchallenged and was not altered, but rather intensified during the communist period. In contrast, the Serbian perception of their own history and religious identity dramatically changed several times across the twentieth century, which provided grounds for the emergence of various rival narratives. The drastic changes to the territory and state-supported forms of identity in former Yugoslavia provided a window of opportunity for a renewed process of nationalization, and for different forms of practice of historiography in which the rivalry between the churches of the Serbians, Montenegrins and

¹⁸⁸ Hopkins. *The Bulgarian Orthodox Church*. 2009, p. 233-239.

¹⁸⁹ Bojan Aleksov. "The Serbian Orthodox Church". In L. Leustean (ed.). *Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Southeastern Europe*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2014, p. 65-100.

Macedonians could become acute issues. The political and national turmoil in Bulgaria has been of much lesser historiographical consequence after 1945.¹⁹⁰

A final outlook to Ukraine – from brotherhood to division

With the conclusions from the comparison with the Bulgarian case in mind, it makes perhaps more sense to compare the renewed practice of Orthodox historiography in former Yugoslavia with current events in Ukraine. The relatively late independence of modern-day Ukraine and the renewed nationalism of Ukrainians follow a similar trajectory as the Montenegrin case, which is further supported by the fact that the unrecognized Kiev Patriarchate shared, before 2018, a status similar to that of the unrecognized Montenegrin Church. Furthermore, these two churches also formed an alliance. In the Ukrainian case, the continual conflict from the early 1990s until 2018 between the unrecognized Ukrainian-dominated Patriarchate of Kiev or Kyiv on one side, and the Autonomous Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate on the other, mirrors the Montenegrin case. In both cases, the country in which the conflict takes place (Ukraine and Montenegro) is a breakaway republic with an important tradition of its own. In this breakaway republic, a renewed form of nationhood (Montenegrin or Ukrainian) is then established and a new local Orthodox Church is formed and argued to be a much needed revival of an older form of church institution in that region. Marko Veković and Miroljub Jevtić have further unfolded these similarities and their political consequences.¹⁹¹ There are, however, still significant differences between the two situations. In Ukraine, it was a former Russian metropolitan with a substantial part of the church and its clergy that declared themselves

¹⁹⁰ See Dragan Šljivić. “A Symphonic Democracy in Orthodox Countries?”. In Vasilios N. Makrides and Sebastian Rimestad (eds.). *Coping with Change – Orthodox Christian Dynamics between Tradition, Innovation, and Realpolitik*. Erfurter Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des Orthodoxen Christentums. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, Vol. 18, 2020, p. 147-171 for a detailed discussion of current similarities between Orthodox and state-church relationship in Bulgaria and Serbia.

¹⁹¹ Marko Veković and Miroljub Jevtić. “Render unto Caesar: Explaining Political Dimension of the Autocephaly Demands in Ukraine and Montenegro”. *Journal of Church and State*, Volume 61, Issue 4, Autumn 2019, p. 591-609. However, Veković and Jevtić only focus on the narrow claim to autocephaly, with a sketchy description of the church-legal and theological stakes at play. It therefore doesn't provide a suitable inroad into the question here, but rather falls under the broad category of social-scientific studies of Eastern Orthodoxy, which overlook or reduce the theological and historical background, as noted in the state-of-the-art-section.

independent. The conflict between the Moscow church and the new Kiev-centered church was therefore in terms of resources a more equal struggle than the one in Montenegro, which is also visible in the difference in the percentage of the population backing each church and the number of parishes belonging to each.¹⁹² The Kiev Patriarchate was, according to Thomas Bremer, only one-third of the size of the Moscow-oriented church in 2016,¹⁹³ which is still more than its Montenegrin counterpart. There are as well two further dimensions in Ukraine, which are different from Montenegro. Kiev was the first home of the Russian Orthodox Church, according to itself. Both churches therefore saw themselves as the continuation of Vladimir's or Volodymyr's baptism in Dnyp in 988 as described in the Primary Chronicle of Russia. The two competing churches claimed the same origin in Ukraine, and thereby many of the same saints and sites. This is in stark contrast to the situation in Montenegro. The claim to the same "birth-certificate" in Ukraine makes a huge difference, because it intensifies the current Ukrainian conflict in historiographical terms. The unrecognized Montenegrin Church would never dream of claiming the founder of the Serbian Church, St. Sava, or the many saints of the house of Nemanjić. Secondly, the church conflict in Ukraine is one with many more actors and one in which the Ecumenical Patriarch intervened in 2018. The Uniate Church and the inter-war Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the so-called Ukrainian Autocephalous Church, also played a role in the lead up to the schism of 2018.¹⁹⁴ So to sum up, the similarities are apparent, but so are the differences.

A thorough investigation of the Ukrainian ecclesiastical case prior to 2018 is Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer's (editors) *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis* from 2016. This anthology provides inroads into the inner dynamic and historiographical structures of the conflict. These issues have not been altered drastically by the current Church schism and the continual debate about church authority in Ukraine after the intervention of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 2018, but have rather intensified. In Alfons Brüning's contribution to Bremer and

¹⁹² Zenon V. Wasyliv, "Orthodox churches in Ukraine". In Lucian Leustean (ed.). *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Routledge, 2014, p. 317-18.

¹⁹³ Thomas Bremer. "Religion in Ukraine: Historical Background and the Present Situation". In Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (eds.). *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*. London: Palgrave, 2016, p. 3-19, p. 17.

¹⁹⁴ Wasyliv. "Orthodox churches in Ukraine". 2014; A. Mykhaleyko. "The New Independent Orthodox Church in Ukraine". *Südosteuropa*, 67(4), 2020, p. 476-499. Retrieved 21 March 2020, from doi:10.1515/soeu-2019-0037

Krawchuck's volume, titled "Orthodox Autocephaly in Ukraine: The Historical Dimension", two different streams of national and ecclesial traditions are detected in the historiography of Ukraine.¹⁹⁵ One tradition claims Kievan Rus and Vladimir the Great's baptism in 988 as the origin of the Russian state and church. This "Russian" Kievan tradition and lineage of culture is argued to have been persevered and further developed in Moscow, following the defeat of Kiev in 1240 to the Tartars and the later incorporation of Kievan lands into Lithuania. This tradition is the basic historiographical structure of the pro-Moscow church in Ukraine in which the early sites and saints of Kievan Rus are claimed as Russian. It bears many similarities with the Bulgarian historiographical narratives of continuation and catastrophe. The other tradition argues that Prince Volodymyr's (a Ukrainian form of the name Vladimir) baptism began a Kyivian tradition, which survived through the centuries in concord with the Catholics and the Uniate Church of the West following the Unions councils of Florence in 1439 and Brest in 1596. This Kyivian tradition stands in opposition to Moscow-based rule. According to Brüning, these two historiographical narratives exist in a variety of forms ranging from the complete denial of the Russian heritage and a pro-Western-Catholic orientation in the Uniate Church of Western Ukraine, a more balanced one in the Ukrainian Orthodox Churches, to a complete denial of the Kyivian one in the Moscow-oriented Orthodox Church. These historiographical streams and the practices attached to them take on a form much like the ones in Montenegro and Macedonia.¹⁹⁶ As such, the Ukrainian conflict resembles the Montenegrin one in historiographical terms with a bipolar differentiated interpretation of history.

This is further unpacked by Natalia Kochan, who shows how the ethnic-oriented version of identity and history was intensified following the Russian and Ukrainian hybrid war from 2014 onwards.¹⁹⁷ This intensification of the ethnic-oriented historiographies (one Russian and one Ukrainian), keen on stressing the differences between Russians and Ukrainians,

¹⁹⁵ Alfons Brüning. "Orthodox Autocephaly in Ukraine: The Historical Dimension". In Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (eds.). *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*. London: Palgrave, 2016, p. 79-98. See also Alfons Brüning. "Orthodoxie als Element ukrainischer nationaler Identität". In Thomas Bremer (ed.). *Religion und Nation. Die Situation der Kirchen in der Ukraine*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003, p. 11-23.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid

¹⁹⁷ Natalia Kochan. "Shaping Ukrainian Identity: The Churches in the Socio-Political Crisis". In Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (eds.). *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*. London: Palgrave, 2016, p. 105-120, p. 113.

supported the notion that the Autocephalous Orthodox Church reinforced national sovereignty, as Mikhail Suslov notes,¹⁹⁸ and Veković and Jevtić repeat.¹⁹⁹

It seems to be clear that the political changes and independence in both Ukraine and Montenegro after 1989 have shaped the scene in a way which made possible a historiographical shift in favor of a renewed form of local ecclesial-based independent nationhood. However, in both Ukraine and Montenegro, this has only been possible because there was already an existing tradition of independence and a historiographical narrative available, which stood in contrast to the one that tied the newly independent republic to a “mother nation” e.g. Russia and Serbia. Curiously enough, the Ukrainian and Montenegrin independent narratives of the past have both been formed in the years following World War I and the immediate dismantling in its aftermath of local independence in both regions, which were incorporated into new major political entities – the Soviet Union and the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. The incorporations of Ukraine and Montenegro were partly violent takeovers, and local opposition was briefly revived during Axis invasions in the Second World War. The political window for change after communism in 1989 seems therefore not to have been the deciding factor, but rather the “trigger” which woke the local forms of national ecclesial narratives from before World War I in rivalry with the “mother nations”. In both Ukraine and Montenegro the local wars after 1989 intensified the revival process even further – and the need for distancing and differentiation from the former “mother nation” and church became more acute. War seems to be a crucial factor in the differentiation process, speeding it up.

History and memory

In the opening of Pierre Nora’s seminal essay on memory and history, he writes that: “memory crystallizes [...] at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound with the sense that memory has been torn”.²⁰⁰ Nora underlines that

¹⁹⁸ Mikhail Suslov. “The Russian Orthodox Church and the Crisis in Ukraine”. In Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (eds.). *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*. London: Palgrave, 2016, p. 133-153.

¹⁹⁹ Veković and Jevtić, “Render unto Caesar: Explaining Political Dimension of the Autocephaly Demands in Ukraine and Montenegro”. 2019.

²⁰⁰ Pierre Nora. “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire”. *Representations*, no. 26, 1989, p. 7-24, p. 7.

memories are formed at new turning points in which the former life and societal order is broken and a new one arises. A case in point is Montenegro, the post-Yugoslav states and Ukraine, where the political breakdown, wars and political independence set the scene for a break. War is a turning point, which becomes a break with the past.

Nora goes on to argue that the former social practice of memory becomes history. Memory is turned into a representation that is unfolded in the construction of history. The former co-existence and shared memory of the past are being buried in places like Montenegro and Ukraine. They are replaced with a spectrum of a bipolar representation of the past, in which agents are keen on stressing difference in all its forms. This structure of memory – alive or not – becomes the new foundations of a church and a society. As such the renewed form of a practice of memory – or with de Certeau's words: historiography – is not history strictly speaking, but rather a form of remembrance of the sacred, according to Nora.²⁰¹

The analyzed form of the Eastern Orthodox practice of historiography departs from the Western form discussed by Nora, because it is not strictly history, but more directly a *cult of remembrance*. The history of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, their saints, sites and nations, is an infrastructure of memory, not a strictly scientific reconstruction of the past. It is not a reflexive form of history as understood in Western academia, which asks about its own inner logic, ideology or purpose. The Montenegrin and Ukrainian historiographical practice is simply a theological stream bound to the ecclesial tradition. History is breathed like the air and practiced as part of the liturgy. Saints and sites become sacred, because they show the way for the community that claims them, rather than needing to be investigated to prove that they were pious believers. Vladimir the Great of Kiev is holy, because the communities that claims him practice him as such – not because he was. Vladimir's seven wives and his brutal slaughtering of his brothers are perhaps true historical facts, but have nothing to do with the sacred memory of him. His contemporary namesake Jovan Vladimir of Duklja was perhaps not a member of the Vojislavljević dynasty, who founded Duklja, or his name was perhaps not even Jovan, but the Montenegrin memory of him retells him as such. The new national Montenegrin movement need him to be as such.

Religious practice is therefore inseparable from that of memory and history. The social practice of historiography, the formation of memories and their material form is history.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 9.

Not the bare facts. There is therefore no split between religion, memory, history and identity in Montenegro post-Yugoslavia, because they are all one as part of the perhaps largest structure of Christianity – that of salvation. All history and all memories are but one brick on the road to salvation seen from the perspective of the Eastern Orthodox clergymen. The saints, their sites and the remembrance of them play the same role – as steps towards a union with God (Theosis). All history in Orthodoxy is *one* as a form of “integral knowledge” of salvation as the Russian Slavophil Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900) would have put it.²⁰²

²⁰² Vladimir Solovyov. *The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge*. Valeria Z. Nollan (trans.). Cambridge (US): William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008 (Russian 1877).

Chapter VI: Orthodox historiographical orders

A *historiographical religious ideology* is according to de Certeau the very order or structure, which is localized through the outward embodiment of history in practice and text. The following chapter contains a further discussion, analysis and concluding observations regarding the religious ideology of the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church (from hereon MOC) and that of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro (from hereon SOC). The analyzed ideologies could be called an Eastern Orthodox historiographical orders and are often expressed by theologians in theological texts. These theologically supported ideologies will be discussed further in relation to Eastern Orthodox theology and historiography in general in this final chapter. In doing so, the religious ideology of each the MOC and the SOC will not only be contextualized, but their form and elements will be related and discussed in relation to the Orthodox tradition.

My main argument in this chapter is that the two forms of modern Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology, described by Andrew Louth as a Eusebian and an Ignatian one,²⁰³ correspond to the two different forms of Orthodox historiography in the MOC and SOC. Louth describes Eusebian ecclesiology as a modern reinterpretation of a close symphonic relationship between emperor and church, which corresponds to a modern historiography in which the nation-state and the church are closely bound to each other. I will argue that this historiographical approach is the one in use by the MOC and the Montenegrin state, as discussed in article 4 and article 5. In this *Eusebian historiographical religious ideology* the close bond between nation-state and church is interpreted as a modern form of the Eusebian ideal relationship between emperor and church.

This modern Eusebian model is an antinomy of the Ignatian one in ecclesiology, which seems to also be the case in historiography. A historiographical religious ideology that stands in contrast to the Eusebian model is one where the church, rather than the relationship between the emperor and church, is the center of attention. I will argue that such a form of Orthodox historiography exists in the SOC. This historiographical ideology draws on Vladimir

²⁰³ Andrew Louth. "Ignatios or Eusebios: two models of patristic ecclesiology". *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 10:1, 2010, p. 46-56. The second model is named after St. Ignatius of Antioch (died ca. 108/140) and is based on his epistles in which the first known use of the Greek word *kataholikos* is found.

Solovyov's and the Slavophiles' idea of Sobornost and Integral knowledge in the specific form these concepts were given in the Paris school and in the neo-patristic turn in Eastern Orthodoxy in the twenty century, exemplified in the writings of Georges Florovsky. This approach to ecclesial history, formulated by the Slavophiles and Florovsky, has paved the way for a specific form of Serbian Orthodox approach to history, which is today expressed by Metropolitan Amfilohije's notion of history, as already briefly described in article 6. The historiographical religious orders of the SOC and MOC are hereby argued to be two different interpretations of the church's place in history and the relationship to the state and people-nation.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section will introduce and discuss the development of the two different forms of Orthodox ecclesiology identified by Louth. Louth's characterization of the Eusebian model will then be used to assess how the MOC reinterprets Eusebios's notion in its perception of ecclesiology, history and the relationship between state, nation and church today. The second section will focus on the development of a historiography which stands in contrast to the Eusebian one and which seeks to place the church at the center of history. Such an approach to history is formulated by Florovsky, who draws heavily on and reinterprets the Church father Athanasius. I have therefore called this specific historiographical order an Athanasian one. The final section will be an assessment of four Slavic-Serbian theologians' interpretation of history, in order to discuss what their historiographical religious ideology consists of and how it is related to Florovsky's Athanasian model. The chapter ends with final concluding remarks on historiographical practice and religious ideology.

Towards Eastern Orthodox historiographical orders

In Vladimir Solovyov's *The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge* (published in Russian in 1877), the Russian Slavophile describes the development of human societies throughout history. In his characterization of the history of the Orthodox churches, he notes bluntly that the Byzantine imperial system kept "their basic character and their basic principle" from the pagan Roman period.²⁰⁴ The higher form of society, which for Solovyov was the church, was subordinated to the emperor in Byzantium, which paved the way for the Byzantine and Slavic Orthodox states' submission to Islam, according to Solovyov. In the final part of his historiographical sketch, Solovyov argues that a third level of human existence is possible, in

²⁰⁴ Solovyov. *The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge*. 2008, p. 36-37.

which the church is not subordinated to the state. This third level will transcend the differentiation in science, arts, society and history. This is:

A kingdom of the third force [which] is inevitable, the sole bearer of which may only be the Slavic peoples and the Russian nation [. It] is a religious calling in the highest sense [and] only then will all the particular forms and elements of life and knowledge attain their positive significance and worth; they will all be necessary organs and instruments of a single, integral life.²⁰⁵

Solovyov thereby makes two essential characterizations of history, which form what could be called the inner conflict in Eastern Orthodox historiography and politics. Firstly, Solovyov notes that the imperial Roman system subordinated the church, despite its ideal of equality between those two. This imperial church system dates back to Constantine the Great and the Milan Edict of 313. It was, according to Solovyov, never replaced by an ecclesial system, but continued to exist as a Byzantine church-state system. Secondly, he argues that there exists a third level of human society, beyond the “pagan” Byzantine-inspired imperial system in his contemporary Russia of the nineteenth century. In this third level, the church becomes an all-encompassing integrated and unifying force for mankind.

Eusebian and Ignatian ecclesiology

Solovyov’s negative description of the Byzantine imperial system of state-church, with its famous expression in the words of Emperor Justinian’s Novel 6 about the “symphony” between emperor and church, is echoed throughout modern Eastern Orthodox theology. The State-church relationship and its genealogy in the Patristic writings has become a major theme and discussion in today’s Eastern Orthodox discussion of state and church.²⁰⁶ Louth argues, in an article from 2013, that there exist two traditions of ecclesiology. The first tradition is one of a close relationship between state and church, which Louth calls an “Eusebian one”. Louth argues that

²⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 51-52.

²⁰⁶ Makrides. “Orthodox Christianity and State/Politics Today”. 2019, p. 235; John A. McGuckin. “The Legacy of the 13th Apostle: Origins of the East Christian Conceptions of Church and State Relation. St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly 475-4, 2003, p. 251-88.

this interpretation of the church's place in society (ecclesiology) is instituted by the Constantinian turn in 313 and further developed by among others Justinian's already mentioned codex.²⁰⁷ In this interpretation of the church's place, the church is bound to the sovereign power as an imperial church. Ideally, the emperor deals with the secular world and the church is freed to focus on the spiritual. The emperor and the church both act for the "common good" and so their interests are aligned.²⁰⁸ This so-called Eusebian ideal, expressed in detail in Eusebios's *Church History* and *Life of Constantine* from the early fourth century, presupposes a universal empire, which encompasses the entire Christian civilization, which then is governed by one church in one empire.²⁰⁹ The model thereby combines Roman and Christian universalism. However, as John Meyendorff sharply puts it, "there lies the tragedy of the Byzantine system: it assumed that the state as such could become intrinsically Christian".²¹⁰ In other words, the model did not work in practice as it was ideally thought, according to the theologians of Eastern Orthodoxy, such as Solovyov, Meyendorff and the so-called Paris school. Perhaps one of the roots of this problem was that the Eusebian idea was born out of an expectation that the elevation of Christianity to the Roman religion would be the start of the end, as Solovyov notes.²¹¹ In Eusebios's writings, Constantine's rule was the first sign of the end – and it seems like Eusebios is expecting Christ to return shortly thereafter. The Eusebian ecclesiological model is therefore in its foundations unstable, because it draws on the church fathers Africanus and Hippolytus's notion of apocalypse and chiliasm. It expects the emperor to institute 1000 years of peace for the Church, which simply was not the case. Byzantium never became an all-encompassing empire nor did its church become a world church, because among other things Christianity plunged into political and theological strife in the fourth century and the centuries to follow.

²⁰⁷ Louth. "Ignatios or Eusebios". 2010, p. 46-49.

²⁰⁸ Simon Schmidt. *Church and World – Eusebius's, Augustine's, and Yoder's Interpretations of the Constantinian Shift*. Princeton: Pickwick Publications, Princeton Theological Monograph Series (Book 237), 2020. S. 25-60.

²⁰⁹ Eusebios. *Kirkehistorien & Om dem, der led martyrdøden I Palæstina*. Jørgen Ledet Christiansen & Helge Kjær Nielsen (trans.). Copenhagen: Anis, 2011; Eusebios. *Konstantins Liv*. Jørgen Ledet Christiansen (trans.). Copenhagen: Anis, 2015.

²¹⁰ John Meyendorff. *Byzantine Theology: Historical trends and doctrinal themes*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1974 p. 213.

²¹¹ Solovyov. *The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge*. 2008, p. 36-37.

The Eusebian church-state model did, however, survive as an ideal and was as such the inspiration for the new Orthodox Slavic empires to come during the Byzantine period: Bulgaria, Serbia and finally Russia. The Eusebian idea persisted and re-emerged in the age of Orthodox nation-states from the eighteenth onwards, before and after communism, and that is what Solovyov reacts against with his fellow Slavophiles in the nineteenth century. Today the Eusebian model and the Justinian notion of state-church relations (often referred to as a *symphonic relation*) continues to dominate many Orthodox churches' thinking in Orthodox majority states, such as Serbia, Bulgaria, Russia and Romania.²¹²

According to Louth, new ecclesiological ideas emerged in the twentieth century in opposition to the Eusebian model. A new model arose, drawing on Solovyov's notion of the third force as quoted above, as a theological response from the Russian diaspora theologians, shaped by their historical experience with the Tsarist state, the revolution and their subsequent exile in 1918. The Eusebian model had not delivered salvation as promised, but instead paved the way for first a subordination of the church to the emperor following Peter the Great's reforms in the eighteenth century, and then a complete dismissal of the church from society under the rule of the Soviets. It is thus hardly surprising that the Russian Orthodox diaspora's trust in the institution of an emperor or a state was weak after the communist revolution. Therefore, a search for a new model was obviously needed, as Louth points out, and in the spirit of the Russian diaspora, the answers were sought in the Patristic writings. Nicholas Afanasiev (1893-1966), professor of church history at St. Sergii Institute in Paris, suggested, mainly in his work *The Church of the Holy Spirit* published posthumously in 1971, that another Patristic model could be found beneath the Eusebian one.²¹³ According to Afanasiev, the state-church model of Eusebios presupposes what a church is and therefore there exists a primary form of the church detached from the emperor. Afanasiev argued that this other model could be found in the Epistles of St.

²¹² An Romanian example can be found in Mihai Săsăujan. "The diplomatic negotiations carried out by the Romanian Government with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople for the recognition of the autocephaly of the Romanian Orthodox Church (1885)". *Östkirchliche Studien*, Band 61, 2012, p. 245-263. See Riis. *Religion, Politics and Historiography in Bulgaria*. 2002, for the Bulgarian case. An overview of the current Orthodox church-state situation can be found in Leustean (ed.). *Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Southeastern Europe*. 2014.

²¹³ Nicholas Afanasiev. *The Church of the Holy Spirit*. Michael Plekon (ed.). Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007. See in particular p. 88 and the expansion in p. 136-139

Ignatios from the second century in which the church is seen as a local community of the baptized celebrating the Eucharist. This model became known as the Ignatian model at the center of what would come to be regarded as Eucharistic ecclesiology in Eastern Orthodoxy.

Ecclesiological models in the Montenegrin case

Turning back to Montenegro, the two models of ecclesiology described by Louth, are very much at play in the debate today. In one of my studies from 2014 of the ecclesiological models in use by the SOC and MOC, the conclusion was that the two opponents each deployed a different form of Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology in the debate about the autocephaly of the MOC in Montenegro.²¹⁴ The first model, which was the one favored by the MOC, was closely bound to the modern idea that an independent Orthodox nation and state presuppose an autocephalous church as well. In the Montenegrin case, this is, in short, the main argument of the MOC and is fully developed in Goran Sekulović's "Crnogorska identitetska prava i slobode".²¹⁵ Sekulović' claims here that:

The Orthodox tradition contains a rule, in which an autocephalic church's borders identifies with that of an independent state (nation, state, church).²¹⁶

Sekulović supports this claim with a reference to canon law (which must be Canon XVII from Chalcedon in 451) and goes on to argue that an Orthodox state therefore inherently has an obligation to create an independent (autocephalous) church. In Sekulović and the MOC's perception of history and state-church relations it seems clear that they draw on a Eusebian model. The church and state are identified as overlapping and dependent on each other.

The SOC – for obvious reasons – denies the relevance of this church-legal argument. The SOC metropolitan Amfilohije refuted this argument in a short text, in which he sketches out his understanding of the Church. The text is titled "The Church as the Pillar and

²¹⁴ Saggau. "Mellem Neo-patristisk of Eusebisk ekklesiologi-- Ortodokse ekklesiologiske positioner i den montenegrinske kirkestrid (1993-2013)". 2014.

²¹⁵ Sekulović. "Crnogorska identitetska prava i slobode". 2010.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 15 (Mng.: "Na sva ova pitanja je već odavno odgovoreno u pravoslavnoj tradiciji i pravilu poistovjećivanja granica nezavisnih državnih i autokefalnih crkvenih jurisdikcija (nacija, država, crkva)").

Stronghold of the Truth – The Question of Autocephaly and the Church” and is a discussion of what a true church is.²¹⁷ In it, he argues that a true Orthodox church is instituted by the true Eucharist overseen by a proper bishop. Amfilohije directly refuses the technical church-legal discussion of autocephaly, because no matter how canon law is twisted and turned, an Orthodox church can only be a true church through its belonging to the traditional Orthodox Churches and their hierarchy. It is the true Eucharist overseen by a proper bishop that ensures that the local church becomes one with the universal Church – that is for Amfilohije the true meaning of *katholikos* or *sobornost*.²¹⁸ This form of ecclesiology is to a large extent the very core of Amfilohije’s position in the Montenegrin debate about autocephaly. In Amfilohije’s position, the Ignatian model is accepted and it could therefore be possible to alter canonical decrees (such as Canon XVII from 451, mentioned earlier). The model centers on the Eucharist celebration in the local church as the *main* sign of a true church. Church law is of less importance.²¹⁹ Amfilohije’s approach to ecclesiology and that of the MOC each draw on one of the two different models described by Louth.

The development of state-centered historiography: The Eusebian history of salvation

The MOC’s Eusebian approach to ecclesiology makes it reasonable to assume that they also approach historiography in a Eusebian way. Eusebios’s approach to the church and the emperor is similar in his ecclesiology and historiography. It is therefore crucial to note that Eusebios was not a dogmatic thinker, but rather a historian. His ecclesiology derives from his writings on history, and so his conceptions of emperor and church are bound to his historiography. The Eusebian ecclesiological model is firstly a consequence of how he views the history of salvation, and secondly how this view is interpreted into the world of nation-states. The following short section is an assessment of Eusebios’s historiography before I return to a discussion of how it is reinterpreted in the MOC today.

²¹⁷ Amfilohije. “The Church as the Pillar and Stronghold of the Truth – The Question of Autocephaly and the Church”. 2013.

²¹⁸ Saggau. “Mellem Neo-patristisk of Eusebisk ekklesiologi— Ortodokse ekklesiologiske positioner i den montenegrinske kirkestrid (1993-2013)”. 2014.

²¹⁹ Ibid. and Louth. “Ignatios or Eusebios: two models of patristic ecclesiology”. 2010.

The tradition of the Christian account of history or what should be known as Church History is ascribed, according to Eusebios, who was the Bishop of Caesarea (263-339), to Julius Africanus (160-240), who in 221 wrote the first Christian world history.²²⁰ Africanus's pursuit was an eschatological one and his history was a way to count the 6000 years of history of mankind from Adam to Christ to the Last Judgement in accordance with the Book of Revelation. In 231 AD, Hippolytos (170-235) expanded Africanus's text and this became the basis for Eusebios's first version of the *Chronicon* (a church chronicle) from 303 AD.²²¹ Hippolytos's and Africanus's texts are born out of two early Christian-Judaic ideas, which had a profound influence on the Christian writing of history. These ideas are chiliasm and eschatology, which both are concepts from the Book of Revelation and Judaism. The basic idea is that Christ will return in a final judgement and initiate a 1000-year reign. World history becomes a narrative from the fall of Adam towards redemption, judgment, atonement and final salvation. Eusebios reinterprets this in his work *Church History* from the early fourth century in which the foundation of the second Rome (Constantinople) and the rule of Constantine the Great are steps in mankind's history towards salvation. The emperor becomes a part and player in the Christian journey toward salvation from Eusebios and onwards.²²² The sacred is bound to the political state from hereon in Orthodox thinking on history.

The Eusebian way of writing history bears several implicit thoughts, such as Africanus's conception of time and history as a basic narrative from creation and fall, which ends with the final judgement. All events, persons and movements are interpreted into this narrative of salvation. The emperor has also become embedded into this narrative.²²³ The emperor plays a crucial role as an appointed guardian instituted and blessed by Christ on Earth, who promotes and protects the Christian society, according to Eusebios in his *Life of Constantine*.²²⁴ The emperor and later the state are necessary guardians for the Christian church

²²⁰ Eusebios. *The Church History*. Paul L. Maier (trans.). Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999, p. 33.

²²¹ Ibid. p. 370-371.

²²² Schmidt. *Church and World-- Eusebios's, Augustine's, and Yoder's Interpretations of the Constantinian Shift*. 2020, p. 25-60 see also Brian Croke. "Historiography". In Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*. Oxford. Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 406- 435, p. 407-408.

²²³ P.G. Lindhardt. *Stat og Kirke*. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels forlag, 1960, p. 33; Croke. "Historiography". 2015, p. 407-408.

²²⁴ Eusebios. *Konstantins Liv*. 2015.

peregrinating through the world – and so the “powers of the sword” (Romans 13.4) are rightfully the state’s to wield. However, this Eusebian historiography binds the church to the empire and this bond is later interpreted as a bond to the king or the nation-state – and thus the history of the Church naturally also becomes the history of the state. They become inseparable in the historiographical tradition that follows the trail of Eusebios. Medieval Western chronicles attest to this trend with their proto-national chronicle of state and church. This was pushed even further by the advent of the Protestant nation-states. Eusebian historiography connects the church and the empire so tightly together that they cannot be understood without each other. The empire deals with the outward (one could say secular) matters and the church with the inner (religious) matters, but they strive towards the same “common good”, which is a part of God’s history of salvation.

A modern reinterpretation of Eusebios

The historiographical scheme used by the MOC follows the same lines as Eusebios’s in a modern form. The obsession of the MOC-oriented writers to find proof of the existence of a medieval Slavic state in the Montenegrin region with an independent church builds on a Eusebian historiographical approach to the past. In their opinion, the modern Montenegrin state and church need to be continuations of the prior church and state through the centuries – and these two concepts, church and state, are closely bound and inseparable. In this approach, the new Montenegrin state needs its own church, because the state and church embody the care for the welfare of the Montenegrins – both politically and religiously. What Goran Sekulović calls “the Orthodox tradition”, in which church and state are identified as one unit, could very well instead be called the “Eusebian tradition”. The emperor is just interpreted as the nation-state today, just as the “polis” in Canon XVII of Chalcedon is interpreted as the nation-state. It is crucial to underline that this historiographical ideology in the MOC is deeply rooted in Eastern Orthodox Christianity, as Solovyov points out and as is further analyzed as a contemporary trend by Daniela Kalkandjieva. Kalkandjieva suggests that the use of a vernacular in the liturgy can be considered as one of the roots of the close relationship between state, church and later nation in the Slavic world, which is further enforced by the institutional structures of the Eastern Orthodox churches throughout the Orthodox empires, nation-states and even during the Ottoman period in

which the church was the primary political institution for the Orthodox.²²⁵ These historical circumstances fit well together with Eusebian historiography, because the theologically prescribed close connection between emperor and church could neatly be interpreted as a call for a close relationship between state, nation and church today – as in Montenegro and elsewhere in the Orthodox world. Despite Solovyov’s critique and Afanasiev’s attempt to form a new church-centered ecclesiology freed from the emperor and state, the close connection between state and church seems to suffice in the modern world of nation-states.

The dismantling of a state-centered historiography

Unlike the clear contrast between Eusebian ecclesiology and Ignatian ecclesiology, there is not a tightly connected rival form of historiography to the Eusebian one. However, Afanasiev’s analysis and later Louth’s and John A. McGuckin’s draw attention to the existence of a primary form of the Church (the Ignatian one) beneath the Eusebian conception of the imperial Church.²²⁶ In the same manner, I would argue that a form of Eastern Orthodox historiography is formulated in which there exists a primary or, to use Solovyov’s words, a third form of ecclesial historiography before the connection between state and church in the Eusebian scheme. This tradition of church-centered historiography is perhaps more rudimentary through the centuries and does not achieve a coherent form until the twentieth century when the Russian Orthodox theologians began to rethink ecclesiology and history disconnected from the state.

In the following section, I will unravel this tradition, which for now could be called an “Athanasian historiography”, because its main feature is that it returns to the Patristic writings as a common ground from which to interpret history – in particular St. Athanasius the Great’s (298-373) historiography detached from the emperor. In Athanasius’s writings, such as *Against the Arians* and *Life of St. Antony*, he denies the emperor a primary role and primary agency in Christian history, but instead puts the authority over history in the hands of the church. This is most prominently reformulated into a modern approach to history by Georges Florovsky (1893-1979). Athanasius’s famous image of St. Antony in *Life of St. Antony* describes the ideal

²²⁵ Kalkandjieva. “A Comparative Analysis on Church-State Relations in Eastern Orthodoxy: Concepts, Models, and Principles”. 2011.

²²⁶ Louth. “Ignatios or Eusebios: two models of patristic ecclesiology”. 2010; McGuckin. “The Legacy of the 13th Apostle: Origins of the East Christian Conceptions of Church and State 2003.

ecclesial life in the desert, which becomes a powerful image of the church walking towards salvation in the desert. The emperors are free to walk along, but their role is reduced to the same as that of all Christian believers.²²⁷

Florovsky's historiography

The eremite in the desert from, amongst others, Athanasius' writings is one of Florovsky's favorite images of the church, while the state and nation are depicted as the empire in the city in this image.²²⁸ The Church is only related to the Divine in an upward direction, and any preoccupation with the mundane would disturb this perspective. The purpose of history and the job of the historian is to draw the focus back to the relationship between the Church and the Divine. It is a vertical relationship, unlike that of secular or national historiography, which follows lines of horizontal human development through history. Therefore, just like Afanasiev, Florovsky implicitly argues that there is a primary form of the Church before the Eusebian one. In this primary form, the communality of the Church is central. However, it does not make Florovsky's perception of history into a simple history of dogmatics, because it still has to relate to the personal experience of man with the Divine, thereby indirectly referring to the notion of how man becomes united with God (the Godmanhood) from Solovyov. This image and form of history resembles to a great extent the very form of "history" found in Athanasius's *Life of St. Antony*, which seems to be Florovsky's blueprint.

In Florovsky's work on *The Authority of the Ancient Councils and the Tradition of the Fathers*, first printed in German in 1967, he argues that the true criterion of history is that "Christ is the Truth", echoing Athanasius.²²⁹ It is the divine revelation in Christ and not the emperor that is the sole source of history – and the connection between empire and church is thus denied any historical relevance for the Church. In another article from 1963, *The Function of*

²²⁷ S. Cartwright. "Athanasius' 'Vita Antonii' as Political Theology: The Call of Heavenly Citizenship". *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 2016, p. 241-264 for a thorough discussion of Athanasius's interpretation of the emperor's role in *Life of St. Antony*.

²²⁸ Georges Florovsky. "Antinomies of Christian history: Empire and desert". In *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky* (Vol. 2). Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1974, p. 67-100.

²²⁹ Georges Florovsky. "The authority of the Ancient Councils and the Tradition of the Fathers". In *Georges Florovsky collected works – Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*. Vaduz: Bieververtriebsanstalt, vol. I, 1987, p. 93-104, p. 97.

Tradition in the Ancient Church, Florovsky argues that the true tradition, which is the core of Church History, should be understood correctly through Athanasius's writings. Florovsky quotes Athanasius to argue that there is only one "Tradition" and that it derives from what the Lord gave and the Fathers preserved.²³⁰ Florovsky goes on to argue in his work on Christian historiography,²³¹ *The Predicament of the Christian Historian* (1959), that "the Christian historian will regard history at once as a mystery and as a tragedy—a mystery of salvation and a tragedy of sin".²³² In doing so, he concludes that the writing of history is also the unfolding of the mystery of salvation and sin. A crucial reason behind this is that Florovsky seems to regard history as a form of preservation and theologizing on the very tradition of Christianity, as he quotes Athanasius: "the Fathers preserves". Florovsky notes in the opening of his work from 1959 that Christianity is a religion for historians, because history is the witness to the tradition. The mystery of the faith can only be understood through history. History is in this light also inseparable from salvation – and there exists no secular history for the Christian. There is only one history and that is the one of salvation. Such a notion of history also rebels against the idea that Church history and the secular history of a nation belong together. They might interact, but their purpose is not the same.

A major reason for this seems to be that the patristic heritage is in Florovsky's opinion not entirely a question for the dogmatic. The patristic heritage is rather a question for the historian, who must try to unpack the words of the Fathers in today's setting. The tradition needs to be preserved *constantly*, as he argues in the above-mentioned article on the tradition from 1963 in which he quotes Athanasius. This point of view is characteristic of Florovsky, whose main theoretical thought was what he himself called the *neo-patristic synthesis*. In short, the synthesis is a way of answering modern-day problems through readings and discussion of the Patristic writings. It could perhaps best be described as a form of hermeneutic method, which Florovsky himself applied throughout his writing – without being occupied with formulating a

²³⁰ Georges Florovsky. "The Function of Tradition in the Ancient Church". In *Georges Florovsky collected works – Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*. Vaduz: BUCHervertriebsanstalt, vol. I, 1987, p. 73-92, p. 83.

²³¹ A lengthy and well-balanced interpretation of Florovsky's historiography can be found in Paul L. Gavrilyk. *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*. Oxford: Oxford University press, 2014. This section owes a great deal to Gavrilyk's close reading of Florovsky.

²³² Georges Florovsky. "The Predicament of the Christian Historian". In *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky* (Vol. 2). Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1974, p. 31-67, p. 65.

clearer description of what the synthesis and the methodology actually consisted of. To some extent it seems more like a slogan than an actual method, which is visible in the multitude of ways the synthesis is applied in Orthodox settings.²³³

Florovsky's original departure into historiography is through Aleksandr Ivanovich Herzen's (1812-1870) philosophy of history and inspiration from the Slavophiles, Dostojevskij, Khomyakov and Solovyov, as well as inspiration and/or direct opposition to the older generation of Orthodox diaspora theologians – often referred to as the theologians of the Russian Religious Renaissance.²³⁴ From these Russian theologians and writers, he inherited a notion of absolute freedom for the individual human in history, which stands in contrast to Western determinism or structuralism in modern or post-modern historiography. History is driven by personal choices. The salvation of the individual stands at the heart of history – and the actions of individuals are taken by Florovsky as the primary driver of history. Florovsky's historiography is therefore not an assessment of the progression of societies as Solovyov's. It is rather an ideographic portrayal of individuals and their thoughts and actions. History is not a reconstruction of how the past was, but an opportunity to engage in the interpretation of and dialogue with the past. His works therefore often take the form of an assessment of one person's theology and persona.²³⁵ As such it is in keeping with the more mystical tradition of the Orthodox theology, which recognizes the divine as an absolute opposition to our world following the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite's apophatic theology. Church History is for Florovsky first and foremost a vertical line, almost a process of deification, whereas the secular or Protestant tradition of his time was a horizontal line following the development of institutions or ideas.

In his grand exposition of Russian history, *Ways of the Russian Theology* from 1937, this becomes very clear, because he constantly comments, assess and even speculates about each individual portrayed. He engages in a discussion with each of them. Florovsky clearly

²³³ An introduction can be found in Kallistos Ware. "Orthodox theology today: trends and tasks". *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 12:2, 2012, p. 105-121 or in Louth. *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*. 2015, p. 77-93.

²³⁴ Gavriilyuk. "Georges Florovsky's Monograph 'Herzen's Philosophy of History'", 2015; Paul L. Gavriilyuk. "Florovsky's Neopatristic Synthesis and the Future Ways of Orthodox Theology". In Aristotle Papanikolaou and George E. Demacopoulos, and (eds.). *Orthodox Constructions of the West*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013. p. 112; Gavriilyuk. *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*. 2014, p. 86.

²³⁵ Gavriilyuk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*. 2014, p. 90-91.

felt that he needed to almost feel their lines of thought in order to portray them correctly – a certain form of hermeneutic engagement. However, he is not blind to the wider developments and cultural, economic and political shifts that influenced each person. It is just not the main theme of his work. In *Ways of the Russian Theology*, he unfolds each writer’s point of view by situating them within their time, but that did not mean that these situations, or structures, had the primary agency. This was reserved for the individual, who had a great form of freedom of creativity, according to Florovsky. History was not a linear progression, as in Eusebios or Western idealistic thought, but marked by turns, twists, crises and jumps ahead. This particular form of indeterminism is visible in the title of the work. He chooses the plural “Ways” (Russian Пути / Puti), because he does not see history as a coherent progression that the viewer is able to trace as one single trajectory.²³⁶ Florovsky clearly positions himself directly against a tendency in the Western forms of history in which structures are given primary agency, and concepts such as “world spirit” (Hegel) or “class” (Marx) are the drivers of history. He contrasted German idealism and opposed what he saw as a decaying form of liberal Protestant writing of history in which the progression of societies and the church would gradually lead to the kingdom of God. His thought was shaped by the experience of the war and the Russian Revolution, and for that reason, positions similar to Florovsky’s in matters such as personality, individual freedom and the return to ancient Christian history, are also visible in Protestant and Catholic thought from around the same time. A point in case is de Certeau, who shares the same attention and care for individual freedom. German idealism seems to have been played out by Florovsky’s time for all Christian traditions. For that reason, Florovsky writes in the conclusion of his work *Ways of the Russian Theology*:

In history alone can one be fully convinced of the mystical reality of the Church and be liberated from the temptation to twist Christianity into abstract doctrine or moralism. Christianity exists entirely in history and is entirely about history. It is not just a revelation in history, but a call to history and to historical action and creativity.²³⁷

²³⁶ Florovsky. *Ways of the Russian Theology*. 1987.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

He goes on to say:

Patristic theology is always a “theology of the facts”, it returns us to events, to events of sacred history.²³⁸

Despite the similarity with other contemporary streams of thought in the Christian world, Florovsky inherited an anti-Western sentiment from the Slavophiles, which influenced his historiography. His opposition to German idealism and the liberal trend in Protestantism also pitted him against other Western forms of historiography.²³⁹ Namely the classic Anglican and conservative presumption that history was more an organic form in which all individuals were bound together in a slow progression. Florovsky rejected any form of organic interpretation of history, because he saw it as an abstraction devoid of personal agency. History was for Florovsky mainly a tale of unity or collapse. Human society existed only through the continual upholding of unity, otherwise it would decline into fragmentation. As such, it takes on a form which draws heavily on Athanasius’s description of the monastic life of unity and Solovyov’s characterization of the basic principle of integral knowledge, which is first and foremost unity. In such a perception of unity in history, Khomyakov’s concept of sobornost clearly shines through. The sobornost or communality (the Orthodox interpretation of the *katholou* - catholic) of the church was all that mattered.²⁴⁰ The historian in Florovsky’s interpretation followed suit with that of Solovyov, Khomyakov and Athanasius – either trying to unite single events or disunite them. Florovsky’s interpretation of history builds on some of the same Slavophil theological assumptions that Afanasiev has about ecclesiology. The unity – sobornost – of the local church is central both for history and ecclesiology.

Another central part of Florovsky’s anti-Westernism is also apparent in *Ways of the Russian Theology* when he laments what he calls the *Western captivity* of the Orthodox Church, which is sometimes said to amount to “historical pseudomorphosis” – borrowing Oswald Spengler’s concept. In short, Florovsky argued that the Western churches had left the Patristic heritage and thereby lost their connection to the true Christian tradition. In itself this was of

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 297.

²³⁹ Gavriilyk. *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*. 2014, p. 176-184.

²⁴⁰ Georges Florovsky. “The Catholicity of the Church”. In *Georges Florovsky collected works – Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*. Vaduz: BUCHER-Vertriebsanstalt, vol. I, 1987, p. 57-72.

course problematic for the West, which had departed from true Christianity, but for the Orthodox Churches it also became dangerous too, because Western theology still influenced and took hold of Orthodoxy. The Orthodox tradition was therefore changed, perhaps most visibly with the ecclesial parts of the Petrine reforms, which quite directly imposed Western thoughts on the Orthodox Church.²⁴¹ Florovsky argued and hoped that the return to the patristic Fathers would free Orthodox theology from this captivity. In a way, this particular form of anti-Westernism takes on a structure, which borrows not only from biblical imagery, but quite literally from Athanasius. Standing against the world and defending true Orthodoxy is perhaps the main trait of Athanasius, who stood up against several emperors and was exiled several times. Athanasius's conception of history, Christian life and the monastic ideal is written against an overwhelming force. This is something that Florovsky seems to transfer onto his own time and experience as a Russian living in exile. In that regard, it makes sense that Florovsky has looked towards Athanasius rather than Eusebios, because the reformulation of theology in light of the experience of exile as a consequence of faith in the true Christianity could be found here.

Athanasian historiography

In the so-called neo-patristic school, which followed Florovsky's slogan and returned to the fathers, the thought of the patristic Fathers was at the center, which could be seen as a continuation of the tradition of the Slavophiles.²⁴² Florovsky's works, influential as they became, were in their essence historiographical writings – and his thoughts about history were always a key theme in his writing. Florovsky's thoughts about history, centered on Athanasius, are perhaps the most radical break with Eusebian historiography in modern Eastern Orthodox theology.

However, Florovsky doesn't seem to have thought coherently about the features of such a form of Athanasian historiography, but rather seemed to exercise it through his Patristic studies. This is a distinctive trait of Florovsky's thought, which is also apparent in the way he practiced rather than theorized the neo-patristic synthesis. In some way, the Athanasian historiography therefore becomes much more apparent in the second generation of Orthodox neo-patristic theologians following him. In the writings of John Meyendorff and John Zizioulas,

²⁴¹ Gavrilyk. *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*. 2014, p. 176-184.

²⁴² Ware. "Orthodox theology today: trends and tasks". 2012, p. 113-114.

some of Florovsky's points are turned into actual historiography.²⁴³ In Meyendorff's work on *Byzantine Theology* from 1979, the neo-patristic way of working is clear. Meyendorff works through Byzantine thinking, and subject after subject he distills the important theological points of this period.²⁴⁴ The harsh criticism of the close relationship between state and church found in Florovsky, Solovyov and Athanasius influences Meyendorff's interpretation. Meyendorff repeats the same Athanasian point in *Byzantine Theology*, *The Orthodox Church* and *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church*. He argues that the church became subordinate to the emperor, which led to the undoing of Byzantine Orthodoxy.²⁴⁵ Moreover, Meyendorff describes, in his analysis of middle Byzantine intellectual life, how the monastic ideal, dating back to Athanasius's portrayal of St. Antony and the following Desert Fathers, became a political power to reckon with – a power that challenged the close relationship between emperor and church. This "monastic" ideal, as Meyendorff calls it, is an Athanasian historiography in full form – and one Meyendorff draws a positive picture of.²⁴⁶

Similarly, the neo-patristic synthesis be seen in Zizioulas's main publication, *Being as Communion* from 1985. As in Meyendorff's work, Zizioulas progresses through subject after subject (it is a collection of essays, so that process seems inevitable) slowly reaching certain points through the examination of a given Patristic source. He even repeats a few of Florovsky's central points, such as the critique of a purely historical approach to the New Testament,²⁴⁷ and the necessity of a notion of complete personal freedom without the restraints of abstract concepts and units.²⁴⁸

As Andrew Louth makes clear in his work on *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*, a range of Orthodox theologians could be called neo-patristic. They might have their differences, but they share in common the return to Patristic sources and the influence from Philokalia and the Slavophiles.²⁴⁹ I would argue that Florovsky – and certainly Meyendorff and Zizioulas as well –

²⁴³ Louth. *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*. 2015, p. 178-193; 214-225.

²⁴⁴ Meyendorff. *Byzantine Theology*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1979.

²⁴⁵ John Meyendorff. *The Orthodox Church*. New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 1981, p. 18-38; John Meyendorff. *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church*. New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 1982, p. 43-66.

²⁴⁶ Meyendorff. *Byzantine Theology*. 1979, p. 54-61.

²⁴⁷ John D. Zizioulas. *Being as Communion*. New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁴⁹ Louth. *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*. 2015.

crafted a new form of Orthodox historiography in this neo-patristic stream in a manner much similar to Afanasiev's ecclesiology. When it comes to Zizioulas, Afanasiev's ecclesiology almost merges with Florovsky's historiography. Central in Zizioulas's historiography is that the state-centered focus was dismantled and the focus shifted towards the Eucharistic local church inspired by the ideals and images from Athanasius's description of the monastic life of St. Antony. Furthermore, this form of historiography doesn't contain a Eusebian notion of chiliasm and the same form of eschatology or apocalyptic thinking. World history is not a progression towards the end times, in which the Emperor-Christ figure will begin a 1000-year reign of peace. History is now and the focus is on the communities' relationship with the divine (theosis). Salvation is now, as pointed out at the end of chapter V.

Athanasian historiography in Eastern Orthodox theology, as I have chosen to call it, is essentially a way of rethinking Church history and consequently the Church outside of the confines of the state and the nation. This problem, so to speak, is an imminent challenge in modern Orthodox thinking as Vasilios Makrides notes.²⁵⁰ Perhaps it is most noticeable in among others McGuckin's article from 2003, Aristotle Papanikolaou and George E. Demacopoulos's recent anthology *Christianity, Democracy, and the Shadow of Constantine* from 2017, and Papanikolaou's *The Mystical as Political* from 2012.²⁵¹ The anthology edited by Papanikolaou and Demacopoulos is preoccupied with thinking Eastern Orthodoxy beyond the state and the nations in opposition to the long tradition of state-church cooperation inspired by Eusebios. I would argue that their anthology is a modern form of Athanasian historiography, which rebels against what Papanikolaou and Demacopoulos call "Constantine's shadow". A shadow Louth and subsequently I have called Eusebian ecclesiology and historiography.

²⁵⁰ Makrides. "Orthodox Christianity and State/Politics Today". 2019. p. 235.

²⁵¹ McGuckin. "The Legacy of the 13th Apostle: Origins of the East Christian Conceptions of Church and State 2003; Aristotle Papanikolaou and George E. Demacopoulos. "Outrunning Constantine's Shadow". In Aristotle Papanikolaou and George E. Demacopoulos (eds.). *Christianity, Democracy, and the Shadow of Constantine*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017, p. 1-8; Aristotle Papanikolaou. *The Mystical as Political*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.

Serbian Orthodox historiography

In the same historical period as that spanning from the Slavophiles to Florovsky, another Slavic and outright Serbian form of historiography took form, which became the base for Metropolitan Amfilohije's contemporary approach to history. This development was closely linked with what I have called Athanasian historiographical thought in the neo-patristic school. The Athanasian ideal of the church in the desert freed from the emperor sufficed and took prominence in modern Serbian Orthodox theology and the theologians' approaches to history, but with additional layers from the Slavophiles.

A partial reason for this is that all of the main Slavic and Serbian Orthodox thinkers lived in close dialogue with the Russians and the Russian diaspora in the West. In fact, all of the Slavic/Serbian theologians that will be discussed below, had studied in either Russia or a major Russian-inspired center in the West – or for most of them both – in which they were all exposed to Slavophile ideas, and many of them even to Florovsky's writings. It is therefore understandable that the Southern Slavic and Serbian Orthodox notion of history was influenced from abroad – but as Andrew Louth remarks, there are also certain features of Serbian theology which make it unique in Eastern Orthodoxy.²⁵² The point of departure for this section is the discussion in article 6, which touched upon the distinct feature of Metropolitan Amfilohije's historiography. The following section will expand on this and end with a discussion of this Serbian tradition's similarities and differences with Florovsky's Athanasian historiography. My main point is that Amfilohije's historiographical theology, and with it that of the branch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, is an Athanasian one. The rivalry between the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church and Amfilohije's church is mirrored or perhaps even derives from the contrast between their forms of historiography. In order to understand Amfilohije's position it is necessary to understand a distinct tradition in Serbian Orthodox theology. The following section is an attempt to draw up this particular tradition and highlight its relationship and its differences with the Russian diaspora theologians, such as Florovsky and Meyendorff.

Njegoš's notion of history and the Divine

Like the history of Florovsky's reformulated historiography, the history of a specific form of Serbian Orthodox historiography takes off with the Slavophiles. In 1831 – while the Slavophiles

²⁵² Louth. *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*. 2015.

published their first works – a young man of the Petrović-Njegoš clan was consecrated into the office of metropolitan and ruler of Montenegro. He would be known as Petar II Petrović-Njegoš. Njegoš, as he often is called, has been introduced and discussed several times (see mainly articles 5 and 6). At this point, it is therefore enough to note that Njegoš is perhaps the greatest theologian and poet of the pre-nation-state period of South Eastern Europe. Njegoš, who spoke and read Russian, undertook two major trips to Russia during his early years during which he may have become acquainted with the Russian Slavophiles' thought and writings. His travels to Russia gave him not only ecclesial and political backing from Russia, but must have given him intellectual inspiration, which is visible in his major library dominated by Russian works. He shares at least Romantic conservatism with Khomyakov, who lived in the same period. Njegoš, however, never became much aware of the deeper theological meaning of the state, perhaps because he himself was a secular ruler and a metropolitan – and hardly saw the contradiction between those two offices which Solovyov makes much effort to stress. The interests of Njegoš's church and his theocratic state always aligned, because the source of both was himself. Instead, he was ahead of his time with his Romantic notions of tradition and people, which is where he develops a more mature theology that is of interest here. His two most important works are *Luča mikrokozma* (*The Ray of the Microcosm*, 1845) and *Gorski vijenac* (*The Mountain Wreath*, 1847), which are both widely debated and the second one even highly controversial.²⁵³

An issue in most analyses of Njegoš's work is that his background as a trained Orthodox theologian is often neglected. This leads to much speculation about his philosophy detached from his theological background, which then ends up in strange places. Just to mention one common mistake: his view on human nature and the nature of evil is often interpreted as an esoteric form of the medieval heresies of the Bulgarian Bogomils, which is done repeatedly by Zdenko Zlatar, Roland Clark and Nemanja Radulović.²⁵⁴ There are sound historical reasons to dismiss this speculation, because the hierarchy of the Bogomil church was non-existent after the

²⁵³ The best neutral introduction in English is the unpublished essays in Edward Dennis Goy. *The Sabre and the Song*. 2010 [retrieved <http://www.njegos.org/petrovics/sabre.pdf> 30.07.2020]. See also Saggau. "Kosovo Crucified – narratives in the contemporary Serbian Orthodox perception of Kosovo". 2019 for a further discussion of Njegoš.

²⁵⁴ Zlatar. *The Poetics of Slavdom*. 2007, p. 508- 582; Roland Clark. "The Dark Side in Njegos and Milton". *Sydney Studies in Religion*, 6/1 , 2004, p. 102-119; Nemanja Radulović. "Esotericism, Orthodoxy and Romanticism in P. Petrović Njegoš's *The Ray of the Microcosm*". *CEENASWE* 2, 2018.

Ottoman takeover of the Balkans, and there does not exist any verified Bogomil sources pertaining to the Bogomils after the fourteenth century in Serbia or Montenegro.²⁵⁵ If Njegoš was thinking like a dualistic Bogomil, as many scholars suggest, a medieval concept of the world has to somehow have lingered on for almost 400 years in Montenegro without any external proof of its existence and then finally taken root in a well-trained intelligent theologian from the monastic tradition, who would have been trained to dismiss it as heresy. It seems to me much more obvious to see Njegoš's theology as a continuation of the mystical teachings of the Orthodox monastic tradition in line with the Byzantine ideal originating with Athanasius's depiction of St. Anthony. Njegoš and many of his family belonged to the monastic tradition – a tradition that would have existed in Montenegro and monasteries nearby during his lifetime in contrast to the Bogomil teachings. These places would have been alive with the inherited Neo-platonic teaching of Athanasius, Dionysius the Areopagite, Gregory of Nyssa or other Fathers whose work was in *The Philokalia*, which after all was published in nearby Venice shortly before Njegoš's reign. Njegoš's point of departure seems rather to be from this monastic tradition, but with a modern Romantic influence, and inspiration from the Augustinian pietistic movement through Romantic writers, such as Milton or Pascal. It is today a well-established fact that Njegoš was inspired by Milton and through him borrowed Augustinian and Neoplatonic concepts as well. It is therefore crucial to remember that Augustine shared at least the Neoplatonic sensibility with the mystical tradition of the East – and both Pascal and Milton shared a concept of the hidden God (*Deus Absconditus*), which falls in line with the apophatic theology of Dionysius the Areopagite and the Cappadocian Fathers of the East. At this exact theological spot of mysticism, the Western and Eastern traditions do not contradict each other, but rather reinforce each other, which is so visible in Njegoš's thoughts.

In *The Ray of the Microcosm* and *The Mountain Wreath* it becomes clear that Njegoš's conception of the divine is based on the theological apophatic notion of the divine as unknowable. It's only through theosis that unity with God can be restored. This is a recurring theme amongst the Slavophiles. The main character of both of Njegoš's major works are often left without God and strive to return to a true relationship. History is therefore not just a Eusebian narrative of slow historical progress according to Njegoš, but it is rather a constant dialogue

²⁵⁵ John Fine. "The Size and Significance of the Bulgarian Bogomil Movement". *East European Quarterly*, Winter 1977, p. 385-412.

between times. As argued in article 6, Njegoš deploys a mystical understanding of time and text in which biblical time, the time of Christ, the present day and the future all mirror each other. This Quadrigal or allegorical form of text and time has historiographical consequences. History, which Njegoš's work *The Mountain Wreath* could be understood as an interpretation of, is in constant dialogue with the past and present. His own time, the time of the main persons in his epic and biblical time are in dialogue and mimic each other.

As such, Njegoš's mystical concept of time has some similarity with Florovsky's idea that Church history is vertical, unlike secular history. History is now and is about the relationship between the Church and the Divine. History is not a progression of time, but marked by jumps, crises and pits – which the historians or poets need to keep together. This idea is one Florovsky seems to have molded over Athanasius's thoughts about salvation history as it is formulated in *The Incarnation of the Word*, which might have been a source in common between Njegoš and Florovsky. Another key notion in Njegoš's *The Mountain Wreath* is that the fate of each person is intimately bound to their community. Indeed, in the epic, the division between Christians and Muslims in the Montenegrin clans threatens the salvation and future of the people, which leads to the drastic conclusion that the Muslim converts must be exterminated. Apart from the drastic measures, Njegoš clearly constructs an idea of an ideal community, which is not state-bound, but is something else. This community in Njegoš's writing clearly draws on the Romantic notion of *volk*, but it is only in its first initial and early steps.²⁵⁶ However, overlooked as it is, Njegoš's conception of community or people also bears close resemblance with Khomyakov's concept of "sobornost". As Louth notes, Khomyakov's thought shares many similarities with Western conservative Romanticism, which seems to be an accurate label for Njegoš's thought as well. The basic conceptions of Church and people in both Orthodox writers, Khomyakov and Njegoš, seem to go well together and thereby reinforce a similar focus in the interpretation of Christianity and history. Therefore it is easy to see, as the Serbian theologians that followed do, Njegoš's community as a form of the local Orthodox church described by Khomyakov. Njegoš's concept of community could simply be called sobornost. After all, the Christian Montenegrins are led by the metropolitan in Njegoš's epic, and in the final scene, after killing the Muslim converts, the Montenegrins go to church at Christmas. Njegoš's concept of community could be seen as a unity between people and church. The community in the epic is a sort of prototype of

²⁵⁶ Goy. *The Sabre and the Song*. 2010, p. 76-77.

sobornost, not only because of the close link between Khomyakov's and Njegoš's thought, but because the Slavic word, *sobornost*, would to Njegoš both refer to the bishops' council and the church gathering, which are the main stage of his epic in which all essential questions are discussed and decided upon. The polysemy of the word *sobornost* in Slavic plays well together with Njegoš's poetic sense. By using it, Njegoš provides an early form of Slavic or Serbian historiography in which the community or local church is the focal point. For Njegoš there is no division between state and church, because his realm was a theocratic Orthodox state led by a metropolitan. This division would, however, come.

Velimirović and the return to St. Sava

One of the reason for Njegoš great influence in Serbian Orthodoxy is due to (later Saint) Nikolaj Velimirović's (1881-1956) writings – among others his influential book *The Religion of Njegoš* from 1911.²⁵⁷ Velimirović is, like Njegoš and the two other theologians that will be analyzed in the rest of the chapter, a debated personality. They are celebrated amongst some factions of Serbian society and shunned by others today. Velimirović is, however, undoubtedly the most influential and prolific Serbian theologian of the twentieth century, because he was the first truly educated and systematic theological thinker of the Serbian Orthodox Church following the restoration of the Belgrade Patriarchate in the twentieth century. He rose to the rank of metropolitan following (a debatable) education abroad, but was later exiled after the Second World War – and therefore spent the rest of his life in the West. He was sanctified in the late 1980s. The controversial part of Velimirović's legacy is his initial fascination with the Hitler regime and his strong anti-Semitic writings, but he seems to have changed his mind when Nazi Germany invaded his country, imprisoned him and eventually transferred him to the concentration camp of Dachau in the final stage of the war.²⁵⁸ Velimirović's change of heart seems to be similar to what many other conservative Christians also went through during the same period in Europe.

Velimirović is most well-known for establishing a concept for a sort of “people-church”, which is called Saint-Savaism (*svetosavlje*). The concept is widely discussed, and its political implications will not be dealt with here, because they are analyzed and discussed in

²⁵⁷ Nikolaj Velimirović. *Religija Njegoševa [The Religion of Njegoš]*. Belgrade: Algoritam, 2015 (originally 1911).

²⁵⁸ See J Byford. *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism*. 2008.

detail by Buchenau.²⁵⁹ The purpose here is rather to discuss Velimirović's historiographical ideology, because he continued some of the thoughts from Njegoš and developed others in his interpretation of the Serbian heritage from its founding saint, St. Sava. Velimirović's works can be divided into two periods with different thematic focuses. The first is preoccupied with Western ideas and concepts and willingly engages in discussion with them. The second period begins when he was appointed as metropolitan of Ohrid in the early 1920s. In this second period, often called his Ohrid period, he returns to the more classic Orthodox writings, which some see as a mere application of Slavophil concepts to Serbian Orthodoxy, while other see it as the beginning of his truly Orthodox theological thinking.²⁶⁰ In Velimirović's Ohrid period, he developed the essential ideas that run through his late thinking. These late theological thoughts are still very much alive in the Serbian Orthodox Church and its theological departments today. The main one is the concept of svetosavlje, which could best be described as a sort of unifying call for the nation, the church and the state to become one organic form.²⁶¹ This concept is also called "Teodulija" (Serbian variation of the Greek name for servant of God) in his writings. Teodulija means a society in which all is governed by the ideas of St. Sava and which lives almost a monastic life. Life is then governed through four principles: faith, honesty, obedience and fortitude, as he describes in detail in his work *Teodulija; the Serbian people as Teodulija* (Теодул; Српски народ као Теодул, 1941). The book itself is a strange work written during a turning point in history. Nazi German forces invaded Serbia in early 1941, leading to bloody resistance and civil war during which Velimirović was imprisoned by the Nazi forces. The book is sort of dialogue between Velimirović and the Teodulija, the Serbian people serving God, who are silent throughout the work. The text's main theme is how the Serbian nation is chosen by God.²⁶² This is slowly built up through a discussion of the Christian teaching, which ends finally in chapter 28 when the Prophet arrives. At this point, the Western notion of history as a progression towards perfection is dismissed as a false idea. This idea will lead towards the

²⁵⁹ Buchenau. "Svetosavlje und Pravoslavljje, Nationales und Universales in der serbischen Orthodoxie". 2006, p. 13-52.

²⁶⁰ Byford. *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism*. 2008, p. 38-39.

²⁶¹ Byford. *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism*. 2008, p. 41; see also the chapter "Svetosavlje und Pravoslavljje, Nationales und Universales in der serbischen Orthodoxie" in Buchenau, *Kämpfende Kirchen*, 2006, p. 13-52.

²⁶² See Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda and Balazs Trencsenyi (eds.). *Anti-modernism: Radical Revisions of Collective Identity*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009, p. 220-221.

destruction of the Church, but Christ will return and judge humanity. Velimirović then concludes: “It is a vision of the All-man” (Serbian: “To je vizija nadčovečanska”) that will create the Teoduljia in contrast to the false idea of the West. The All-man will bring salvation.²⁶³ Velimirović thereby introduces a Serbian form of Godmanhood, in his words the All-man, a sort of Slavophil-inspired idea in which the collective Serbs could institute the Teoduljia themselves. The All-man is the end result of the divinification (theosis) of a man in which the man becomes one with the Divine. For Velimirović this was the case with St. Sava and the Serbian people during the medieval Serbian kingdom. He argues that the Serbian people, state and church were united as a Teoduljia then. The concept is not of a personal form of salvation, but a collective one thereby turning the proto-version of an ecclesial nation of Njegoš into an actual Serbian ecclesial and national one. The sobornost, the local church, is in Velimirović’s writing one with the nation and state, and thus becomes a collective embodiment of the All-man or the Teoduljia. It is a pure form of Solovyov’s third stage of human society in which all flows together into one integral knowledge governing according to the monastic ideal, which obviating the secular power. In another version of Velimirović’s text, published as *The Serbian nation as a servant of God* (a different version of Теодул; Српски народ као Теодул, 1941),²⁶⁴ this point becomes clearer. In the English translation, Velimirović writes:

what kind of example has this nation received from its secular and spiritual leaders? The example of theodoulia, the service of God as the sense of life and the path towards the Celestial Empire. [... T]he Serbian master of the house has created something exceptional in the mountains with God’s help. He has turned his home into a place of worship and a church; he has turned it into a monastery and the Holy Mountain; he has

²⁶³ Nikolaj Velimirović. *Теодул; Српски народ као Теодул* [*Teodulija; Serbian people as Teodulija*]. Chapter 28. [retrieved at <https://www.rastko.rs/svecovek/duhovnost/vlnikolaj/vlnikolaj-teodul.html> 28.07.2020]

²⁶⁴ The difference in the versions used here, both from 2010, seems to be grounded in the different editions of his work. The second edition referred to here is available in an English translation while the other is a Serbian version. See Nikolaj Velimirović. “Srpski narod kao Teodul” [The Serbian nation as a servant of God]. In Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda and Balazs Trencsenyi (eds.). *Anti-modernism: Radical Revisions of Collective Identity*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009, p. 221-230.

turned it into Jerusalem. [...] The Serbian home has become a true monastery.²⁶⁵

He goes on to say:

Christ has been for Serbs the sense of life and struggle, of suffering and death, of freedom, renewal, and labor. He has been the sense of the church, the sense of the state, the sense of the family, and the sense of the individual. No single nation has beautified the festivals of Christ with such caring deliberation and tenderness of custom as has the Serbian nation.²⁶⁶

Velimirović's speculation about Teoduljia is complex and draws heavily on Solovyov's ideas of Godmanhood and integral knowledge – a mystic vision in which mankind and Christ become one and recreate the world.

It is therefore perhaps more in Velimirović's more popular historical writings, which were widely disseminated in his lifetime and after his canonization, that his historiography and notion of Teoduljia come into play in a more direct form. In these popular works, the main theme is often the Serbian medieval dynasty of Nemanjić, founded by Stephan I Nemanjić (1168-96). Stephan's son became Stephen II, the first crowned king of Serbia, while the youngest son became St. Sava, the founder of the medieval Serbian Orthodox Church. Velimirović wrote a book on St. Sava, *The Life of Saint Sava*, an English version of which was published in the USA in 1951 towards the end of his life. In it, Velimirović seeks not only to introduce St. Sava to readers outside of the Serbian tradition, but also to deploy a certain image of Serbian Orthodox history, the Teoduljia. In short, the text describes the life of St. Sava and his family following the classic monastic ideal. However, the concepts of the All-man and Teoduljia are at play here – St. Sava is the embodiment of Godmanhood or the All-man and the society he helps create is the Teoduljia, which stands firmly on “an independent national church with

²⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 222.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 225,

national clergy”.²⁶⁷ The last chapter of the book describe the Turkish (Ottoman) invasion of the Balkans and their final burning of St. Sava’s body outside Belgrade in 1595. Velimirović notes:

So Sinan Pasha [the Ottoman governor] destroyed the body of Saint Sava, but increased his glory and influence. [...] The living soul of the saint, however, looked triumphantly at the fire from the invisible world. For Sava’s lifelong desire to be also a martyr for Christ’s sake was now fulfilled. Therefore with the smile of victory, Sava forgave Sinan Pasha, and blessed his Serbian people.²⁶⁸

The historiographical scheme deployed by Velimirović in his work on St. Sava, published in exile, unfolds in a narrative form what Solovyov envisioned in his work on integral knowledge, quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The emperor is substituted with the Serbian king and the people or nation are drawn in as the community of the church. A certain part of this is related to the language, because Velimirović frequently mentions the Serbian need for a church of their own. The vernacular is also the source of the nationalization of their church. In the midst of the Romantic nationalist image of St. Sava emerges an image in which the state is subordinated to the Church. It is St. Sava who calls on the rulers and crowns them. The church is the center and not the state. The historiographical weight is heavily put behind St. Sava and the Serbian people, while the state never plays a crucial role. The intent is to say that society as a whole should serve God and only him. This is not in alignment with the latter development of Eusebian historiography, which is seen in today’s unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church. Velimirović retells Serbian history through an Athanasian scheme very close to that of *The Life of St. Antony*, but with a clearly infused theological mindset deriving from Solovyov. The Teoduljia is the Athanasian monastic ideal freed from the emperor in the form of a modern society in which all is united in the final stage of Solovyov’s scheme. The proto-national-Christian community in Njegoš’s writings has taken on a new form in Velimirović’s writings in which the salvation of the nation-church is a collective movement, a Teoduljia, embodied in an All-man or Godmanhood. Following Velimirović, other Serbian theologians took the concept of

²⁶⁷ Nikolaj Velimirović, *The Life of Saint Sava*. Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Press, 1989, p. 65, p. 71.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 160.

Teoduljia, a collective form of Godmanhood, further, which in the end undermined the role of the state and the emperor in Serbian Orthodox historiography. A peculiarity, which I will return to, is that Velimirović clearly underlines that the invocation of the Teoduljia is through one All-man. A sort of monastic ideal person, who embodies society and creates a pathway towards salvation, much like the way St. Sava is presented.

Popović – Orthodoxy beyond the confinement of the state

Closely related to Velimirović's thought and work is Father Justin Popović (1894-1979), who was slightly younger than Velimirović and worked closely with him over an extensive period of time. Popović was, just as Velimirović, sanctified in 2010 in Serbia as St. Justin the New. As a young man, he attended the Seminar of St. Sava where Velimirović was a teacher at that time. Popović left the seminary to join the Serbian armed forces in the First World War. Following the first years of the war, he took his monastic vows in 1916 and was sent to Petrograd in Russia to study, where he began to work on the Slavophiles. The revolution cut his stay short and he traveled on to Oxford where he began to write a thesis, which was eventually dismissed because of its sharp criticism of Western thought. He returned to Serbia and later undertook studies in Athens. In Athens, he finally received a doctoral degree with a thesis on St. Makarios of Egypt – a monastic Father of the desert. Back in Serbia, he worked on various journals and seminars, and was later appointed Professor of Dogmatics at the University of Belgrade, a position which he kept until the end of the Second World War. Popović's outspoken criticism of communism throughout his life made his position as a professor in Belgrade impossible after 1945 and he eventually ended up retreating to the rural monastery of Čelije in 1948, where he stayed for the remainder of his life. At the monastery, many of the next generation of Serbian theologians visited him and Popović was successful in creating a conservative intellectual circle of theologians in opposition to the communist regime.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ Buchenau. *Kämpfende Kirchen*. 2006; see also Buchenau. "What went wrong? Church-State Relations in Socialist Yugoslavia". 2005 for a further discussion about the Serbian Orthodox Church's relationship with the state during the communist period. An example, which Buchenau refers to, is a book by Justin Popović. *Istina o Srpskoj Pravoslavnoj Crkvi u komunističkoj Jugoslaviji*. Belgrade: Manastir Čelije, 1990, in which Popović heavily criticized the atheistic communist state.

In contrast to Velimirović, Popović was a much more well-trained dogmatic thinker and in line with the Orthodox diaspora theologians of the Paris or neo-patristic school. This might have to do with two essential elements. First of all, Popović was well aware of the Slavophil heritage, which he encountered in Russia and at Oxford. Secondly, Popović was both in Athens and in Serbia in close contact with neo-patristic thinkers. The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) had its headquarters in Sremski Karlovci, the old center of Serbian theology during the Ottoman period, and Popović is said to have had, in the 1920s, a close relationship with among others the Russian metropolitan Khrapovitsky (Antony), known for his conservatism, anti-communism and Slavophil position.²⁷⁰ However, Popović's work is more closely bound to Velimirović's, especially that of Velimirović's Ohrid period in which he developed the notions of Saint-Savaism and Teoduljia, as Buchenau notes. Buchenau goes even so far as to claim that Popović's concepts of Godmanhood and Saint-Savaism (Svetosavlje) are a clear continuation of Velimirović.²⁷¹ Among other things, Popović wrote the foreword to Velimirović's *Prayers on the lake* from 1922. In this foreword Popović describes Velimirović as a saintly person and even goes on to write that the prayers in the book are that of "the All-man/ Godman" (Serbian: "Svečova").²⁷² Popović concludes that the book and Velimirović "speak of an outcast of time and space, not of man, but of All-man" (Serbian: "govori nerob vremena i prostora, ne čovek, već Svečovek"). Popović thereby casts Velimirović as the All-man and seems to buy into Velimirović's thoughts about Teoduljia.

Popović's main legacy is, however, not only his dogmatic works, but his historiography and depiction of St. Sava and the Serbian saints in his version of the *Lives of the Saints* (a Serbian Synaxarium), which plays a crucial role in Serbian Orthodox theology. This is perhaps partly due to the fact that the *Lives of the Saints* is much easier to understand and fits

²⁷⁰ A more detailed English biography can be found in Andrew Louth. *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*. 2015, p. 143-148 and a detailed English discussion of Popović's theology can be found in Zdenko Širka. "Transformation in the Theology of Tradition: A study of Justin Popović and His Hermeneutical Presuppositions". *Östkirchliche Studien*, 2018, p. 325-344, p. 336-37. A thorough Serbian analysis of Popović's theology can be found in Bogdan Lubardić. *Јустин Ђелијски и Русуја нутеву реценције руске филозофије и теологије [Justin of Celije and the Russian path of reception of Russian philosophy and theology]*. Novi Sad: Bethesda, 2009.

²⁷¹ Buchenau. *Kämpfende Kirchen*. 2006, p. 38.

²⁷² Justin Popović. "Foreword". In Nikolaj Velimirović. *Molitve na jezeru*. 1928m p. 1 [retrieved at the Serbian Digital library https://www.rastko.rs/svecovek/duhovnost/vlnikolaj/vlnikolaj_molitva.html 30.07.2020]

into the religious practice of his church. Popović or St. Justin the New is traditionally depicted with the *Lives of the Saints* in his hands, which underlines this work's central place in his legacy. For that reason, this work will be the focus here. In addition to the *Lives*, Popović wrote a number of works on St. Sava, such as *Saint-Savaism as a Philosophy of Life* (ca. 1950 – Serb. *Svetosavlje kao filozofija života*), *The Life of St. Sava and St. Symeon* (1962 in Serbian) and a Russian version of *The Life of St. Sava* (undated), which according to Buchenau are all variations or expansions of Velimirović's points.²⁷³ Andrew Louth describes Popović's theology as a form of the neo-patristic synthesis applied to a Serbian Orthodox context with great emphasis on the Church Fathers. Zdenko Širka also notes this trait in Popović's writings.²⁷⁴ Popović's main project thus seems to have been a transferal of the major Slavophil thoughts into a Serbian context, much like Velimirović.²⁷⁵ Essential in this work is Solovyov's ideas of Godmanhood and integral knowledge and Khomyakov's concept of *sobornost* which has already touched upon above.

An example of Popović's approach to history is the Russian version of *The Life of St. Sava*,²⁷⁶ which is remarkably similar to Velimirović's text of the same name. Both texts contain the depiction of a well-known scene from St. Sava's life when he chooses to follow Christ's call and travels to Athos, rather than be married and become a secular prince. This monastic theme here, which suited both Popović's and Velimirović's theology, is also used to cast St. Sava as an All-man (Godman). Popović's and Velimirović's theology are in continuation of each other on this point. The difference between the two is that Popović focuses a great deal on the deeper dogmatic aspect of personhood and knowledge in the ascetic patristic writings,²⁷⁷ but the core historiography remained the same.

In Popović's introduction to *Lives of the Saints*, republished in an English version, the concept of All-man, a neo-patristic synthesis and a Slavophil ecclesiology are formed into a

²⁷³ Buchenau. *Kämpfende Kirchen*. 2006, p. 38-40.

²⁷⁴ Širka. "Transformation in the Theology of Tradition: A study of Justin Popović and His Hermeneutical Presuppositions". 2018, p. 328.

²⁷⁵ Louth. *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*. 2015, p. 154-155.

²⁷⁶ Justin Popović. *Житие Св. Саввы* [*Life of St. Sava*]. Undated. [retrieved from https://www.rastko.rs/bogoslovje/jpopovic-zitije_save_ru.html] 30.07.2020]

²⁷⁷ Louth. *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*. 2015, p. 154-155.

historiographical theology. Popović writes that :“Only with the God-man Christ ‘life was manifested’ [...] and through Him lives eternal life”.²⁷⁸ He goes on to say:

the Lives of the Saints are nothing else but the life of the Lord Christ, repeated in every saint to a greater or lesser degree in this or that form. More precisely it is the life [...] the God-man Jesus Christ who became man. [...] [The “Lives of the Saints”] are nothing else but a certain kind of continuation of the “Acts of the Apostles.” In them is found the same Gospel [...].²⁷⁹

He continues:

The man who makes himself a Christ surpasses himself, as man, by God, by the God-man, in Whom is given the perfect image of the true, real whole man in the image of God [...]. Christians are those through whom the holy Divine-human life of Christ is continued from generation to generation until the end of the world and of time, and they all make up one body, the Body of Christ-the Church [...].²⁸⁰

According to Popović, history is a continual repeating of the process of theosis in which man must seek to become All-Man or God-man. The Christians are the community that seek this process and become the *sobornost*, or body of Christ, which unites them with Christ. In other words, it is similar to Velimirović’s Saint-Savaism and Teoduljia. It does, however, seem like Popović’s neo-patristic orientation and his anti-Western attitude has after all made him transgress the Serbian boundaries, which Velimirović sticks to, and instead view Serbian Orthodox history not as a singularity, but as one in close accordance with the Orthodox commonwealth and the Patristic heritage. St. Sava is a Serbian example of God-man, but the

²⁷⁸ Justin Popović. “Introduction to the Lives of the Saints”. In Asterios Gerostergios (trans.). *Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ*. Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1994, p. 32-50. [retrieved at http://orthodoxinfo.com/general/stjustin_intro.aspx 30.07.2020]

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

Serbian nation as such does not occupy the entire vision of an Orthodox way of life in the manner encountered in Velimirović's work. This difference might be closely linked to their various historical experiences and contexts. Popović's latter writings were after all produced while he was surrounded by an atheistic and hostile regime, and this might have made the pan-Slavic and Orthodox historiography more important to him. His close connection to Athens and the Russian metropolitan Khrapovitsky might also have provided him with this broader perspective. Moreover, his monastic life and near-isolation in the rural districts likely led to more attention being paid to the ascetic and monastic ideals so essential to the Desert Fathers and Athanasius's depiction of St. Anthony. In Popović's writing the state has almost vanished. St. Sava and the church or the God-man do not relate themselves to the state, or the empire. To use Florovsky's image from Athanasius, in Popović's historiography there is only room for the eremite in the desert. There is no Christian emperor left to form a relationship with. Popović might therefore concur with Velimirović's point that the entire society should "become a true monastery", but beyond that, the state seems to vanish from his thinking and has become entirely obliterated by his experience with the communist regime. This is evidently more visible in a short text called "The clergy of Saint Sava and political parties" (Serbian: Svetosavsko sveštenstvo i političke partije) published after his death in 1994 in Cetinje by Metropolitan Amfilohije's metropolitanate. In this text Popović notes that:

the duty of the Saint Sava's priesthood has always been and remains forever to be: leading the people to the immortal and eternal through time; to adapt the nations' souls and ideals not to the spirit of time, but to the spirit of the eternity and immortality of Saint Sava; not to bend to the winds of the various scandals of modernity..²⁸¹

²⁸¹ Justin Popović. "Svetosavsko sveštenstvo i političke partije" [The clergy of Saint Sava and political parties]. Cetinje: Svetigora Press, 1994 [retrieved at <https://www.rastko.rs/bogoslovlje/avajustin/jpopovic-partije.html> 30.07.2020]. Author's own translation (Serb.: dužnost svetosavskog sveštenstva uvek je bila i zauvek ostala; kroz vremensko voditi narod besmrtnom i večnom; narodnu dušu i narodne ideale prilagođavati ne duhu vremena, već duhu svetosavske večnosti i besmrtnosti; ne povijati se po vetru raznih sablažnjivih modernizama).

Popović here directly casts St. Sava as the Godman in which the people or, to use Velimirović's word, Teoduljia can find eternal salvation – unlike the “scandals of modernity” (communism as an example). Popović goes even further in his dismissal of the state and argues that:

Political parties, silently or openly and in principle, recommend or sanction the use of force and violence, especially when in power. The Saint Sava priest should not belong to any political party for the very reason of the Gospel. [...] Although they live in this world, the priests and the high priest of Saint Sava are not of this world.²⁸²

In other words, the church is exactly as the eremite in the desert, who only related to the Divine and not to the Emperor-state. As Popović states, Orthodoxy does not have a desire for secular authority.²⁸³ This is an extremely radical break with any form of relationship with the state and secular politics, but it needs to be stressed that Popović formulated this vision in relation to the communist state. In his writings, the people (narod) play a central role, which provides substantial grounds for some political involvement when the clergy needs to be “leading the people to the immortal and eternal” salvation.

Popović's historiography is thus in line with the experience of the Russian diaspora thinkers, such as Florovsky and Meyendorff, both of whose thought is characterized by going beyond the confines of the state and a hostility towards Western and communist ideology. Popović upholds the same veneration for the All-man and in particular St. Sava as seen in Velimirović's writings, but with a stronger anti-secular or anti-state position. The connection to the neo-patristics seems evident, and is thoroughly documented by the Serbian professor of theology Bogdan Lubardić in his recent analysis of Popović's correspondence with Florovsky

²⁸² Ibid. Author's own translation (Serb.: Političke partije, ćutke ili otvoreno i u načelu preporučuju ili sankcionišu primenu sile i nasilja, naročito kada su na vlasti. Svetosavski sveštenik baš sa načelnog evanđelskog razloga ne treba da pripada ni jednoj političkoj partiji [...] Iako žive u ovom svetu, svetosavski sveštenik i svetosavski prvosveštenik, nisu od ovoga sveta.)

²⁸³ Ibid.

over the theology of Solovyov.²⁸⁴ The common perception of history, here called the Athanasian historiography, in Popović and Florovsky's thinking seems to derive from in Solovyov's historiography, mentioned in the opening of this chapter.

Amfilohije and the embodiment of salvation

One of Popović's most vocal and theologically active students is Metropolitan Amfilohije (Radović), whose theology and person has been a central topic in this thesis. Amfilohije's person is described in article 3 and his historiography is discussed in articles 5-7. In article 6 especially, the connection between Amfilohije's, Velimirović's and Njegoš's historiographies is touched upon. This section will therefore only be a discussion of how Amfilohije relates to the neo-patristic school and the Serbian Orthodox tradition of historiography outlined above. It has already been noted in several parts of the analysis, mainly in article 5, that Amfilohije draws on neo-patristic thought and method, in which he was well trained during his periods in Paris and Athens. His doctoral dissertation's patristic theme fits into the classic line of inquiry of the neo-patristic school, which is one of many things he shares with Popović.

It is worth mentioning that Amfilohije has a vast authorship and it is therefore difficult to cover all of his work, but in this context – beside the writings already discussed in the articles of this thesis – the work *The tradition of St. Sava's enlightenment and Dositej Obradović's education* (Serbian: *Svetosavsko prosvetno predanje i prosvetećenost Dositeja Obradovića*) from 1994 is a crucial entry point.²⁸⁵ In this work, Amfilohije turns to St. Sava and in doing so enters into a direct dialogue with Velimirović's and Popović's writings on this subject. Amfilohije opens the text by drawing an image of St. Sava and Obradović as exponents and outward symbols of their times. They embody the spiritual reality of their time. From there Amfilohije ventures into the life of St. Sava stressing how the saint was essential in the creation

²⁸⁴ Bogdan Lubardić. "Преписка Јустина Поповића и Георгија Флоровског – прилог разумевању рецепције главних идеја Соловјева у међуратном периоду у Србији" [Correspondence between Justin Popović and Georgi Florovsky – understanding the reception of Solovyov's main ideas in the interwar period in Serbia]. In Irina Deretić (ed.). *History of Serbian Philosophy II*. Belgrade: Evro Giunti, 2012, p. 381-453.

²⁸⁵ Amfilohije. *Светосавско просветно предање и просвећеност Доситеја Обрадовића* [*The Enlightenment of St. Sava and Dositeja Obradovica*], 1994. Dositeja Obradovica was a Serbian thinker and statesman, whose full name was Dimitrije "Dositej" Obradović (1739-1811). He was not only an Orthodox thinker, but also the first Serbian Minister of Education.

of the Serbian Church. It becomes quite clear, though never spelt out, that St. Sava here is described as an All-man and the scene in chapter 1 is that of the creation of the Serbian Teoduljia. The Serbian people and kings are called together around St. Sava and the church is created through faith. The community becomes the embodiment of the sacred as a church, the sobornost or the *katholikós* – and in so being a primordial model of the ecclesial society envisioned by Solovyov and seen in fragments in Athanasius’s writings.²⁸⁶ Amfilohije continues to describe the inner working of this community and St. Sava’s teachings, and writes:

That is why the Holy Sava lays the same foundation of knowledge and reason eternally [...] Adding virtue to this as the eternal feature and strength of truth, Christ and demanding that we should have both, that is, faith and virtue, truth and deed, “That the man of God may be perfect” (2 Tim. 3:17). [the Bible quote is from the King James version, but in the Serbian version of the bible the meaning of the quote is closer to: “that the perfected may be the man of God”]²⁸⁷

Here, Amfilohije combines the teaching of theosis, the community’s pilgrimage towards unity with God, with that of the All-man or Godmanhood. Mankind must be perfected in order to become one with God as an All-man. This is possible through the devotion of the community to God as a servant, Teoduljia. Amfilohije further unfolds this in chapters III-IV of the book before he turns his focus onto the martyr Prince Lazar of Kosovo (d. 1389) in chapter V. In this chapter, Amfilohije writes:

In these writings, the center of the life of the nation becomes the Kingdom of Heaven, the martyrdom of Tsar Lazar is interpreted and linked in the sense of the suffering of Christ: it is Christ-like and as such

²⁸⁶ Ibid., chapter I.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., chapter II. Author’s translation (Serb.: Dodajući tome vrlinu kao večno svojstvo i silu Istine, Hrista, i zahtevajući da nam treba imati oboje, tj. veru i vrlinu, istinu i delo, “da savršeni bude čovek Božiji” (2 Tim. 3,17),).

a precondition for the popular resurrection, just as Christ's resurrection was preceded by crucifixion and death.²⁸⁸

Amfilohije casts prince Lazar in the same manner as St. Sava. They are both All-man or Godman, which invokes the possibility of the creation of a sacred nation and the revelation of God's kingdom on earth in the form of the Teoduljia. These two saints are pathways for the community towards unity with God. From here, Amfilohije turns to Obradović, his time and his thought in the remainder of the book. In chapter IX, he concludes that Obradović too was a Godman.

There is a strong connection between Velimirović's, Popović's and Amfilohije's interpretations of St. Sava and Prince Lazar here. First and foremost, Amfilohije uses his predecessors' conception of God-man/All-man as a tool to interpret and represent Serbian Orthodox history. Secondly, these All-men are used as a sort of theological pathway for the community, both the imagined one in the text and the intended audience in the Church, towards unity with God (theosis). The monastic ideal of Teoduljia is applied to society at large and underlies this theological line of thought. Each All-man paves the way for a sacralization of the Serbian People. In a broader light, this seems to be the exact same way Amfilohije interprets St. Petar I Petrović-Njegoš, his nephew St. Petar II Petrović-Njegoš (Njegoš) and St. Jovan Vladimir, as discussed in detail in articles 4, 5 and 6. The articles mainly deal with the practice of the SOC's and Amfilohije's historiography, but in a broader theological light each of these saints is also an embodiment of the All-man according to Amfilohije. The significance and the reason for the need to protect and rebuild their sacred shrines lies on Amfilohije's interpretation of them as All-men, as Godmen. The way to salvation is through these All-men towards the restoration of unity with God. The collective congregation takes part in each All-man through pilgrimage, the rebuilding of shrines, liturgies, parades, etc., which in the end ensures their salvation. In other words, the very fundamental theological foundation or – as de Certeau would put it – “religious ideology” for the revival of these cults is the very teaching of Teoduljia, as a monastic societal ideal built on Athanasius's depiction of Anthony combined with Solovyov's

²⁸⁸ Ibid., Chapter V. Author's translation (Serb.: “U tim spisima centar života nacije postaje Nebesko carstvo, mučenička smrt Cara Lazara se tumači i dovodi u vezu po smislu sa Hristovim stradanjem: ona je Hristolika i kao takva preduslov za narodno vaskrsenje, kao što je i Hristovom vaskrsenju prethodilo raspeće i smrt.”).

vision of the third form of human society. This third form of society, Solovyov's ecclesial level, is instituted by a Godman, which could be found in Velimirović's and Popović's thought and Amfilohije's interpretation. In this Orthodox historiographical order a certain interpretation of the community of the church is presupposed, which is the one that is visible in Khomyakov and Njegoš' thoughts.

Athanasian historiographical theology

I would therefore argue that the historiographical religious ideology that is "already invested in history itself", in the case of the SOC in Montenegro draws heavily on a particular Serbian form of Slavophil and neo-patristic theology. The major themes and theological presuppositions used to interpret history by the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, as discussed here and in articles 4-7, come from this tradition. First of all, there is a general presumption about the Church, which is closely related to Khomyakov and Njegoš's concept of collective community (sobornost), which is shared by Amfilohije, Velimirović, Popović and theologians of the neo-patristic school, such as Florovsky. Secondly, the concept of Godmanhood or All-man is a theme both in neo-patristic and Serbian Orthodox thought, though slightly different and with different emphases. Thirdly, the selected Serbian theologians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, discussed here, share many stylistic and methodological traits with Florovsky and Meyendorff. The neo-patristic synthesis or the return to the Church Fathers is essential, but for the Serbs it means a return to St. Sava above all. Both traditions contain the same way of writing history; there is a constant focus in both on the individual thinker and to some extent their context, which at the same time is balanced (sometimes for better or worse) with society at large. Florovsky's description of the Russian theologians and their impact on their time could be read as the very scheme which Amfilohije's text on St. Sava and Obradović is formed upon. The person is at the center, and history is marked by jumps, crises and pits, which are only avoided by the unity of history, mankind and God in the theologies of Florovsky and Amfilohije. At the same time, the attention is always kept on the individual's relation towards the divine. The attention is on the theosis and the gradual becoming of the All-man, which ensures the pathways to salvation for the Eucharistic congregation celebrating Christ and the Christ-like saints. The basis for Florovsky's historiographical theology and perhaps the lingering background of Solovyov's, Njegoš', Amfilohije's, Velimirović's and Popović's, is the ideal of the monastic life deriving from Athanasius in which the main purpose of history is to preserve the true tradition. Historical writings about St. Sava are for these Serbian theologians above all the preservation of the true Christian Tradition, which Athanasius spoke of, but one without any ties to the state. The king or

emperor might exist, but their true place is as one believer amongst the rest, as St. Antony replies to his disciples in Athanasius's *Life of St. Antony*.

State and history

The theological, cultural and political trajectory of Eusebios' writings was grounded in a certain perception of history. History was the revelation of Christ and in so being, as Florovsky notes, the very witness to the true tradition. The tradition was in this Eusebian perception about to end with the second coming of Christ, and the core source for both secular (imperium) and religious (sacerdotium) power was God's creation. This ideal model is based on a religious hope, with the underlying premise that the entire human world was the Christian empire: Church and state governed in symphonia from one prime source towards one and the same end goal. Practically speaking, Emperor Justinian had perhaps already in the sixth century seen the weak points of this ideal model and so he tried to strengthen its foundations through his famous church laws, which would restore justice and the rule of law in these areas.²⁸⁹ With the advent of the Orthodox Slavic kingdoms and empires in the late Byzantine period, which later resurged after the Ottoman period in the heyday of nationalism, the Eusebian model for both history and state-church affairs sufficed. The Montenegrin intellectual, Goran Sekulović, is therefore perhaps right when he argues that there is an Eastern Orthodox rule for the close relationship between church and state. However, this relationship was thought by Eusebios and the Justinian Byzantine world as a universal system which would never degrade to petty discussion between rivaling nation-states. Sekulović's point therefore highlights how this former Eusebian-envisioned universal system has been nationalized and emptied of its former content. The core theological message of the Eusebian system was that state and church should work together towards the Kingdom of God, because Christ was standing at the doorstep. This eschatological theology has been drained out today. Instead the church is just another central pillar for the nation to raise if it wants independence. There are sound historical and political reasons for that, which a multitude of studies deal with. This is a new phenomenon, which has only come about in the formation of the new nation-states of South Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century. It is crucial to remember that the modern-day versions of the Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, Romanian and even Russian

²⁸⁹ See David J.D. Miller and Peter Saaris. *The Novels of Justinian – A Complete Annotated English Translation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Orthodox Churches are reconfigurations of the ancient ones. Barely two hundred years ago, none of these churches were led by a patriarch and their influence was kept at bay by the tsars or the sultans.²⁹⁰ Social scientific studies tend to forget this historical point and buy into what Riis called the “continuation” theory in which all historical institutions of the church seem to be the same.²⁹¹ By doing so, many studies of Eastern Orthodoxy and state-church relations overlook the fact that the practical and political reality of a state running a national church rather derives from Petrine reforms in Russia, which imported the Protestant Caesaropapism of among others the Anglican Church, as Kalkandjieva so sharply points out.²⁹²

Velimirović’s concept of Teoduljia, as a societal model beneath the slogan of a people-church for St. Sava (svetosavlje), is in contrast a continued eschatological vision of society retreating to the famous desert of monasticism, which Florovsky argues is the opposite of the imperium in his recasting of Athanasius. Perhaps the real cause for the rise of the Athanasius-inspired historiography and the Serbian variant of it, is the theological bankruptcy of the Eusebian model. Its theological content was no longer viable and needed to be re-thought. There is therefore not a refusal of Eusebios in the Serbian historiography, both practiced and ideological, as analyzed in this thesis, but rather just an attempt to think beyond the narrow constraints of the state. It is often argued, by among others William Cavanaugh, that the creation of the modern-day state is based on the reuse of the sacred nature of religion.²⁹³ In such an interpretation of state-church, the state swallowed more or less the church in the Eusebian model and took over the “sacerdotium”. The neo-patristic historiography in the Serbian case seems to be a way to think beyond the parameters of the all-encompassing nation-state, which their Montenegrin counterpart has in contrast embraced.

²⁹⁰ See Leustean (ed.). “Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Southeastern Europe”. 2014 and in particular Aleksov. “The Serbian Orthodox Church.” 2014.

²⁹¹ An example is Zdravkovski and Morrison. “The Orthodox Churches of Macedonia and Montenegro: The Quest for Autocephaly”. 2014. See chapter I and the state-of-the-art section for further examples.

²⁹² Kalkandjieva. “A Comparative Analysis on Church-State Relations in Eastern Orthodoxy”. 2011.

²⁹³ William T. Cavanaugh. *Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2011.

The history of the saints or of the nations?

The four cults which have been analyzed in this thesis provide insights into this question. The Montenegrin Orthodox Church's devotion to the cult of St. Jovan Vladimir and the local dynasties of "Duklja" that followed throughout the medieval period is an embrace of the imagined historical nationstate. These rulers, which the MOC celebrate, are not entirely religious figures, but founders of states. The Eusebian model of history is clear here and as such the state and the church need to be founded on the nation in order for all three to play along. In reality, the church and state become the final external symbols of the nation. It is the Eusebian model nationalized and so history is not the history of the church, but that of a nation. MOC's point of view seems to be the state, and the limitation of their sight is determined by the borders of the nation, why so much ink is spilled in the MOC's journal on the family trees of the various rulers of the Montenegrin medieval lands (see article 4). The MOC's approach to history is shaped by the development of Montenegrin historiography from the Montenegrin Kingdom and onwards as described in article 4. In fact, as article 4 also argues, the main historiography that the MOC draws on is a variant of Montenegrin nationalism based on the writings of the illustrious person of Marko Stedimilja, which in itself is an odd turn of history.

In contrast, the SOC in Montenegro and Metropolitan Amfilohije do not seek to recreate a new state for the Serbian church and nation (at least not at the moment). The state has rather, as in Popović's writing, dwindled and become but a shadow. The true form of the community is the Eucharistic gathering of the Church in which the *katholikós* or *sobornost* becomes real. This collective form of gathering is the local church, which through the embrace of the All-man or Godman can become one with God. These Christ-like figures of St. Petar I Petrović-Njegoš (article 6), his nephew St. Njegoš (article 5) and St. Jovan Vladimir (article 7) are local examples, which ensure the community's return to God. As such, they could be compared to St. Sava and to St. Lazar, shepherds of the people. History, as a witness to tradition, is bound to these All-men and through them their community. In this theological vision, the local community, the local church, becomes also the people, as described by both Khomyakov and Njegoš. It does however, due to the conservative romanticism inherently inscribed in these concepts, also become a form of "volk". It is perhaps not the same as the modern concept of the nation strictly speaking, but bears a variety of similar traits. It is perhaps more like a form of continued proto-nation bound to the All-men and restricted, to some extent, by the continual stressing of the universality of the church. In that respect, just as neo-patristic historiography is balancing between depicting the individual whilst arguing for the *sobornost* (collective), it is also

balancing between depicting the local church whilst stressing the universal feature of becoming one in the body of Christ – an almost impossible job.

In conclusion, it is striking that the same ways of practicing historiography are used by all the rival churches in Montenegro and Ukraine, as noted in chapter V, whilst the “religious ideology”, to use de Certeau’s concept, beneath is so different. The creation of sites and history is made through the same worn-out tools, but the motivation differs. This might have to do with the fact that the historical, political and cultural circumstances for the two different forms of historiography are the same. The MOC and SOC in Montenegro stand in the same context and with the same horizon. Their goals and ideologies might differ and contradict each other, but history is still made in the same ways.

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The author at Mount Lovchen, October 2013.

English summary

This thesis is an assessment of the Eastern Orthodox churches' perception of their own history after the fall of communism in former Yugoslavia. The Orthodox churches' perception of history is crucial for their participation in the reconstruction of national identity and statehood. This reconstruction has in Montenegro led to a division of the Slavic-speaking Orthodox population. Today, they are separated into a pro-Montenegrin wing, who have formed their own unrecognized Orthodox church, and a pro-Serbian wing clinging on to the historical Serbian Orthodox Church institution in Montenegro.

The period in focus is from the fall of communism to the creation of an independent Montenegro and subsequent statehood (1989-2019). New research into religion, politics and national identity in the Balkans and in particular Montenegro stresses that this period is marked by a close relationship between religion and national identity. Religion is often reduced in these studies to a proxy for nationalism. This precludes a deeper consideration and assessment of the agency of the churches and priesthoods, and their perception of themselves as a church, in history, and in theology, as noted in the state-of-the-art section in chapter I.

The purpose of this investigation is to look deeper into the role of the churches and their perception of self in history after communism. The investigation tracks the churches' historiographical practice and religious ideology. This practice and ideology are the structures which form the perception of self in history and their reformulated religious and national identity. The methodological and theoretical frame is built on Michel de Certeau's theories about history and the social and political world history helps create, as further discussed in chapter II. The theoretical frame presupposes a close analysis of the social and political context for the churches. This context is used as the foundation for the main analysis of the "religious ideology", as de Certeau calls it. The ideology is analyzed as a practiced material phenomena and as an abstract notion of history, memory and politics.

The first analytical part, chapter III, consists of an assessment of the social and political role of the churches in question. The analysis is divided into two parts, which map the unrecognized Montenegrin Orthodox Church (article 2) and the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro (article 3). The analysis is based on textual analysis, the assessment of empirical surveys and field observations. These two articles provide the first holistic picture of the Montenegrin Orthodox communities' size, spread, organization and status in society. This is the first primary result of the dissertation.

The main analysis is concerned with the “religious ideology” and its form as practice and notion. Chapter IV contains this part in the form of four articles that each focus on a distinct group of saints and sites revived after communism. In article 4, the unrecognized Montenegrin Church’s perception of its history is investigated through an analysis of the sanctified lords of the medieval Slavic realm of “Duklja”. The investigation highlights how the Montenegrin Church’s perception of its history relies on a Montenegrin nationalist interpretation of Montenegro’s history. This interpretation was formulated by Montenegrin nationalists shortly after the end of the Kingdom of Montenegro in 1918. A similar perception of Montenegro’s history can be found in the former Montenegrin government during the rule of the Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro (DPS, 1996-2020). This is to its fullest extent expressed in the celebration of Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrović-Njegoš (1813-51) at his mausoleum on Mount Lovćen in 2013, which is explored in article 5. Njegoš’s political, cultural and religious heritage is heavily debated. Article 5 assesses this debate in particular through an analysis of unique sources from the Serbian metropolitan Amfilohije. The analysis reveals the material and practiced form of the debate between the DPS government and the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Serbian Church in Montenegro and Metropolitan Amfilohije’s perception of history is further explored in article 6. Here, Metropolitan Amfilohije’s perception of history and Orthodox theology is assessed in his writings about Prince-Bishop St. Petar I Petrović-Njegoš. The final article 7 focuses on another debate about religion, memory and politics in Montenegro concerning Mount Rumija. In 2005, the Serbian Orthodox Church built a small controversial tin church on the summit with help from two Serbian war helicopters. Rumija’s summit is a sacred site devoted to the Slavic lord St. Jovan Vladimir (d. 1016). The site is one out of several sites in southern Montenegro devoted to him which have been either rebuilt or neglected after communism. These sites are places for a practice and material outlet of the churches’ perception of history, which is discussed in detail in article 7.

In chapters V and VI the conclusions from the articles are summed up and contextualized, discussed and expanded upon. An overall conclusion is that the practiced and material form of the churches’ perception of history takes a similar form in the two churches’ shaping of revived sites and saints. This particular practice takes its form in place-making, icon-making and the large infrastructure of memory and rituals revived after communism. The revival is a process bound to already existing historical materials, which each of the churches tries to monopolize. The process entails a differentiation, neglect and alienation in which an “us” and a “them” are created. Such a process is recognizable in other primarily Orthodox countries in Eastern Europe, such as North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Ukraine, which is further discussed in

the last part of chapter V. In all of the three other national cases, similar processes of national, religious and political differentiation are taking place through the same form of historiographical practice.

The final chapter VI expands on the assessment of the “religious ideology” of the two churches in question. The overall conclusion is that the unrecognized Montenegrin Church draws on what in Eastern Orthodox theology is called a Eusebian approach to history and emperor. This approach is named after the ancient church historian Eusebios and is based on his ideal of emperor-church relations. The Eusebian approach presupposes a close *symphonic* (cooperative) relation between the emperor and church, as famously formulated in the Byzantine emperor Justinian I’s Novel 6. The Montenegrin Church reinterprets Eusebios’s ideal into a historical and necessary close relationship between church, state and people, whose individual independence is entangled with the others. Orthodox theologians, such as Georges Florovsky (1893-1979), have formulated an antinomy to the Eusebian approach. This different approach is shaped by readings of the Church father Athanasius. In Athanasius’s description of the monastic community, the congregation is only related to the divine and not to the emperor. The development of Florovsky’s historiography based on Athanasius is discussed in the wider context of twentieth-century Eastern Orthodox theology. This analysis reveals that four Slavic-Serbian theologians’ historiographies follow similar lines. Metropolitan Amifilohije’s historiographical ideology is concluded to be a part of this reception of Athanasian historiography.

The two Orthodox communities in Montenegro therefore seem to build on two different “religious ideologies”. The Serbian Orthodox Church perceives history as a history of salvation in which the church and its people are peregrinating through history as an eremite in the desert. The community’s relation is only upwards toward the divine. The Montenegrin counterpart views their history in close relation to the state and the nation. These two historiographical ideologies shape practice in the form of place-making and even demonstrations against the Montenegrin government. Historiographical ideology thus has direct consequences today, which have become visible in the debate in 2019-20 over the new Montenegrin law on religion. In this debate the Serbian Church is locked into a conflict with the former DPS government of Montenegro shaped by their diverging perceptions of history – a conflict that will determine the ownership of sites and recognition of church. A conflict that determined the fate of the DPS government, which failed to be reelected in august 2020 because of the struggle with the church.

Dansk resume

I denne ph.d. afhandling undersøges de ortodokse kirkers egen forståelse af deres historie efter kommunismens fald i det tidligere Jugoslavien. De ortodokse kirker historieforståelse er afgørende for deres deltagelse i genopbygningen af national identitet og den politiske udvikling i de tidligere Jugoslaviske republikker. Denne genopbygning har i Montenegro ført til opdelingen af den slaviske-ortodokse befolkning i henholdsvis en ”montenegrinsk”-orienteret gruppe, der grundlagt deres egen ortodoks kirke, og en serbisk-orienteret, der holder fast ved den historiske serbiske ortodokse kirke i landet.

Afhandlingens fokus er perioden fra kommunismens opløsning til de Montenegrinsk selvstændighed og statsdannelse (1989-2019). Nyere forskning i religion, politik og national identitet på Balkan og særligt i forhold til Montenegro i denne periode er kendetegnet ved, at religion ofte reduceres til et del-element af den nye nationale identitet. Kirkerne og deres præsteskabs selvstændige aktive ageren og egen selvforståelse af deres kirke, dens historie, folket og det teologiske ophav udelades, som det bemærkes i kapitel 1's gennemgang af forskningsområdet.

Formålet med afhandlingen er på den baggrund en nærmere undersøgelse af de ortodokse kirkes rolle og selvopfattelse efter kommunismen. Denne undersøgelse tager udgangspunkt i kirkernes historiografiske praksis og religiøse ideologi. Denne praksis og ideologi er de bagvedliggende mønstre i kirkernes historiske selvforståelse samt deres nye religiøse og nationale identitet. Undersøgelsens metodiske og teoretiske rammer bygger på Michel de Certeau's teorier om historie og historiens sociale og politiske ophav, som der nærmere redegøres for i kapitel 2. Denne teoretiske ramme forudsætter en nærmere analyse af den socio-politiske kontekst for kirkerne. Denne kontekst er fundamentet for hovedanalysen af den ”religiøse ideologi”, som de Certeau kalder det. Ideologien analyseres både som et praktisk-materialet fænomen og som et abstrakt tankesæt.

Afhandlingens første del, kapitel 3, udgøres af en socio-politisk analyse af kirkerne. Analysen er opdelt i to artikler som kortlægger henholdsvis den ikke-anerkendte montenegrinske kirker (artikel 2) og den serbiske ortodokse kirke i Montenegro (artikel 3). Analysen er baseret på tekstanalyser og feltarbejde. De to artikler er det første holistiske empiriske billede af de ortodokse menigheder i Montenegro, deres størrelse, udbredelse, organisering og placering i samfundet efter kommunismen, hvilket er afhandlingens første primære resultat.

Afhandlingens hovedanalyse fokuserer på den ”religiøse” ideologi dels som praktisk og abstrakt fænomen i kapitel 4. Dette kapitel består af fire artikler, der tager udgangspunkt i fire forskellige helgene-grupper, kultsteder mm., som alle er genopbygget efter kommunismens fald. I artikel 4 undersøges først den montenegrinske kirkers historieforståelse ud fra den montenegrinske helgen-gruppe, der alle er fyrster af ”Duklja”. Et slavisk middelalderrige. Undersøgelsen påviser, at den ikke anerkendte montenegrinske ortodokse kirkeres historieforståelse er baseret på en montenegrinsk nationalistisk ide om nationen, der blev formuleret af montenegrinske nationalister, efter at Montenegro ophørte som selvstændig nation efter Første Verdenskrig. En lignende opfattelse af, hvad den montenegrinske nation er, genfindes hos den montenegrinske regering. Regeringens opfattelse kommer til udtryk i fejringen af bispe-prins Petar II Petrović-Njegoš (1813-51) ved hans Mausoleum på bjerget Lovćen i 2013, der undersøges i artikel 5.

Njegoš’ politiske, kulturelle og religiøse arv er stærkt omdiskuteret, hvilket udfoldes i artiklen, bl.a. gennem unikke kilder fra den serbiske metropolit Amfilohije. Analysen kortlægger den praktiske materielle form af diskussionen mellem den serbiske kirke og den montenegrinske regering. Den serbiske kirkes opfattelse af Montenegros historie udfoldes yderligere i artikel 6, hvor metropolit Amfilohijes teologiske fortolkning af bispe-prins St. Petar I Petrović-Njegoš (1813-51) liv diskuteres. Diskussionen om mausoleet på Lovćen, i artikel 5, har mange lighedstræk med diskussionen vedrørende en kirke på bjerget Rumija i det sydlige Montenegro. På Rumija byggede den serbiske kirke en kontroversiel kirke med hjælp fra to serbiske kamphelikoptere i 2005. Rumijas top er hjemsted for en helligdom for en helgenkåret slavisk fyrster, Jovan Vladimir af Duklja (d.1016). Rumija er én blandt flere helligdomme til St. Jovan Vladimir i det sydlige Montenegro, hvis genopbygning efter kommunismen undersøges som et praktisk materielt udtryk for kirkernes historieforståelse i artikel 7.

Konklusionerne fra artikler samles i kapitel 5 og 6, hvor resultaterne kontekstualiseres, diskuteres og uddybes. Overordnet konkluderes det i afhandlingen, at den praktiske-materielle udformning af historieforståelsen i eksempelvis helligdomme eller helgengørelse tager samme form i begge kirker. Denne praktiske form involverer flere elementer, som hellige steder, ikoner, og kan tage form som store infrastrukturer af minder og ritualer, der er genopbygget efter kommunismens fald. Konstruktionerne er dog ikke afgørende nye, men tager udgangspunkt i allerede eksisterende historisk materiale, der dog gøres eksklusivt, hvormed den anden kirkes krav afvises. Helliggørelsen forudsætter en differentiering, hvori der kan skelnes mellem et ”os” og et ”dem”. I anden del af kapitel 5 diskuteres det, om denne praktiske udformning af historie kan genfindes i tre andre primært ortodokse områder i

Østeuropa, nemlig Nordmakedonien, Bulgarien og Ukraine. I alle tre tilfælde kan det påvises, at lignende processer foregår eller har foregået med samme religiøse, nationale og politiske differentiering.

I Afhandlingens kapitel 6 påvises det, hvordan den ”religiøse ideologi” i de to undersøgte kirker er udformet. Konklusionen er, at den montenegrinske kirke trækker på det, som i ortodoks teologi kaldes for et Eusebisk-skema – efter kirkehistorikeren Euseb – for stat-kirke forhold. Det eusebiske skema forudsætter en tæt *symfonisk* (samklang) relation mellem kejser og kirke, som det formuleres i den byzantinske kejser Justinian I’s statstraktat. Dette skema genfortolkes af den montenegrinske kirke, som en historisk nødvendig tæt sammenhæng mellem kirke, stat og folk, hvis individuelle selvstændighed forudsætter de andres. I modsætning hertil har ortodokse teologer, særligt Georges Florovsky (1893-1979), formuleret et andet skema for stat-kirke forholdet med udgangspunkt i kirkefaderen Athanasius. Her er kirken og ”kejseren” adskilte, da kirken er relateret direkte mod det hellige og ikke mod ”kejseren” (det politiske). Udviklingen af det Athanasiske skema i ortodoks teologi uddybes i kapitel 6 og påvises både i den brede ortodokse sammenhæng, men også hos fire centrale serbiske teologer, hvoraf den sidste er den serbiske montenegrinske metropolit Amfilohije. Det konkluderes, at de to stridende kirker arbejder med hver deres ”religiøse ideologi” om end de anvender samme praktiske-materielle metoder til udformning af deres historieforståelse. Hovedkonklusionen er, at den serbiske ortodokse historieskrivning dels har en nationalistisk strømning og dels en teologisk. Disse to strømninger definerer den historiografiske praksis i form af alt fra monumentbygning, parader til demonstrationer mod regeringen. Historieforståelsen har direkte religiøse og politiske konsekvenser, hvilket særligt ses i 2019-2020, hvor den montenegrinske regering og den serbiske kirke i Montenegro støder politisk sammen i en højspændt konflikt om land, anerkendelse og den fremtidige magt over Montenegro. En strid der var medvirkende til den montenegrinske regerings fald i august 2020 efter ca. tredive år ved magten.