

BOOK REVIEWS

Priest Professor Gheorghe I. Drăgulin PhD, *The Academician Professor Priest Dumitru Stăniloae – Confessor of the true faith at home and abroad*, Publisher Basilica, 2015, 168 p.

The book of Priest Professor Gheorghe I. Drăgulin PhD that was published in 2015, at the Basilica Publisher in Bucharest, it is an admirable bouquet of studies and articles, dedicated to the greatest Romanian theologian, priest Dumitru Stăniloae.

Priest Gheorghe I. Drăgulin is one of the Romanian Orthodox theology's outstanding personalities, being one of the Romanian specialists in the problem of Areopagistic texts and the identity of Dionysius Areopagus with the monk's priest The Humble Dionysius Exiguus. There with the work of priest professor is extremely prodigious if we think at the amount of research, articles of Fundamental Theology, The Dogmatic and the History of Romanian Orthodox Church. All this important theological concern, as well as especially the appreciation and gratitude regarding priest Dumitru Stăniloae – in which he defended his doctoral thesis, urged father Drăgulin to assemble a series of studies and articles about priest Stăniloae and print the min to this present volume, which for he received the blessing of His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of Romanian Orthodox Church.

The studies, articles and speeches that he harmonized in this volume, are actually written texts over the years and on different occasions, that was published in magazines like: *Theological Studies, The Orthodoxy, Romanian Orthodox Church, The orthodox faith* and other.

In this book, the author offers a synthesis regarding the theological ascension of father Dumitru Stăniloae, of his major contributions in the 20th century theology, as well as international recognition of his credits. Through this book, father Gheorghe Drăgulin offers the readers 16 articles who wants to dwell on five main directions:

1. Dumitru Stăniloae, complex personality of orthodox theology of 20th century.

2. Dumitru Stăniloae and Philokalia.
3. Dumitru Stăniloae and Aeropagistic texts.
4. Recognition of father Dumitru Stăniloae's theological values at home and abroad.
5. Father Dumitru Stăniloae's personality in eyes of disciples.

Using these sketches, in the following I will try to capture extremely concise what father Drăgulin wanted to highlight in this book.

Right from the first studies (p. 7-30), priest professor Drăgulin aims to create a brief biography of father Dumitru Stăniloae, and that to dwell on several essential coordinates of his theology. In this way, he enumerates most reference works of the 20th century, works that made father Stăniloae the greatest Romanian theologian and in the view of some, the foremost theologian of 20th century.

Author believes that the contribution of the father Dumitru Stăniloae's work to Romanian theology, created many desiderata as: "The relation between theology and Church's life"; "Forming an authentic Orthodox theology school"; "Identifying the Romanian Orthodox particularities". Also here it is remembered the fact that father Stăniloae dwells on themes of orthodox dogmatists as: "creation as a gift of divine goodness, incarnation of the Saviour, the delicacy of Saints' soul, church's ethnicity, the Romanian orthodox spirituality - synthesis between East and West", has been elaborated in personal manner, taking into account the deep meaning of orthodox theology. All these propelled the great Romanian theologian among neopatristic theologians of 20th century.

Another series of articles included in the present volume (p. 31- 76), is based especially on a Philokalia event that appeared occurred within Orthodox Christianity, event that appeared in the Romanian theology too. Developing a compendium which includes teachings of the saints, useful Christian's spiritual ascent, it involves a comprehensive process which father Drăgulin tries to present schematically. In this process are mentioned saints like Basil of Caesarea or Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, Paisius Velichkovsky as well as father Dumitru Stăniloae. He will also recall here about the English editions, French version and its dissemination within eastern Christianity. In this study, father Drăgulin will find the importance of Philokalia event within Romanian theology (p. 63-76).

Priest Professor Gheorghe I. Drăgulin PhD...

In the two of the studies presented in the volume (p. 77-105), the author highlights the fact that for father Stăniloae, the author and pseudo Areopagistic work, represented a remarkable theological source, that he used to elaborate his work, being also strongly influenced by his thinking. The appreciation of father Stăniloae for this great theologian is showed by the fact that he translated into Romanian the entire work of Dionysius the Areopagite. In this project father Stăniloae invests “both his historical erudition in the patristic domain and a theological processing and a spiritual analogy that could only be found in the tradition of great European cultures”. In the same time, in the studies presented previews, the author look to identify the influence of Areopagistic teachings in the work of father Stăniloae, noticing these influences in his dogmatic and mystical writings, as well as in the precious Philokalia notes.

In the most of this volume (pp. 107-124; 141-164), the author is not trying anything else but to highlight the masterly work of father Stăniloae, also correlating it with his authentic Christian life. Throughout these studies, father Drăgulin depict the contemporary on father Stăniloae, in different poses: dogmatist, patrologist, mystical, byzantinologist, church historian, philosopher, professor, academician, political prisoner, fighter against atheist communist regime, by all these he tried to capture the vast cultural and theological horizon where the great professor has been working. One of the largest study in this book, presents the bound between father Stăniloae and Christianity abroad and also understanding father’s theology by theologians from abroad. Thus, the bound with the Greek church is made by the studies realized there, as well as by translating of Andrusos’s Dogmatica; Russian diaspora thinking is researched by the great theologian from the period he worked in Sibiu; German existentialist philosophy comes early in the research horizon of our theologian, here being reminded Martin Heidegger the philosopher, professor Jürgen Moltmann, Adolf Martin Ritter; father had also „productive contacts” with french orthodox people too, recalling his relation with professor Olivier Clément, father Marc-Antoine Costa de Beauregard, Michel Evdokimov; he meets also the Italian theology, if were call Cardinal Ratzinger and Pope John Paul II; within the Church of England, father Stăniloae collaborates with theologian Donald Allchin and Kallistos Ware; supportes a series of conferences in USA within the different Romanian communities. Here are also reminded his participations in the ecumenical meetings all over the world.

Priest Professor Gheorghe I. Drăgulin PhD...

Considering that father Drăgulin had father Stăniloae as professor and PhD supervisor, in some articles (p. 125-140), he plays with emotion and nostalgia, experiences and events in which he was directly involved. In these articles it can be seen the close relationship there was between teacher and disciple, father Drăgulin, recalling the intimate discussions during the years of study. Here also, the author wants to highlight in particular the fact that „Father Dumitru Stăniloae is the greatest theologian of the XXth century”, mentioning closet o the great theologians like: Vladimir Lossky, Iustin Popovici, Placide Deseille, Oliver Clément, Stephanos Papadopoulos, and George Florovski. As an older belief, the author argues „together with many other christians from home and abroad, canonization of Father Dumitru the Theologian”.

The book of father Gheorghe Drăgulin falls in to the category of reference studies regarding both the work of father Stăniloae and his complex personality. It refers to all those from one reason or another want to meet the personality and the work of the greatest Romanian theologian. The studies included in this book are not developed solely on a certain theological theme or an event related to father Dumitru Stăniloae, but they have been written on various occasions. Because of this the reader can distinguish the many informations are reaffirmed, which can lead to a certain monotony. But if you take in to consideration the fact that these were written on different occasions, in a period of 35 years (1979 – 2014), can be justified this shortage of the book. In conclusion, those who want to know closely the life and the work of the great Romanian theologian, are urged to browse the book, especially if they are keen to find out some other things about father Stăniloae, presented throughout the prism of his close disciple.

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