

Chrysostomos Papadopoulos and the Russian theological academic landscape of 19th century

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In this report I will focus on Archbishop of Athens, Chrysostomos Papadopoulos' studies in 19th century Russia. More precisely, the Russian theological academic landscape will be specified. This landscape had on one hand certainly been influenced by the western philosophy and the protestant theology, but on the other hand it is nevertheless characterized by an evolution in the theological studies to which a systematic character of translation, study and pinpointing of the works of the Fathers is gradually attributed. Concerning Church History, about which Chrysostomos Papadopoulos is mostly interested in, it will followingly be supported that it particularly flourishes in the Theological Academies of Russia as well, especially in Saint Petersburg, with the presence and the work of the significant historian, V. Bolotov.

Keywords: Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, theological studies, Fathers, Western philosophy, theological Academies of Russia.

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This paper deals with the theological studies of Chrisostomus Papadopoulos, the Archbishop of Athens (1868-1938)¹ within two theological academies of Russia in the 19th century: Kiev and St. Petersburg, in 1891-1893. and 1893-1895 respectively. I will talk about spiritual education in Russia at the end of the 19th century, but first I will outline in general terms the relationship of Archbishop Papadopoulos with Russia and the two academies.

First of all, it should be noted that the studies of Chrisostomus Papadopoulos in Russia was initiated by Queen Olga (1851-1926)², who “expressed a desire that her secretary, under her patronage, would organize training in Holy Russia for the most diligent of the poor students. students of theology” [*Νεαμονιτάκης* 1969:26]. The Queen’s secretary and lecturer in Christian archeology George Lambakis (1854-1914) [*Καραθανάσης* 2010:293-294] proposed the candidacy of the then young student of the Theological Faculty of the University of Athens — C. Papadopoulos.

The biographical sketches about C. Papadopoulos do not clearly indicate the reasons why he chose to study at the academies in Kiev and St. Petersburg, since at the time of his arrival in Russia two prominent church historians were teaching at the Moscow Theological Academy — E. E. Golubinsky (1834-1912) and A. P. Lebedev (1845-1908).

I will add that even the period under consideration, there was a practice of theological training of Greek pupils and students in the academies of Russia. In fact, Archbishop C. Papadopoulos himself cites the example of Michael Apostolidis (1789-1862), who “was sent to Russia as a representative of the Church and the government of Greece on issues of the autocephalous church”. Two students were sent with him from the Rizarios Theological School³, Alexios Papadakis and Panayotis Robotis, at the expense of the state and for their training in the theological academies of Russia” [*Παπαδοπούλου* 1919:79]. Another typical example, cited by C. Papadopoulos himself, is the fact that the Director of the school [the Rizarios] Sokratis Koliatsos, in 1876, compared it with “Russian seminaries” [Ibid.]. Although the comparison of the Rizarios School with the theological academies and seminaries in Russia is rather exaggerated, it can be said that the two examples cited indicate that the Church showed an interest in the training of Greek theologians in the theological academies of Russia, and not only and

¹ Chrisostomus I Papadopoulos, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece (1923-1938); professor at the University of Athens, academic of the Athens Academy of Sciences, author of numerous works on history.

² Olga Konstantinovna, Grand Princess, wife of the second Greek King George I.

³ Rizarios Theological School is a public educational institution in Athens (Greece). The idea of creating a school was expressed by the famous Greek educator and theologian priest Konstantinos Ikonou, who in 1814 convinced the Greek merchant and philanthropist Mantos Rizarios to send most of his fortune to create a school (academy) in Athens to train the Greek clergy. The school was officially opened in 1844. The first director of the school was the Greek scientist and writer Georgios Gennadios, and in the period from 1894 to 1908, the educational process was led by Nektarios (Aeginsky), later canonized by the Greek Church. Graduates are eligible for admission to any higher education institution in Greece.

exclusively in the theological faculties of Western universities. Undoubtedly, this issue is of extreme interest, since, as a rule, the generally correct point of view is accepted that teachers who have worked in theological schools in Greece over the past two centuries have been educated exclusively in Roman Catholic and Protestant universities in Western Europe [Πανναρά 2006].

Having learned Russian, C. Papadopoulos entered the Kiev Theological Academy (1891-1893), and then the St. Petersburg Academy (1893-1895), where he prepared a thesis entitled *The Works of St. John Chrysostom from the Philological Perspective* [Χρυσοστόμου Παπαδοπούλου Μητρ. 1923] (the same name was mentioned later [Παπαμιχαήλ 1931:3], [Νεαμονιτάκης 1969:29]), which “was very favorably received by Professor V. Bolotov, and an excerpt from it was published in the journal *Akademiya*” [Θεολογία 1938:394]⁴. This thesis title is confirmed by the corresponding entry: Ch. Papadopulo, “Die Schriften des hl. Joannes Chrysostomos von der philologischen Seite” [Papadopulo 1895:411-421], in the famous Byzantine edition “Byzantinische Zeitschrift” for 1896. However, it is noteworthy that in another essay on the life and works of C. Papadopoulos, the same dissertation is mentioned under a different title: *On the social and religious position of the Christian community at the end of the 4th — beginning of the 5th century according to the texts of St. John Chrysostom* [Κωνσταντινίδης 1968:417], without specifying the source of this information. I do not know whether the full text of C. Papadopoulos’ dissertation has survived in one form or another at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. However, in any case, it should be noted that V. Bolotov (1854-1900)⁵, the world-renowned professor of church history at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, praised the work very highly. It is also indicated, although not in all biographical materials, that C. Papadopoulos did not agree with “his appointment as a teacher of Greek literature at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy” [Κωνσταντινίδου 1938:398]⁶.

It should be added that C. Papadopoulos’s interest in Russian church history, both ancient and modern, remained unchanged after his return from the theological academies of Russia, which is confirmed by his relevant research [Οἱ Πατριάρχαι 1906; Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ρωσικὴ Ἐκκλησία 1922].

After a brief overview of the relationship of C. Papadopoulos with the theological academies of Russia, where he went to study at the end of the 19th century, let us turn to a necessary brief presentation of the history of these academies, as well as their contribution to the development of theological science.

⁴ The reference was received from K. Diovuniotis.

⁵ Vasily Bolotov was an outstanding specialist in Church history. His dissertation *On Origen's Doctrine of the Holy Trinity* was published in St. Petersburg in 1879. Bolotov was fluent in many ancient (ancient Greek, Hebrew and Latin) and modern languages (Arabic, Coptic, Modern Greek, French, English, German and Italian). For more on Bolotov and his works see, for example: [Rubtsov 1900; Brilliantov 1910; Turaev 1910].

⁶ The link was received from Gr. Papamichaila.

In 19th century Russia the theological academic landscape was quite wide, considering that “in addition to universities, in Russia there were a large number of other educational institutions engaged in higher education, most of which did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Education” [Schnitzler 1929:93].

In particular, in pre-revolutionary Russia there were four theological academies, the oldest of which is Kiev, opened in 1630 as a college and in 1701 reorganized as an academy. It is also important that it was in Kiev that “the first printing house was founded, where in 1551 the Psalter was printed, which is the oldest monument of Russian typographic art” [Schnitzler 1929: 76]. As for the state and nature of theological science at the Kiev Theological Academy, it would be appropriate to say that it not only presented “theology in the lessons of philosophy” [Zenkovsky 1992: 57], thanks to the works of Peter Mohyla (1596-1647), but moreover, even later, during the time of Paisiy Velichkovsky (1722-1794), “it bore the stamp of ideas about church education, formed under the strong influence of Roman Catholic theology adopted by the Metropolitan of Kiev” [Ταχιάου 1964:23].

The Kiev Academy was a model for the Moscow Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy, founded by the Greeks Ioannikios (1633-1717) and Sophronius (1652-1730) Likhuds in 1685. It should be noted that towards the end of the 17th century Peter the Great “began to show interest in the Moscow Academy” [Hughes 2007:450], whose graduates in the 18th century held positions in the state administration. Despite the fact that during the first two centuries of its work the Moscow Academy did not have systematic theological courses in its curriculum, in the 19th century it turned into the Theological Academy⁷.

Theological education included the following disciplines: Dogmatic Theology, Church History and Rhetoric, Canon Law and Patrology, Interpretation of Holy Scripture, etc. A milestone in theology was the figure of Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov) of Moscow (1782-1867), who, according to George Florovsky, “was raised in the spirit of the formalism of the traditional theological teaching of the Protestant school” [Florovsky 2001:191]. However, the great merit of Metropolitan Filaret was the strengthening and support of the initiative of the monks of Optina Hermitage to publish the Russian translation of the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the holy fathers.

The foundation of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, a higher spiritual educational institution, which in 1809, during the era of church reform, was transformed into an academy, dates back to 1721. Among the graduates of the Academy were such famous figures of the Russian Church as John of Kronstadt (1829-1908), Bishop Feofan (Govorov)

⁷ About the writings of P. Mohyla and the controversial moments of his Confession, with corresponding discussions and corrections by Meletius Sirigos see: [Παπαδοπούλου ἀρχιεπ. 1936-1937: 28-29, 32].

⁸ In fact, in 1814, during the reform of spiritual education (1808-1814), the academy ceased to exist; some students (19 people) and teachers (4 people) were admitted to the Moscow Theological Academy in the Trinity-Sergius Lavra (Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy. Great Russian Encyclopedia. Moscow, 30, 392) — *Editorial remark*.

(1815-1894), who, among other things, was the rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, and See also Patriarch Tikhon (1865-1925).

Kazan Theological Seminary was founded in 1713, and in 1797 it was renamed the Academy. This educational institution reached a special heyday in the 19th century. Unlike the aforementioned theological academies, the Kazan Academy, although it was organized in the likeness of the Moscow one, retained a missionary orientation due to the fact that most of the region's population — the Tatars — professed Islam, and the state church built its activities on this basis. For example, the Kazan Theological Academy issued the first Russian translation of the Koran, carried out by Gordy Sablukov (1804-1880).

It is a characteristic trait that in Russia in the beginning of the 19th century, in addition to the aforementioned academies, there were 35 seminaries and 76 bishops' schools, which "as a result of the reform of 1884 were finally transferred to the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishop" [*Φειδᾶ* 1997:319]. Thus, by the time of his arrival in Russia, C. Papadoupoulos had laid before him an interesting cross-section of Russian theological academic science and a rich choice of institutions in which he can conduct his theological and historical research. However, both in the 18th and 19th centuries, it is clear that, despite attempts to Westernize Russian life and secularize the institutional church on the part of Peter the Great, and despite individual problems (related to employees, students, and infrastructure), theology in Russia is central to spiritual education. It is interesting to note that in the first decades of the 19th century. "These institutions [seminaries and academies] have about 26,000 students and 427 teachers" [*Schnitzler* 1929:93].

In addition, the four theological academies that I refer to have some similarities. First, all of them, despite some practical difficulties, provided a high level of education. Therefore, the graduates of the academies, who later belonged to the higher and lower clergy (which in total numbered about 97 thousand people by the end of the 19th century), had a relatively good level of education.

The second characteristic feature common to the theological academies of Russia in the 17th-19th centuries is that, on the whole, they experienced, to a greater or lesser extent, the influence of Western philosophy. According to a number of researchers, "their representatives, all belonging to the clergy, were the bearers of Western philosophy in Russia" [*Lesourd* 2010:25]. However, from the middle of the XIX century. there is a shift towards the study of the patristic heritage, which is manifested in the translations into Russian of the works of the holy fathers of the Eastern Church (the first and subsequent centuries of Christianity), as well as in the scientific research of their thought.

Associated with this shift is the third and especially important common feature of the four academies described here, namely the introduction and promotion of the Russian language instead of Latin in

teaching theological disciplines and in translation and publishing. At the same time, teaching of Greek and Hebrew, as well as European and Oriental languages, is preserved in the academic courses of the academies.

The last common feature of the four academies is the fact that they enjoyed absolute autonomy in the Russian education system, since theological science was not included in the university curriculum. On the other hand, it is characteristic that “theological academies, along with the earlier religious educational institutions, trained more teachers and students for higher secular schools, among which was the Gymnasium and the University of the Academy of Sciences” [Hughes 2007:451]. However, in order to better understand the issue, one should separate the strengthening of the state’s position in relation to the Church in the course of the reform activities of Peter the Great and the development of spiritual education in the post-Petrine era, especially in the 19th century.

Based on the foregoing, we can conclude that C. Papadopoulos found himself in a scientific environment, to a certain extent influenced by Western philosophy and Protestant theology, but which is also characterized by the development of theological science and the gradual systematization of translations, study and dissemination of creations holy fathers. During that period, Church history, a subject that interested Papadopoulos, flourished in Russian theological academies, especially in St. Petersburg, through the efforts of Vasily Bolotov.

Finally, I repeat that the Russian academic theological scientific environment, in which Chrisostomos Papadopoulos studied, played a central role in the educational affairs of Russia.

Relationships and activities. The author’s report at a conference organized by the Volos Theological Academy on 02/04/2016, on the topic: “Archbishop Chrisostomos Papadopoulos: Theology and Church Life in the Interwar Period”.

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