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FROM FOLK RELIGION TO CHURCH POLITICS: NAUM'S SIGNIFICANCE IN MACEDONIA

Апстракт: *Наум е втор национален патрон на Македонија со оглед на црквите и манастирите што му се посветени. Новите црковни објекти на Наум го визуализираат опсегот до кој се рашири култот на Наум во Македонија. Манастирот на Наум од IX век јужно од Охридското Езеро станал центар на православието за денешна Македонија во Османлиската Империја. Со процесите на распаѓање на Османлиската империја и Југославија, се појавија нови градби посветени на Наум и го поддржаа процесот на градење на македонската нација што се базира на словенски и православен идентитет. Оваа студија на случај придонесува за испитување на религијата во тековните процеси на трансформација.*

Клучни зборови: *Наум, Македонија, православие, црква, манастир, идентитет, трансформативни процеси*

1. Introduction

Naum is a popular disciple of the Slavic Apostles Kiril and Metodij and at the same time he is an unknown disciple of them. While Kliment as the first Slavic bishop gained the role of Macedonia's nation patron because of his high position, Naum often is remembered as a monk and a wonder worker. The medieval nation patrons that supported the unity of "state, sovereignty and nation" experienced a renaissance in the transformation processes of Eastern Europe in the 20th and 21st century.¹ They conduce to the self-presentation of the state, present a collective identity, provide stability, imply continuity and offer orientation for individuals in times of identity crises. In

¹ Stefan Samerski and Krista Zach, "Einleitung," in *Die Renaissance der Nationalpatrone: Erinnerungskulturen in Ostmitteleuropa im 20./21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Stefan Samerski and Krista Zach (Köln et al.: Böhlau, 2007).

the Balkans states, especially the orthodox churches aspired to become a partner in negotiating national identities that they connect to historical or new political saints. Thus, they wanted to revive a central role traditionally assigned to them as a trend-setting cultural institution and social integration factor.

In Macedonia one of the constituent countries of the socialist Yugoslavia, Kliment was shaped to the nation patron since the one-sided autocephaly declaration of the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC) in 1967.² After the independence of Macedonia, the MOC promoted Kliment stronger than before as Macedonia's nation patron and demanded even his feast day to become a national holiday. With the growth of Kliment's significance for the MOC, Naum's role was also boosted by the MOC. The numbers of churches and monasteries dedicated to Naum increased in the last 30 years in Macedonia and it made Naum as a second nation patron.³ Since all *lieux de mémoire* have an identity building function,⁴ Naum as the second nation patron shapes the Macedonian orthodox identity. Naum's significance is systematically intensified by the politics of the Macedonian Orthodox church since Macedonia's independence in the 1990s.

This paper presents how Naum's role changed from a local saint to the second nation patron of Macedonia. At the center of this case study, there are new religious buildings named after Naum that testify a stronger veneration cult. Specifically, I consider the time of constructing, the main actors and their intentions. However, the main monastery in the south of the Ohrid lake serves as an important reference for this research. Among many publications on the monastery built by Naum, Grozdanov's *Sveti Naum Ohridski* (2005) is the most substantial monography.⁵ For this chapter, Grozdanov's work mainly supplies the historical background information whereas I built on ethnographical data that I collected in Macedonia and Albania (2016-2018). The study shows how Naum's role changed in three stages: first from a monk to local saint, then to a particular Slavic saint and in stage three to a Macedonian nation patron.

² Stefan Rohdewald, "Sava, Ivan von Rila und Kliment von Ohrid. Heilige in nationalen Diensten Serbiens, Bulgariens und Makedoniens," in *Die Renaissance der Nationalpatrone. Erinnerungskulturen in Ostmitteleuropa im 20./21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Stefan Samerski and Krista Zach (Köln: Böhlau, 2007), 207-14.

³ Cf. Arnold Bartetzky, "Rekonstruktion für Nation in der östlichen Hälfte Europas. Zur Einführung," in *Geschichte bauen: Architektonische Rekonstruktion und Nationenbildung vom 19. Jahrhundert bis heute*, ed. Arnold Bartetzky (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2017).

⁴ Evelyn Reuter, "Im Schatten der Slawenapostel. Funktionen Naums im (trans-)nationalen Erinnerungsdiskurs," in *Das Erbe der Slawenapostel im 21. Jahrhundert. Nationale und europäische Perspektiven*, ed. Thede Kahl and Aleksandra Salamurović, *Symbolae Slavicae* (Frankfurt (Main): Peter Lang, 2015), 152-54.

⁵ Цветан Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски* (Скопје: Матица, 2015). <http://manu.edu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Cvetan-Grozdanov-Sv-Naum-Ohridski-2.pdf>.

In a micro perspective, my paper adds some insights to the national and religious history of Macedonia. In a macro perspective, this study contributes to research on religion in ongoing transformation processes with considering mainly political and economic factors.

2. Naum as a local saint and the transregional spreading of his cult in the Ottoman Empire

Only a few definite things are known about Naum. He has been a disciple of Kiril and Metodij and travelled with them to Rome where he probably became an ordained priest in 867.⁶ After Metodij died, Naum and other disciples were first imprisoned, then they have been expelled from their previous mission area. In 886, Naum together with Kliment and Angelar arrived in Preslav and he was sent as a teacher to support Kliment in the region of Ohrid in 893. In 900, he built the monastery consecrated to the archangel Michael in the South of the Ohrid lake and he died as a monk in 910.

Already at the beginning of venerating Naum, the lack of biographical information about Naum, for example about his family origins, led to legends among the local population. Even the Naum's hagiographies as sources for his life and work show that most of the biographical information are taken from other hagiographies such as those of Naum's teachers Kiril and Metodij.⁷ These hagiographies are official ecclesiastic documents which are based on an epitaph for Naum and were extended with stories about his thaumaturgy. This approach shows the need of the church to fill out the knowledge gaps on Naum's life due to the increasing veneration of Naum. The liturgical ceremony for Naum originates from the 13th century.⁸ The late occurrence of the liturgical remembering implies the cult's development and distribution since his death. Otherwise there is nothing which can explain the sudden interest in the saint. Furthermore, icons give proof for the spread of his cult.⁹

A turning point in the Ottoman Empire for the significance of Naum was in 1727 when the archbishopric of Ohrid became a patriarchate.¹⁰ Due to the demolition of the monastery in the 16th century because of unknown reasons, documents from the beginning of 17th century prove the requested financial support to rebuild the monastery.¹¹ Although the Naum monastery did not become a bishop's see, there was a

⁶ Erich Trapp, "Die Viten des hl. Naum von Ochrid," *Byzantinoslavica* 34 (1974): 166.

⁷ Erich Trapp, "Die Viten des hl. Naum von Ochrid," *Byzantinoslavica* 34 (1974): 161-85.

⁸ Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 57f.

⁹ Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 57-60.

¹⁰ Наум Целакоски, "Старите Печати и Преданијата за Свети Наум Охридски," (Охрид: Факултет за туризам и угостителство/Институт за истражување на туризмот, 2004), 28f.

¹¹ Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 73.

church-political interest for its preservation which gave an outstanding importance. A decisive event indicates this thesis: In 1727, patriarch Joasaph officially changed Naum's holiday from January 5th to July 3rd (Gregorian calendar) to ease the pilgrimages path to the monastery.¹² One reason for this was the simultaneous loss of importance of the church *Sveti Pantelejmon*, which Naum's colleague Kliment had built as the first Slavic bishop.¹³ In this time, Naum's cult spread in the entire region and beyond to Mount Athos in the South up to Vienna in the North.¹⁴

At that period, the small town Moschopolis, today known as Voskopoja in Albania, has been flourishing as the center of orthodoxy and trading. Moschopolis was a significant place in the patriarchate because of its printing house which published especially ecclesiastical documents. This printing house was named after Naums as its patron saint. One Naum chapel is said to have been in Voskopoja, but it is destroyed.¹⁵ Beside the main monastery, this chapel could be the oldest building dedicated to Naum in the region. Another chapel is still in the village Shipska, nearby Voskopoja, that reminds on the previous connection to Naum's main monastery. Unfortunately, I could not get any information about the history of chapel from the local people.¹⁶ Even the local priest based in Voskopoja does not celebrate one of Naum's holidays why the people in the parish hardly know the dates of the holidays.¹⁷

However, the spread of Naum's cult was not dependent on the activities of the patriarchate of Ohrid that was dissolved and placed under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1767. Two years later, in 1769, Moschopolis was attacked and robbed several times.¹⁸ Consequently, many inhabitants left the

¹² Max Demeter Peyfuss, "Die Druckerei von Moschopolis, 1731 - 1769. Buchdruck und Heiligenverehrung im Erzbistum Achrida," (2, Wien et al.: Böhlau, 1996), 170.

¹³ Evelyn Ivanova-Reuter, "Ein mittelalterliches Fundament für die späte Nation. Die Rekonstruktion des christlich-orthodoxen Erbes der Stadt Ohrid in der Republik Mazedonien," in *Geschichte bauen. Architektonische Rekonstruktion und Nationsbildung vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Arnold Bartetzky, Visuelle Geschichtskultur (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2017), 379f.

¹⁴ Robert Elsie, "The Christian Saints of Albania," *Balkanistica* 13 (2000), <http://www.elsie.de/pdf/articles/A2000ChristianSaints.pdf>.

¹⁵ Dhori Falo, *Trajgedia e një qyteti (Voskopoja)* (Korçë: Kotti, 2015), 136f.

¹⁶ I visited the chapel in Shipska on December 23, 2016, the date of Naum's death, e.g. the original holiday of the saint regarding to the Gregorian calendar which is used in the Albanian Orthodox Church.

¹⁷ Against this observation, the metropolitan bishop of Korçë, Joan Pelushi, claimed that Naum is venerated in Albania on his winter and the summer holiday; Metropolitan Joan Pelushi, "Specifics of Saint Naum, Najazma at the border," interview by Evelyn Reuter, August 08, 2016.

¹⁸ Max Demeter Peyfuss, *Die Druckerei von Moschopolis, 1731 - 1769. Buchdruck und Heiligenverehrung im Erzbistum Achrida*, 2 ed., 13 vols., vol. Wiener Archiv für Geschichte des Slawentums und Osteuropas. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Ost- und Südosteuropaforschung der Universität Wien, ed. Horst Haselsteiner et al. (Wien et al.: Böhlau, 1996), 41-46; Falo, *Trajgedia e një qyteti (Voskopoja)*, 203-08. For background information of the town see Pëllumb Xhufi, *Shekulli i Voskopojës (1669-1769)* (Tiranë: Botimet Toena, 2010).

previous trading town and flew into more distant regions and spread the Naum cult in their new homes like in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. A closer destination of the refugees was Bitola whereto they probably brought the cult of Naum.¹⁹ In this city, a residential building was turned into a church consecrated to Naum in the Ottoman Empire, said the care taking woman of that place, but she could not specify the date.²⁰ Though there are no sources with reliable information about the church in Bitola, there are two legends.²¹ According to the first, the house was turned into a church in 1825 or 1828 what fits to the information of the caretaker. The second legend dates the transformation back to the year 1935/6, i.e. in the post-Ottoman time.²² Furthermore, Naum's famousness led to some sustainable construction measures: his tomb was replaced a few meters towards the wall of the church and a chapel was built to protect the tomb and to integrate it into the church in 1799.²³

Beside the new Naum buildings, in the 18th and 19th century, the significance of Naum and his monastery increased by the 1000th anniversary of the Moravian mission in 1869.²⁴ Beginning in the same year, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and a church committee from Ohrid started again to quarrel over the control of the monastery.²⁵ In 1874, the conflict was decided in favor of Constantinople by the intervention of Ottoman officers.

3. From the South Slavic imprint of Naum' cult to its supportive function of Macedonia's nation building

The events of the second half of the 19th century were only the beginning of an increase in the involvement of Naum's monastery in ethnic-national negotiations. With the ongoing disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the religious-cultural meaning of Naum and his monastery politicized for demarcation processes between Albania and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes after the Balkan Wars.²⁶ While Serbian troops in 1913 placed the monastery under Bitola's administration, the international border committee decided that the region "from Lin to Sv. Naum" belongs to

¹⁹ Александар Гулевски, "Графиката Св. Наум (1743) од Христофор Жефарович од Битолската митрополија," *Пелагонитиса* 16-20 (2008): 56.

²⁰ Fieldnote from October 14, 2016.

²¹ Стојан Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, 2 ed. (Охрид: Канео, 2009), 216-19.

²² For the churches of the post-Ottoman period see the next paragraph.

²³ Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 141.

²⁴ Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 268, 86f; Наум Целакоски, "Летопис - 1100 години Св. Наум Охридски," in *Зборник на научни трудови од научната средба "1100 години од смртта на Св. Наум Охридски"*, ed. Ленче Андоновска (Битола Киро Дандаро, 2010), 39.

²⁵ Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 282.

²⁶ Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 287.

Albania. Albania and Yugoslavia discussed about the correct interpretation of the phrase “from Lin to Sv. Naum” until 1925.²⁷ While Albania understood “to Sv. Naum” inclusive, i.e. belonging to Albania, Yugoslavia interpreted the phrase exclusive so that the monastery stayed under the control of Ohrid.²⁸ In 1925, Albania and Yugoslavia compromised; Albania left the monastery to Yugoslavia in exchange of the city Peshkopi.²⁹ The last time that this decision was questioned from the Albanian side was during World War II when Italy occupied the monastery.³⁰ After Italy’s capitulation, the Naum monastery became again part of Yugoslavia. The historical negotiated national border became an accepted fact that influenced the further spreading of Naum’s cult in Macedonia rather than in Albania.

However, the population on the Albanian side of the border, from the monastery to Korçë, still strongly feels connected with Naum and his monastery. A chapel dedicated to Naum that was erected during the the reign of Ahmet Zogu closeby Pogradec proves this connection.³¹ It is not clear where this chapel has been built and what happened to it during the anti-religious measures in socialist Albania. It might be the chapel at the *najazma*³² called spring close to the border that by legends is connected to Naum. Until Albania finally closed the border in 1948, the *najazma*-spring was practically connected with the monastery. The metropolitan bishop Pelushi explained that for the holidays of Naum “this water [from the spring] was taken over there [to the monastery] to make the blessing. And this water was used to bless all the people that were in this day in this feast – mostly people that have mental problems.”³³ After closing the border, passport controls and the increase of military presence have led to a decrease of monastery visits.³⁴ However until recent times, the population of the

²⁷ Милчо Балеvски, “Балканските политички прилики и дипломатските битки за манастирот Свети Наум,” (Скопје: Македонска Книга, 1984), 125-32; Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 290.

²⁸ Kaliopi Naska, “Shën Naumi dhe diplomacia e kohës. Trajtesë dhe dokumente,” (Tiranë Shtëpia Botuese “Kristalina-KH”, 2012), xv-xx; Цветан Грозданов, “Свети Наум Охридски,” (Скопје: Матица, 2015), 290; Балеvски, “Балканските политички прилики и дипломатските битки за манастирот Свети Наум,” 186-89.

²⁹ Naska, “Shën Naumi dhe diplomacia e kohës. Trajtesë dhe dokumente,” xx-xxiii; Грозданов, “Свети Наум Охридски,” 290.

³⁰ Грозданов, “Свети Наум Охридски,” 291.

³¹ Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*.

³² The Albanian *najazma* like *ajazma* means holy spring and derives from the Greek *hagiasma*, a derivat of *hagios* and etymologically connected with *hagnós*; Méropi Anastassiadou-Dumont, “Sacred Spaces in a Holy City. Crossing Religious Boundaries in Istanbul at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century,” in *The Changing Landscapes of Cross-Faith Places and Practices*, ed. Manfred Sing, *Entangled Religions. Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Religious Contact and Transfer* (2019), 46.

³³ Pelushi, interview.

³⁴ Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, 34.

border region between Pogradec and Korçë remember Naum and his monastery as parts of their local heritage.

Beside the administrative demarcation to interpret the monastery internationally acknowledged as south Slavic, i.e. "Yugoslavian", there were only two examples for religious motivated establishing and spreading of Naum's cult in this time on the Yugoslavian side. The first church after the Ottoman disintegration was built in Livoišta, a village nearby Ohrid, in 1923.³⁵ In the Ottoman Empire, the village was ruled by some Ottoman officials and a station on the trade route between Bitola and Debar until 1938. To build a church, after the dominating Ottomans lost their power, is a clear demarcation sign. Although the reasons to dedicate the church to Naum are unclear, the ongoing struggle between Albania and Yugoslavia for the main monastery probably influenced the dedication process.

The second church occurred with a bigger space and time distance than the one in Livoišta. In 1938, two metalworkers from Pobožje initiated the new building of a church consecrated to Naum in Radišani, halfway to Skopje.³⁶ Their reasons to build another church for Naum nearby the capital in a village that already had two churches are not documented. A Christian family gave the land for the new monastery who took it over from an Ottoman official. Furthermore, it is known that the icon painters came from Skopje but had their family origins in Kumanovo. Although, a clear reference to Naum's main monastery in Ohrid is not obvious, the building of this church consecrated to a Slavic saint on a land that belonged to a Muslim Ottoman must be interpreted as another post-Ottoman demarcation.

In socialist Yugoslavia, according to new built churches and monasteries dedicated to Naum, the saint's cult spread increasingly since the 1960's. In general, the socialist politics suppressed religions. In this context even the Naum monastery was declared a cultural and historical monument and as such expropriated from the church institution and placed under the protection of the law in 1950.³⁷ The complex was turned into a museum without any church activities, but with an admission fee to reduce the religious character. Archaeological investigations have been further measures to turn the monastery into a cultural and historically significant monument at the beginning of the 1950s.³⁸ In 1955, excavations in and around the church started to explain its genesis. The center of the excavations was the chapel with Naum's tomb that was identified as an

³⁵ Јован Ф. Трифуноски, *Охридско-струшка област. Антропогеографска проучања* (Београд: Српска академија наука и уметности, 1992), 123-25.

³⁶ Ацо Александар Гиревски, *Манастир Свети Наум Радишани* [Kloster Sveti Naum Radišani] (Скопје: Македонска православна црква, 2006), 15-18.

³⁷ Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, 21.

³⁸ Димче Коцо, "Проучувања и археолошки Испитувања на Црквата на Манастирот Св. Наум," *Зборник 2* (1958): 58f, 65.

annex to the previous church. The opening of the tomb by the archaeological committee provoked some legends among the villagers of the nearby Ljubaništa. For instance, the anonymous committee from Belgrade opened the tomb to find gold. However, the committee did not find anything but the skeleton.³⁹ Interlocutors interpreted the tomb opening as a strategy to destroy the myth that Naum's heart is still beating which it can be heard when putting the ear on the tomb slab. Hence, the desecration of Naum's grave is another measurement against the religious character of the place.

Further construction measures boosted the turn of the monastery into a touristic destination. The most significant measures were the building of the restaurant "Ostrovo" and of the road from Ohrid to the monastery.⁴⁰ Due to the monastery's touristic popularity, in 1962 even Tito visited this complex and he ate in the new restaurant because the traditional Yugoslavia relay started at border crossing nearby, said the former major of the neighboring village. Finally, the monastery's politization was complemented by the erecting of the military campground in the 1970's. However, the area never lost its religious significance. Interlocutors reported that some Muslims slaughtered lambs as sacrifice (*kurban*), Orthodox Christians brought lambs as votive offerings to Naum and people from all over Yugoslavia came because of Naum's healing power.⁴¹ On the other hand, only in the 1980s, the state leased the church for the celebration of liturgies due to Naum's summer holiday.⁴²

An exception among this general anti-religious attitude of Yugoslavia is the foundation of the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC) as strategy to strengthen the Macedonian nation in 1967.⁴³ On the one hand, almost all orthodox churches are organized nationally, i.e. a separate MOC implies that Macedonia is a souverain nation. On the other hand, by supporting the foundation of a separate MOC, Macedonian and Yugoslavian politicians aimed to reduce the influence of the SOC.

In the period of the autocephaly declaration of the MOC some new churches dedicated to Naum were built in the region of Ohrid. First, a church was built in the village of Orman in 1970.⁴⁴ The reason to name the church after Naum goes back in

³⁹ Милева Крстаноска and Никола Крстаноски, "Св. Наум во време пред да е затворен како манастир," interview by Evelyn Reuter, Juli 08, 2016.

⁴⁰ Крсте Наумоски, "Св. Наум во време пред да е затворен како манастир," interview by Evelyn Reuter, July 06, 2016.

⁴¹ Ејуп Салих, "Бекташи во Охрид," interview by Evelyn Reuter, June 09, 2016; Крстаноска and Крстаноски, interview; Аноним Битолчанец, "Јагниња за Свети Наум," interview by Evelyn Reuter, July 02, 2016.

⁴² Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, 24.

⁴³ Stella Alexander, *Church and State in Yugoslavia since 1945*, Soviet and East European Studies, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 249-86.

⁴⁴ Трифуноски, *Охридско-струшка област. Антропогеографска проучанња*, 115f.

the time before the Ottomans took over the village, because it has been part of the property of Naum's main monastery. Thus, the historical connection was revived and architectonically established. The inhabitants of the village base their decision to a previous event that happened at an unknown date. Plowers saw a fire wandering from Orman to Ohrid and to Naum's monastery in the south of the lake and interpreted it as Naum who was visiting his land in Orman.⁴⁵

A chapel has been built in the second half of the 20th century and consecrated to Naum is the one in Leskoec. Dates of laying the foundation stone and the consecration are not handed down.⁴⁶ Instead there are two founding legends for this chapel. According to the first, Naum once flew from his main monastery because there have been many naked people at the beach.⁴⁷ He settled in Leskoec due to its beauty and quietness. The interlocutor claimed this version as dreamed by someone. The second legend says that Naum first has been in Leskoec and later went on to the south of the lake because there are springs with healing power. Thus, Naum's stay in Leskoec was only one station on his way.

A third church consecrated to Naum at the time of the MOC formation was newly founded in a village of Resen, a small town in the east of Ohrid. In 1965, the church was built as a small chapel about 3km in the south of the village Bolno.⁴⁸ This building bases on a dream of a Roma woman called Pemba.⁴⁹ Naum appeared to Pemba in her dreams and told her to construct a church for him at a place called *počinalište* that was a spring with healing water. According to two women who were the key-keepers at the time of my visit, the place's name refers to Naum's rest when he was on his way from the neighboring village Stipona to Ohrid.⁵⁰ Until that dream nobody knew about the connection between the medical spring and Naum's life. In the 1970s, a ledge was added to the first small church. Later a house with a kitchen, sleeping berths and a hall turned the church into a small monastery. Interestingly, the first liturgy by the main priest Metodija Poposki is mentioned in Risteski's report but not the foundation of the MOC as historic context.

Beside the construction of new churches, construction measures on the previous buildings dedicated to Naum emphasize the increasing political meaning of this saint. Already in 1964, at the time before the autocephaly declaration of the MOC, the

⁴⁵ Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, 68f.

⁴⁶ "Охридско архијерејско намесништво," Дебарско-кичевска епархија, updated 30.01.2015, 2015, accessed 21.05.2020, 2020, <http://www.dke.org.mk/index.php/namesnistva#7>.

⁴⁷ Fieldnotes from January 17, 2017.

⁴⁸ Владо Јовановски, *Населбите во Преспа. Местоположба, историски развој и минато* (Скопје: Ѓурѓа, 2005), 54.

⁴⁹ Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, 73-76.

⁵⁰ Fieldnotes from March 13, 2017.

church of Radišani became a monastery because of the new accommodation that was used by single caretaking monks or nuns.⁵¹ A parish office made the monastery a fix place in the village. Some years after the founding of the MOC, in 1970 the church in Livoišta were completely renovated.⁵² Rather than the renovation, the consecration of this village church by the metropolitan bishop Metodij of Debar-Kičevo in 1974 is a clear evidence of the contemporary church political contribution to establish the Macedonian nation.

4. Naum's role for an increasing Slavic Macedonian orthodox identity since the 1990's

After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Naum became a significant figure in the formation of a Slavic Macedonian orthodox identity. With Macedonia's declaration of independence, the politics officially granted to more religious freedom. During the so-called "denationalization", the government returned the former expropriated buildings to the religious organizations. Hence, in March 1991, the Naum monastery came under the administration of the Eparchy Debar-Kičevo with its bishop see in Ohrid, i.e. under the new founded autocephalous and unacknowledged MOC.⁵³ In June 1993, the MOC used the Naum monastery for an international symposium on the occasion of the 1100th anniversary of Kliment's episcopal ordination and Naum's arrival in Ohrid. The venue demonstrates the monastery's significance for the MOC's efforts to reconstruct a continuation since the medieval foundation.

Since the return in 1991, the monasterial complex changed its appearance that strengthened the touristification. The complex is surrounded with a wall, the souvenir stalls replaced by wooden booths.⁵⁴ Further new constructions are the parking areas for cars and buses after 2013 and another parking area behind the souvenir booths for the traders.⁵⁵ Beside this development of the explicit touristic infrastructure, even the religious surface was strengthened with the building of a chapel dedicated to Kiril and Metodij next to the older church named after Naum.

Since the independence of Macedonia, the MOC strengthened Naum's cult all over Macedonia by constructing new ecclesiastic buildings. It seems as the MOC checks where in its territory churches and monasteries dedicated to Naum are miss-

⁵¹ Гиревски, *Манастир Свети Наум Радишани*, 27, 36.

⁵² "Охридско архијерејско намесништво."

⁵³ Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 29f.

⁵⁴ Sebastian Kempgen, "Die Säulen in der Klosterkirche von Sveti Naum. Ein Projektbericht zur Digitalisierung des sprachlichen Kulturerbes in Makedonien," in *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach*, ed. Bernhard Brehmer, Aage A. Hansen-Löve, and Tilmann Reuther (Berlin et al.: Peter Lang, 2019), 2. <https://doi.org/10.20378/irb-47671>.

⁵⁵ Fieldnote from July 01, 2018.

ing in order to fill systematically these gaps. The gaps were especially found in the north western, the south eastern and north eastern part of the republic.

The first new constructed Naum building was the monastery in the mountains of Popova Šapka nearby Tetovo, in northwest Macedonia.⁵⁶ Although Popova Šapka is a touristic centre, the monastery was considered less touristic, as the successor of the previous *Sveta Bogorodica* church, which was destroyed in the Ottoman Empire. The reconstruction and renaming of the *Sveta Bogorodica* monastery in the neither Slavic nor orthodox region was perceived by some members of the Islamic community and some Albanian politicians as a clear show of force against the Albanian and Muslim inhabitants. I suggest the reconstruction of the monastery would have been less provocative, if the monastery was not renamed, because the Mary, i.e. the mother of Jesus, is a high respected person in Islam, even if she is not a *bogorodica*, i.e. God-bearer. On the other side, representants of the MOC as the archbishop Kiril or the main priest of Tetovo Mirko Stankovski argue with the historicity of the Christian place. According to a Muslim Albanian, the MOC represented territorial claims of the absent Slavic Macedonians who are the ethnic majority of the Macedonia's population.⁵⁷ The Macedonians visit this place only as tourists or for Naum's annual celebrations.

The thesis, i.e. demonstration of power, is supported by rarely celebrated liturgies and the missing monks or nuns in the so-called monastery. At this Naum monastery, church interests and national politics are interdependent because even politicians visit this place. Hristijan Mickoski, for instance, who became the leader of Macedonian's opposition party VMRO-DPMNE in December 2017, visits the monastery almost every year for Naum's winter holiday.⁵⁸ In 2019, the office of the VMRO-DPMNE reported the visits and informed potential voters about the possibility to talk with him about future plans and strategies of the party.⁵⁹ Thus, the visits became part of a publicly effective and subtle advertising strategy of the party for future elections. If he had visited the monastery as a private person and because of religious motivations, the party must not announce it publicly. However, in 2018 and 2020 even the SDSM-

⁵⁶ Мирко Станковски, *Вечни Светилишта во Полог. Цркви и Манастири во Тетовското Архијерејско Намесништво* (Тетово: Македонска Православна Црква Епархија Полошко - Куманковска Тетовско Архијерејско Намесништво, 2003), 30-32.

⁵⁷ Fieldnote from October 22, 2016.

⁵⁸ СВЕСТ.МК, "ФОТО: Мицкоски присуствуваше на литургија во манастирот Св. Наум Охридски на Попова Шапка," *Слободна Вест*, 05.01.2018 2018, <https://www.svest.mk/foto-mickoski-prisustvuvashe-na-liturgija-vo-manastirotsv-naum-ohridski-na-popova-shapka/>; Центар за комуникации на ВМРО-ДПМНЕ, "Мицкоски во посета на манастирот Св. Наум Охридски на Попова Шапка," *sitel*, 05.01.2019 2019, <https://sitel.com.mk/mickoski-vo-poseta-na-manastirotsv-naum-ohridski-na-popova-shapka>.

⁵⁹ СВЕСТ.МК, "ФОТО: Мицкоски присуствуваше на литургија во манастирот Св. Наум Охридски на Попова Шапка."

politician Oliver Spasovski, who became prime minister on January 3, 2020, documented his visit of the monastery for the winter holiday on Facebook.⁶⁰ Compared to Mickoski's post about his annual visit for the winter holiday⁶¹, Spasovski's post of 2020 is less political because he did not write about any political issue and did not show up with a Macedonian flag on the photos.

Another region of Macedonia whereto the Naum cult spread in form of building at this time was the southeast, around Strumica. At the beginning of 19th century, the Turkish Muslim population dominated the entire region until Slavic Christian refugees from Kukuš, today's Kilkis in Greece, settled down in villages around Strumica after the two Balkan wars.⁶² During Yugoslavia, Turks and other Muslims emigrated to Turkey because of an agreement between both countries;⁶³ even those of the Strumica region as the last official census from 2002 has shown.⁶⁴

According to a document from the Commission for Relations with Religious Communities and Religious Groups from 2011, there are three buildings named after Naum nearby Strumica. Two are churches in the villages of Gečerlija and Čanaklija, and one is a monastery in the Hamzali village.⁶⁵ I found more information about the monastery than about the two churches. In 2000, the construction of the monastery started which was consecrated to two saints, Naum and Kliment.⁶⁶ Until 2004, a monasterial accommodation was built and monks moved into the monastery. Ac-

⁶⁰ Oliver Spasovski, "Секогаш со голема радост го посетувам манастирот на Попова Шапка посветен на Св. Наум Охридски Чудитворец," Facebook, January 5, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/oliver.spasovski.35/posts/2571502349748138>; Oliver Spasovski, "Денес присуствував на одбележувањето на патрониот празник Свети Наум Охридски Чудотворец во манастирскиот комплекс на Попова Шапка," Facebook, January 5, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/o.spasovski/posts/915178518659772>.

⁶¹ Hristijan Mickoski, "Традиционално денес во посета на Попова Шапка, каде се чествува празникот и делото на Св. Наум Охридски," Facebook, January 5, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1432180303624091&type=3>.

⁶² Васил Иванов Кънчов and Маргарита Михайлова Василева, *Македонија. Етнографија и Статистика*, 2 ed. (Софија: Академично издателство "Марин Дринов", 1996), 161; Петър Хр. Петров, *Научна експедиција в Македонија и Поморавието 1916* (Софија: Универзитетско издателство "Св. Климент Охридски", 1993), 244.

⁶³ Nathalie Clayer and Xavier Bougarel, *Europe's Balkan Muslims. A new History*, trans. Andrew Kirby (London: Hurst & Company, 2017), 133f.

⁶⁴ Dončo Gerasimovski, "Popis na naselenieto, domaќinstva i stanovite vo Republika Makedonija, 2002. Definitivni Podatoci," (Ohrid: Državen Zavod za Statistika Republika Makedonija, 2002), 74, 78, 346f, 52.

⁶⁵ Валентина Божиновска and Комисија за односи со верските заедници и религиозни групи КОВЗ, "Карта на верски објекти во Република Македонија," (Скопје: Менора, 2011), 65-67. <http://www.kovz.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/karta%20i%20tekt%20spoeno.pdf>.

⁶⁶ "Хамзали - манастир Светите Климент и Наум Охридски," Македонска Православна Црква, accessed 22.05.2020, <http://www.mpc.org.mk/MPC/SE/hamzali.asp>.

ording to the abbess, in 2010 the complex was turned into a nun monastery.⁶⁷ Furthermore, she explained that the monastery name changed before the arrival of the nuns into *Sveti Kliment, Pavel i Car Justinijan*. The reason for changing the name was the existence of the other two churches in Gečerlija and Čanaklija that were consecrated to Naum. The church of Gerčelija was renamed into *Sveti Theophil*, only the name of the church in Čanaklija was not changed. This decision was made to avoid confusing people, said the abbess. Although, I could not find more reliable information about the two churches, one explanation why a minor church could keep the name of the significant saint must refer to the years of construction. Thus, the church venerated to Naum in Čanaklija must be the oldest one.

In general, all three buildings are so new and less important that even staff members of the eparchy in Strumica knew nothing about them.⁶⁸ However, Naum's cult is quite relevant to the eparch who choose Naum's name for himself when he became bishop. Thus, the effort to establish Naum's cult in this area that is far away from Ohrid and the main monastery must also be interpreted as closing a Naum gap in the MOC territory.

Another Naum gap in the MOC territory is northeastern Macedonia. Exemplarily for the eparchy Bregalnica, a small church was built in the middle of the village Čiflik, nearby Kočani. After the consecration in May 2008, the metropolitan bishop of Bregalnica Ilarion Serafimovski several times celebrated Naum's holiday in this church.⁶⁹ According to some direct neighbors, the MOC induced the construction and the eparch Stefan Veljanovski choose the church's name.⁷⁰ The neighbors also explained that there are other churches around the village. People of the village are considering *Sveti Atanasij* to be their saint whose holiday is celebrated in May. Thus, the interlocutors expressed their lack of understanding that why another church was built in their village. They also asked why the church is dedicated to Naum to whom they have no connection. Besides this statement, the performance of the metropolitan in Čiflik and other places in his eparchy to celebrate Naum supports the thesis of spreading Naum's cult systematically.⁷¹ However, not all places where the metropolitan celebrated Naum's holiday are dedicated to this saint like the monastery *Sveti Gavriel* of

⁶⁷ Fieldnotes from June 28, 2017.

⁶⁸ Fieldnotes from July 10, 2018.

⁶⁹ "На празникот на преподобен Наум Охридски Чудотворец во с. Чифлик – Кочани," Македонска Православна Црква, 2008, accessed 23.05.2020, <http://www.mpc.org.mk/vest.asp?id=3063>.

⁷⁰ Fieldnotes from 26.02.2017.

⁷¹ "Барaj. Наум Охридски," Брегалничка Епархија, accessed 23.05.2020, <http://www.bregalnickaeparhija.org.mk/index.php/component/search/?searchword=%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%83%D0%BC%20%D0%BE%D1%85%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B4%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8&ordermg=newest&searchphrase=all&limit=20>.

Lesново. Furthermore, in this eparchy there is another chapel located in Delčevo that was consecrated to Naum in August 2013.⁷² Finally, in 2019 a small shop in front of the cathedral *Sveti Kiril i Metodij* was named after Naum.⁷³

One of the last places in the MOC territory with a Naum gap was Prilep in southern Macedonia. According to my fieldwork data, the church in Prilep is the latest construction under the administration of the MOC.⁷⁴ In comparison to previous churches named after Naum, the genesis of the church in Prilep is documented in newspapers and it shows the connection to the local and national politics.⁷⁵ This church is one of four which are built in a few years with the support of the MOC and the mayor Marjan Risteski who is a member of VMRO-DPMNE which has been the long ruling party of Macedonia. Since the VMRO-DPMNE “established a close alliance” with the MOC,⁷⁶ the Naum church of Prilep is the peak of implementing Naum as the Slavic Macedonian saint *per se*. However, the financial support for the construction of the new Naum church by the SDSM in 2019 shows that this tendency is not related to one political party, rather a general tendency of political continuity.⁷⁷ Though the SDSM decided for a financial support, the decision became not as public in newspapers as the previous one of the VMRO-DPMNE.

Finally, the veneration of Naum can still be a very individual and religious motivated act. For instance, in the southeastern provincial town Nov Dojran close to the border to Greece, another chapel is named after Naum. The chapel’s construction is initiated and done by a woman from Skopje. Her husband survived a boat accident on a tour in the Ohrid lake towards Naum’s monastery in 2002.⁷⁸ She writes that she

⁷² "Осветен парақлис – крстилина посветен на „Св. Наум Охридскиот Чудотворец“ во Делчево," Брегалничка Епархија, 2013, accessed 05.07.2020, <http://www.bregalnickaeparhija.org.mk/index.php/95-uncategorised/618-2013-08-04-16-35-09>.

⁷³ "На „Преподобен Наум Охридски Чудотворец“, освет на црковна продавница во Делчево," Брегалница Епархија, 2019, accessed 05.07.2020, <http://www.bregalnickaeparhija.org.mk/index.php/82-2010-01-15-21-45/2010-01-15-21-513/1288-2019-07-05-15-42-17>.

⁷⁴ Fieldnotes from 18.08.2017.

⁷⁵ "Во Прилеп одбележан споменот на големиот православен светител Свети Наум Охридски Чудотворец," *НемПрес*, 03.07.2017, <https://netpress.com.mk/vo-prilep-odbelezan-spomenot-na-golemit-ot-pravoslaven-svetitel-sveti-naum-ohridski-chudotvorec/>.

⁷⁶ Bilge Yabancı and Dane Taleski, "Co-opting religion: How Ruling Populists in Turkey and Macedonia Sacralise the Majority," *Religion, State and Society* 46, no. 3 (2018): 287, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0963749-4.2017.1411088>.

⁷⁷ Илија Јованоски, *Службен Гласник Општина Прилеп*, Советот на Општина Прилеп, Одделение за правни и општи работи (Прилеп: Општина Прилеп, October 15 2019), 2-3, <https://www.pri-lep.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/slgh142019.pdf>.

⁷⁸ Snezana Milkovska, "Св. Наум Охридски Чудотворец- Дојран 2014," Facebook, 07.01.2014, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/snezana.milkovska.3/posts/234152610098247>.

started to build this chapel after a dream on January 5, 2011. In 2018, the construction was not yet completed and consecrated. According to the local priest, the chapel was nevertheless used for the annual celebration of Naum's holiday on January 5th.⁷⁹

Beside new constructions, the Naum cult was intensified even by renovations and complementation's of existing churches. At the beginning of the 1990's, the Naum monastery of Radišani was rebuilt in a bigger dimension due to the initiative of the previous eparch Gavril Milošev.⁸⁰ This engagement of the highest representant of the MOC in a church projected started by lay persons occurs in the course of the republic's independence as a statement to support the nation building process. Thus, the MOC acts in continuity with the supportive Yugoslavian politics of 1967 as well as in discontinuity in sense of the general Yugoslavian anti-religious politics. Furthermore, beyond Macedonia, a couple of churches dedicated to Naum are raised abroad by the Macedonian diaspora in Canada, USA, Australia, Sweden and Switzerland.⁸¹ The diaspora eparchy of Europe is even named after Naum.

5. Conclusion

Referring to churches and monasteries which are named after the saint, Naum's cult is spread all over Macedonia. With respect to the historic context, first these buildings were constructed by the country's population as reaction to some radical changes. Furthermore, they are especially located in the countryside rather than in cities. Whereas Voskopoja has been a historical center and turned into a rural place, other churches and monasteries were erected consciously in villages. One reason is that cities such as Ohrid or Skopje as centres already had their churches. On the other hand, some villages did not have churches for a long time, because the countryside was often dominated by Ottoman landlords or populated by Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. Only after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the Muslim-Christian rela-

⁷⁹ Fieldnotes from July 06, 2018.

⁸⁰ Гиревски, *Манастир Свети Наум Радишани*, 20-22.

⁸¹ "American-Canadian Macedonian Orthodox Diocese," World Heritage Encyclopedia, accessed 06.07.2020, http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/American-Canadian_Orthodox_Diocese; Aco Girevski, "St. Naum of Ohrid" Macedonian Orthodox Church Community in Triengen, Switzerland (1992-2017)," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 37, no. 4 (2017); James Jupp, *The Australian people: An encyclopedia of the nation, its people and their origins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 679; "Background," Macedonian Orthodox Church - Diocese of Australia and New Zealand, 2017, accessed 06.07.2020, https://www.mocdanz.org.au/en_AU/diocese/%d0%98%d0%a1%d0%a2-%d0%9e%d0%a0%d0%98%d0%88%d0%90%d0%a2/; Nick Anastasovski, "The arrival and settlement of Macedonians in the inner Western suburbs of Melbourne," *Victorian Historical Journal* 82, no. 1 (2011), <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=201211779;res=IELAPA>; "Историјат," Македонска Православна Црква „Свети Наум Охридски“ - Малме, accessed 06.07.2020, <http://www-mpc-malmo.org/>.

tions changed so that churches could be built for the population's need. In Yugoslavia, occasions for the construction of these buildings arose with the foundation of the autocephalous Orthodox church of Macedonia and the emigration of a large number of the Muslim population to Turkey.

Consequently, the popping up of churches and monasteries dedicated to Naum in the rural areas is a sign of Naum's increasing significance for the ones who induced the construction and naming measures. Although it is not always clear who initiated these measures, it is noticeable that the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC) has been strongly involved in the construction and reconstructions of these buildings since the 1990s. As the construction involvement of the MOC is in coincidence with Macedonia's independence and several home affairs, the MOC's supporting role in Macedonia's ongoing nation building process becomes visible. This becomes also clear, because the places of the new buildings are far away from the original monastery of Naum in regions. Traditionally, some of these regions did not have a strong connection with Naum, since he as a local saint was most important between Ohrid and Korçë, rather than around Tetovo, Strumica or Kočani.

Whereas the population did not spread Naum's cult according to a plan all over the country, the MOC uses Naum in charge of his historical position to strengthen the Slavic-orthodox basics from the middle ages of the Macedonian nation. The systematic approach let the people identify with a local saint. Thus, the MOC generates the idea of continuity with the saint's tradition, i.e. Slavic orthodoxy with Ohrid as its centre.

Finally, the case study contributes to a deeper insight in the role of religion in transformation processes that are mainly examined with respect to politics and economy rather than religion. Against the theories on revitalization of religion and secularization in modern times, the study illustrates the historic contingent use religious and cultural heritage for the purpose of nation building in post-socialist Macedonia. Furthermore, the tradition of cultural and religious elements was only possible because the general limitations of church activities did not effect the individual living out of religious needs. The post-socialist strategy continues past religious-political tendencies since the differentiation of the *millet*-system in the 19th century, that survived the socialist anti-religion attitudes.

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