ORTHODOX RELIGIOUS FUND OF BUKOVYNA:
MOTIVES OF CREATION AND CHURCH-ADMINISTRATIVE
PRINCIPLES OF ACTIVITY

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Abstract: In the article it is examined controversial issues that appeared in the process of church property dividing between the newly installed Austrian authorities and clergy. Such way of Orthodox Church Reformation received a negative evaluation of the clerical hierarchy, resulting in the secularizational acts and affiliations of monastery property were changed. The author researches the process of implementation of the church legislation that legitimized sequestration and substantiated the creation of Orthodox religious fund and approached its work to the perfection. In the investigation it was reviewed the peculiarities of establishment and functioning of the Fund, its role and influence on the overall development of the region.

Keywords: Bukovyna, Orthodox Fund, secularization, activity, possessions, estates, administration, Orthodox Church.

1. Introduction

The activity and formation of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine often became the subject of scientific interests of Ukrainian and foreign experts. However, the specificity of existence and functioning of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine always had its own regional peculiarities that are quite different and require additional study. Regional specification of the church necessitates its narrower and thorough researches that allow creating a kind of mosaic, where differences of ecclesiastical existence form additional opportunities for the gained experience. It will let to engage the gained experience in the structure of the Orthodox Church that in further helps to improve its work according to the requirements of time. In this context it is necessary to examine in details the activities of the Orthodox Church of Bukovyna, because the presence in its structure the Orthodox religious fund distinguishes it among all regional churches. This shows the serious hint of autonomy and independence of the church, where format of diplomatic relations between ecclesiastical and secular authorities are clearly singled out. Therefore, this problem will help solving a number of socially important issues that require deep scientific analysis and is actual.

The aim of our study is to analyze the causes and legitimacy of religious fund establishment, specificity of its activity and its socially political significance.

This objective leads to the following tasks:
- to examine the causes of Orthodox Fund creation in terms of geopolitical changes;
- to define the role of the Religious Fund in reformation of the Orthodox Church in Bukovyna and its social functions;
- to analyze the specificity of Orthodox Fund activity based on regulatory rules of the church.

2. Materials and Methods

Specialized researches devoted to the problems of Orthodox Fund formation and functioning in the structure of the Orthodox Church in Bukovyna that started in the late eighteenth century and chronologically encompass two historical periods of territorial accession of region: Austrian (1774-1918) and Romanian (1918-1940; 1941-1944). During this time the issues connected with the organization of work and purpose of Bukovyna Orthodox religious fund reflected in the papers of Austrian, German, Romanian, Ukrainian and Russian scientists. Despite the thoroughness of their researches it is worth noting that much of it suffers bias or conjuncture. This can be explained by the national affiliation of researchers to the states that in different historical periods prevailed in Bukovyna.

There are four periods in the history of the study of the Orthodox Fund specifics in Bukovyna. They are caused by the historical past of a land that was part of the various states. Therefore scientific papers relating to the establishment and activities of the Orthodox religious fund were the subject of scientific research of foreign and domestic experts. Among Austrian researchers it is worth mentioning such scientific scholars as F. Vikenhauzer, R. Kayndl, F. Tsihlauer, E. Fischer and modern studios of K. Sharr. Their works are incomplete, or partially reveal the specifics of religious fund functioning and require additions and clarifications. Romanian specialists studied the activities of the Church Fund more substantively, such as: I. Nistor, G. Sirbu, A. Morariu, I. Onchul, most of which were written by the objective need to prove "romanianity" of Fund or to protect the interests of Romanians that claimed to it. Today scientific works of Romanian researchers are represented in professional investigations of M. Yakobesku, S. Clip, D. Valenchuk. It should be noted their significant contribution to the development of the problem, but this works can not claim to be objective, as they were written in the light of national identity. Issues related to the Fund functioning were also comprised to the visions of such Russian scientists as G. Voskresenskij, V. Mordvinov, G. Gybka, where attention was focused on the legal evaluation of Orthodox Fund. Researches of Ukrainian scientists devoted to the definite problem are presented in the works of S. Dohmaru, I. Buhovets, M. Haykovskij, written under the influence of Soviet anti-Church policy. Modern scientific works about the Bukovyna’s Fund activities were written by S. Yaremchuk, V. Dokash, M. Chuchko, V. Botushansko. But the peculiarities of the formation and functioning of the Religious Fund are
considered in the context of the Orthodox Church study which is not profound and detailed, therefore requires a significant addition and thorough research.

The source base that is represented by funds of the State Archive of Chernivtsi Region (fund №1, F. №3, F. №320, F. №320, F. №321) plays an important part for our research. The basis for the work of mentioned funds is F. №321 «Administratia fondului bisericesc ortodox roman din Bucovina» (Administration of Bukovyna Orthodox religious fund) where are presented documents that reflect the events of Orthodox fund formation, the specifics of its activities (statutes) and the process of liquidation. These materials allow reflecting the work and functions of diocesan fund, its internal structure and also examining documents that regulated the functioning of the Fund and Bukovyna Orthodox Church in particular. Archival base is strengthened by "Shematyzms Orthodox Church" (first published in the Orthodox diocese in 1841) which are located in the library of Chernivtsi museum of local lore. Exactly in them there is information on lists of clerics, the number of parishioners and the state of church property, which is significant for this work. Equally valuable sources that consistently represent activity of Orthodox religious fund are theological journal «Candela», newspaper chronicle (newspaper "Bucovina"), which most objectively illustrate the mood of the population and the course of affairs in the Orthodox structure.

The author, based on the analysis of narrative and assembly material, uses general scientific and specific historical methods of research. In particular, historical retrospective method is used to reflect socially historical conditions of the second half of the eighteenth century; historically systematic method – to study the Fund in general along with the specific regulation of internal activity; for consistency of presentation is used chronological method; for comparison of parallel events - synchronic method.

3. Results

The historical vicissitudes that occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century, led the accession of entire territory of Bukovyna (North and South) under the authority of the Habsburg Empire. On the joined territory Austrian Empire projected its own experience of development. This spread not only on the state socio-political and economic sector, but also on the most significant religious sphere. Being officially Catholic, Austria didn’t enforce Bukovyna their religious beliefs, but took on organizing the Orthodox Church. As part of the policy of "enlightened absolutism" it was actively implemented the system of "state ecclesiasticism". On the one hand it was diplomatic relations between the state and the church, where the first served as a defender of the interests of the second. On the other hand the state regulates the Orthodox Church activity, which primarily concerned the industrial and economic part. Instead, it was put a number of public policy objectives on the Orthodox Church that played a key role in building of Bukovyna Society.

Assigned tasks to the Church, that were providing and development of various sectors of Bukovyna, were caused by the presence of relevant resources for it. The reason is that in the province of Moldavian churches and monasteries were significantly enriched through the patronage of the governors and the boyars. Thus the bishops disposed of fairly significant holdings and were the largest landowners in Bukovyna. However, monastic clergy and archpastors sought to buy more property, if possible, in order to meet their needs in perpetuity. They reached their goal partly by the buying estates, and partly by the benefactions. At that time the land was expensive, so entire villages were purchased for the little money. As a result of the policy of accumulation of land resources 55% of the total land in the province was owned by the Church before the creation of Bukovyna Orthodox fund.

Austria nominated its territorial claims to Bukovyna because of a military confrontation between Russia and Turkey. After a series of diplomatic actions on the 2 September of 1774 the Austrian army led by generals Spleni and Kiss took the main points of the new border. It took advantage of the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, which at that time was not ready to enter the war. In spite of Duchess Maria Theresa fears, Joseph II instructed to justify historical right of Austria to the newly occupied territory. This task was performed by major Mig and colonel Zeger, who built it on several facts: 1) appealed to the former belonging of land to Pokuttya; 2) emphasized the rights of Poland and Hungary to Bukovyna, to which the land was belonged. Already in October 27, 1774 Emperor with military units throughout the Bukovyna issued orders not to admit Turkish and Moldovan forces [1].

Weakened by wars Turkey was forced to acknowledge the transfer of land to the ownership of the Habsburgs. Officially, in April 3, 1775, an agreement about the transfer of Bukovyna (except Khotyn raja) to Austria was signed. On the basis of the treaty, signed in May 7, 1775 between Austria and Turkey, and Balamutivska Convention in July 2, 1776, Bukovyna became the part of Austria [2]. On February 25, 1777 the agreement was ratified, and the final accession of Bukovyna to Austria can be considered on October 12, when the population of Bukovyna pledged allegiance to the Habsburgs – as emphasized M. Nykyforak [3].

At the time of accession Bukovyna to Austria the biggest part of the Orthodox Church was part of Radivetska (Radautska) diocese, which belonged to Iasi (Moldavian) Metropolis, the autonomous Church of the Constantinople Patriarchate. The smaller part of the Orthodox Church was part of Suceava county, that was subordinate to Iasi Metropolis, which the vicar represented in Suceava [2]. As a result of diplomatic relations and the unwillingness of Austria to subordinate the Church, on March 24, 1781 Joseph II issued a decree which said that all parishes and monasteries subordinate to Radivetskyj Bishop Dositheus (Hereskul). On April 24, 1781 with the support of the Austrian intelligence Iassy Metropolitan Gavrjil (Kalimah) refused jurisdiction over Radivetska diocese and the Orthodox people of Bukovyna, which were part of his diocese. In response, Bishop Dositheus abandoned his spiritual power over the faithful of Radivetska diocese who were in Moldova. On December 12, 1781 by the imperial Decree episcopal chair was moved to Chernivtsi, and on February 13, 1783 Bishop Dositheus was enthroned in dignity of bishop Chernivtsi and Bukovyna. Thus, Bukovyna got its own independent chair.
For legal (canonical) existence of the church organization it must have at least 2-3 bishops. To remedy the situation and keep the ecclesiastical laws emperor, by his order of July 4, 1783, added the episcopal chair to the jurisdiction of Karlovatskij Metropolitan (from 1848 - Serbian Patriarch), who was rector of the faithful people of Austria [4]. But this submission was purely dogmatic and bishop in its internal affairs used almost all the rights of autocephaly.

The rights and obligations of Metropolitan were regulated by imperial powers from September 30, 1783, March 13 and April 26, 1786, and July 20, 1790. Metropolitan Powers were minimal, which actually must perform the sacrament of the priesthood (ordination) over the candidate to the Bukovyna episcopal chair appointed by power [5]. However, later Metropolitan tried to correct the situation and gave a petition to the emperor that he allowed the bishop to choose the protege to Bukovyna chair. But this petition was not successful, and monarch remained the de facto leader of the diocese. It was a gross violation and contradicted to the canons of the Orthodox Church. Bishop Dositheus was the last bishop selected, all others were proteges of secular power.

Since 1774, Austria not only streamlined identity of episcopal chair, but began the Reformation of entire structure of church organization. For the legitimacy of its actions Bukovyna Orthodox Church entered the legal field of the Austrian monarchy, where it received a legal status that was manifested in patent about religious tolerance which Joseph II issued on October 20, 1781. On June 19, 1783 Emperor published a «Tolerance Patent», which ensured freedom for all religions. So, based on these documents, the Orthodox Church was legalized and was listed to the state churches.

Giving legal status to the Church, Emperor Joseph II, introducing on the territory of Bukovyna rights and liberties, which were acting within the Austrian monarchy, decided to secularize church-monastery possessions [6]. To this decisive step Emperor was prompted several reasons: general Gabriel von Spleni and lord B. Balsh proposed in their memorandum of 1772 to confiscate the possessions of monasteries and to provide them with such amount of property, which was necessary for their maintenance, or, due to the Russian example, it was necessary to assigned for monasteries clear power.

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Another impetus for secularization was the fact that Bishop Dositheus said that the management of extensive holdings had caused extraordinary trouble, expressed readiness to transfer the property to the state in return for an annual payment of rent and the right to use estates in Radauti to the end of life, where his residence was located. The proposal was adopted by Emperor Joseph II, but not on behalf of the church, and of the High court. But the monks believed that everyone, who put his hand on monastery property, would be cursed [7].

The Bucovyna’s researcher V. Botushanskyj points to another reason for secularization of property that claimed that 82 estates, that were fully or partially owned by monasteries and where it was conducted a primitive economy, didn’t give high profits. Inefficient use of monastic lands and the need for improvement their economy pushed for secularization of property [8]. However, these reasons can be considered only a formality, since the real impulse of secularization was Emperor’s Joseph II misunderstanding of the monastery “beholding” life. Regarding the seizure of all assets of the church there are many different statements, ranging from praise for this government to uncompromising criticism. Both positions have the right to live, but we should recognize that innovation in the Orthodox Church had benefited not only the clergy, but also had a positive impact on the socio-political situation in Bukovyna.

Governor-General of the Land Enzenberg (1778-1786) developed a detailed plan regarding monasteries and in 1781 created a commission for "separation" [9], whose task was in inventory the church property and strict definition of the boundaries of the monasteries estates to pass them to the Religious Fund. In December the court of the Military Council (Hofkriegsrat) issued an order that required the reduction the number of monasteries with their property, which passed officially to the administration [10]. The authorities examined the revenue and expenditure and assigned all documentation [11].

Immediately after the enthronement of Joseph II in 1780, it was developed a plan of "antimonasteries" or "anticlerical" reforms. The basis for justification of the legality of secularizational measures made the descriptions of such German researchers as J. Poljeka, R. Kayndl, F. Vikenhauser, F. Tsihlauer von Blumenthal and with the assistance of Romanian scholar Isidor Onchula, where were taken into account only the negative sides of the monastery.

[12] By that time the activity of the Orthodox Church did not comply the canonical rules, because the clergy was ignorant, monks led the dissolute life exploiting the peasants on their own land.

In practice secularizational events began on August 3, 1782, when appeared the Orthodox religious fund based on imperial decree, which proclaimed the secularization of the estates of 14 monasteries and hermitages [13]. V. Botushanskyj indicates that since 8 October this year and over the next one under the imperial control were switched monastery ownership in Radauti, Novoselytsia, Oster, Kitsman, Lashkivtsi, Suhoverhiv, Klivodyn, Davydivtsi, Putyla, Havrylivtsi, Hlyvysche, Horech, Vylavche , Khreshchatyk, Zamost, Babyn, Zvynyachyn, Luke, in the monastery of nuns in Petrivtsi, in women's monasteries of Mamajivtsi, Vyzhnytsya, Voloka and others [8].

Officially the Orthodox Fund was formed on June 19, 1783 according to the order of Emperor Joseph II, who demanded the following: “... with no adjournment to reduce the number of Bukovynian monasteries, and their lands and
funds came under the administration of the royal management and His Majesty. The property of the clergy of the stranger will be fully accepted, and from the all fund that will be created on this basis will be provided the Orthodox clergy and will be formed at least one school, either in Chernivtsi, whether in Suceava and let the rest will be used in useful purposes " [14]. But abbots and monks who were an obstacle to the expropriation and closing monasteries, tried to protect the property. They said that having destroyed the monasteries and owned wealth, the power would despise the founders and donors will. But their protests were in vain, and the general called them all traitors [10].

Bishop Dositheus initially supported the initiative of the Government. But the irregularities during the expropriation were unacceptable to the church, and the bishop was forced to ask for the help Karlovatskyj Metropolitan Moisej and write a letter to the emperor. In response Joseph II did not approve dishonest actions of the administration of military policy, having stressed that he had no intention to remove the diocesan wealth, but would prefer that they would be under the state control, and Church and its ministers would live with these revenues [15]. That is, the Emperor paid attention in his rescript that diocesan property, as well as assets of monasteries, was not confiscated, but withdrawn by the State for augmenting the church funds and improve economic activity.

Religious Fund was established by decree of the emperor with full name "Greek eastern religious fund of Bukovyna » (Der griechisch-orientalische Religionsfond der Bukowina) and was regulated by "Spiritual regulations» (Anordnung zur Regulierung des Geistlichen, Kirchen und Schulwesen in der Bukowina) on April 29, 1786, that has been updated by the Highest decision on December 10, 1869. The regulation primarily legitimized secularizational activities of the Austrian monarchy and declared that: "Under the name of the Church Fund means ... all property which is intended for the maintenance of religion. Church Fund Property includes ... movable and immovable property of monasteries. Earned income undoubtedly will come into the religious cash and will be used as payment for the proper maintenance of the church and school personnel and only for the benefit of clergy, religion and humanity. The local governor ... is his protector. All cases of Religious Fund will always carry an official character and protect its rights and interests required to state officials ... ". [10]. Actually "Spiritual regulations" concluded the secularizational measures, constructed the work of the Fund and was the beginning of his legitimate activities. The spiritual rules concerned not only Orthodox Fund but also regulate the activity of the entire Orthodox Church.

During the formation of the Orthodox religious fund in the church it was secularized 260 objects of immovable estate and 7 estates of Radivetksjy Episcopal House (Radauti, Kitsman, Lashkivka, Suhoverhiv, Klivodym, Davydivtsi and Rohizna). Previous estates of Radivetska diocese which remained abroad and was not able to exchange, Austrian government ordered to sell and the proceeds (61 thousand Florins) put on the interest rate into the banks [8].

Thus, Orthodox religious fund consisted mainly of forests, arable fields, fish ponds and trade institutions. Lands of the Fund amounted to almost 20% of all Bukovyna (200 000 hectares). At the end of 30 years of the nineteenth century the Fund had 255 thousand hectares of land, and at the end of the nineteenth century – 271 thousand hectares, of which 253 thousand hectares of forests and pastures, 18 thousand hectares of arable land [16].

"Spiritual regulations" or "Order of arrangement of the activity of spiritual, religious and school institutions in Bukovyna " proclaimed that the emperor (or submitted in his face marginal governor) declared the defender and protector of the people and ruled that the government and using the fund, appointed only for clergy and schools, depended on royal orders. For the emperor remained right to choice Bukovyna bishop and land administration chose priests. The clergy were assigned and secular duties, which were limited to civil registration, instilling to the people obedience to the Caesar and declare issued laws and government regulations in the church [6]. This manual has been updated by supreme decision of December 10, 1869. However, as the experience showed, acts of public law priests made their source of income and demanded exorbitant fees from the citizens.

Legal regulation of Orthodox Fund activity did not exclude other forms of financing and provision of the Orthodox Church. On the contrary, it was allowed different types of interactions with contributors whose common goal was the development and expansion of the Church. One of the most effective forms traditionally established in the region was the right of patronage.

Functions of Orthodox Fund were clearly defined in the "Spiritual regulations" but, unfortunately, throughout the existence of the Fund Regulation has repeatedly violated or not implemented in the future at all. This year Bukovyna was administratively attached to Galicia and the ruling of Bukovyna’s Orthodox fund moved to Lviv. Profits of Religious fund were decreased significantly, and the remainder was absorbed by considerable administration. Only in 1810 the control was passed to the military administration and was introduced the system of rental estates [8].

According to the order in Bukovyna were left only three monasteries - Putna, Drahamyryna and Suchavytsya, in each of which could live to 25 people, and the remaining monasteries were closed. Three nunneries were eliminated completely. Due to the various sources of Bukovynian researchers there were about 36 monasteries and hermitages before the joining of Bukovyna, and about 28 – after submission of Austria. However, not only in Bukovyna the institute of monasticism was almost destroyed by acts of elimination, but throughout the monarchy it was closed 400 religious monasteries. Scientists put forward the thesis that the closure of monasteries and strict rules of vows were genuine revival of monastic life in Bukovyna.

Monks of closed monasteries were forcibly sent abroad. They were allowed to stay in the monastery Moldovysysa, which became their temporary shelter until all the local devotees had died. As a result of these actions many monks went into acting Moldovan monasteries. Such governmental actions justified in the regulations that the monks were considered idlers. The document reported that for the public weal of inhabitants of the land the monasteries must to be transformed into the places that would serve
not like "hangout of parasites" who received salaries from
the Fund at the expense of other essential needs. Most of
monasteries turned into a hospice. The government wanted
to make the monastery a place where priests who could not
serve because of health or old age, took monastic vows and
found a shelter and nutrition.

The regulations introduced strict rules for applicants
on taking monastic vows. He forbade to leave in the
monastery foreigners and those monks who took monastic
vows abroad. Control of reception relied on secular power.
Since the formation of the Fund monks received constant
maintenance, they were forbidden to engage in secular
affairs, trade, wine, animal husbandry, farming, gardening
and monetary transactions. Any agreement related to the
acquisition of property was considered invalid [2]. Acquired
property through wills or donations had to be passed to the
Orthodox Fund; funds for various worship had not to move
to the ownership of the monastery. With the accumulation
of 100 florins they had to be sent to the cash of Diocesan
Fund. These rules concerned also property that was brought
by entrants among the brethren. Novices, who did not want to
continue living in the monastery, were allowed to leave it and
get their property back [5]. Thus, the regulations disciplined
monks and left to them only their immediate duty – sending
worships and prayer communion with God.

According to the "Spiritual regulations" all monasteries
were held by the Religious Fund. Each monastery was given
everything it needed for subsidiary farming, allowing them
to provide their own needs. The salary was varied: superiors
received a fee of 460 florins (guilders), vicars received 260
fl., the monks – 210 fl. Of course, over the time their salary
increased to this size: superiors – 1,200 guilder and 300 for
receiving visitors, vicars – 600 guild., the monks with the
teological education – 420 guild., without education – 300
guild. [5].

The parish clergy was also reformed. When Bishop
Dositheus ruled, as V. Botushanskyj says, Bukovyna
diocese had 408 priests. After the reforming it was left 269
parishes, although "Spiritual regulations" defined only 180
[8]. Number of priests, as it was stated in the regulations,
depended on the size of the parish. In parishes, numbering
no more than 150 yards, it was appointed one priest, where
was no more than 250 yards – two, and where was more than
250 yards – three priests. Diocesan Bishop was allowed as
the population increased to enlarge the number of priests in
parishes.

A priest, due to the Spiritual Regulation, should be
perfect in life, of local origin, an Austrian citizen, loyal to
the Austrian authorities, at least 25 years old and receive the
ordination of the local bishop. Moreover, he should get a
spiritual education. The document forbade priests to collect
donations, to buy any estate, sale cattle and wine and so on
[17].

The regulation provided every Orthodox priest 44
Morgue (0.57 hectare) of plot of land (session). Land used by
the parish priests, and all their immovable property exempted
from taxes. Two days from each household parishioners had
to work on the priest’s land.

Overall clergy had several sources of income: a)
proceeds from leasing the land; b) payment of people for
clearly defined rites; c) the payment of the Diocesan Fund,
determined as sufficient livelihood for the priest of that
area. However, in the regulations there were well calculated
costs, as the third item provided not payment of full salary,
but surcharge difference from established amounts and have
earned income for the previous two items [18]. Later it was
determined pension payment from a Religious fund.

The management of eparchial affairs according to
the "Spiritual regulations" was provided the bishop and
the consistory that was under the guidance of Bishops [2,
5]. Although the Orthodoxy consistory obeyed the bishop, it
was controlled by public authorities. Repeatedly supreme
spiritual authority and Religious fund experienced political
interference of management powers. Influence of Vienna was
made through the local governors. Of course, the spiritual
and secular authorities were aware that the economic position
of Diocesan Fund created opportunities for its use in the
crown land for political purposes [19]. However symbiosis
of two branches of government in the management of the
Orthodox fund that was proposed by Austrians, later gave
unprecedented results.

The first innovation was concerned with structural
specifics of the Orthodox fund that consisted in bringing
to its economic work secular experts of relevant industries.
Administrative changes concerning the structure of the
Orthodox Church allowed to develop economic power of
ecclesiastical institutions. Having regulated legal side of the
Fund, the process of establishing economic and industrial
activities began that permitted to get significant income
in cash of Religious Fund. The Fund gradually came to
Bukovyna markets as the biggest landowner of the region,
and after that any large-scale project was conducted without
its participation.

4. Conclusions

We can conclude that due to the territorial joining
Bukovyna to the Austrian it was held a number of changes
in the organizational structure of the Orthodox church, which
began to decline. First of all the positive innovation was
the formation of Orthodox Fund, established as the result
of the Kaiser policy and positive vision of such changes
by Bukovyna bishop. Having created the Orthodox fund,
Austrian authorities introduced a new form of relations
between church and state. It played a key role in ensuring
the independence of the Orthodox Church, and was the
first impulse in the development of education and regional
economy. The Orthodox fund financially provided priests
since their education and to their old age, and religious
position was legally prescribed it. After the formation of
the Orthodox Fund the standard of living of the priests increased
in several times due to the grouping of church property in
one institution. Issued "Spiritual regulations" were the
cornerstone of the Fund activity, and established all forms of
economic and political interaction. Social institutions such
as church and state had to live in harmony, complementing
each other. For secular power the adjustment of church
order brought remarkable benefit as it caused loyalty in the
population to the balanced policy of Austria.

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