

„BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY, CLUJ-NAPOCA

FACULTY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

**ORTHODOX ROMANIAN VICARIATE
OF ALBA IULIA, 1940-1945**

-PhD THESIS-

-summary-

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KEY WORDS

Orthodox Vicariate of Alba Iulia, years 1940-1945, Diocese of Cluj, Bishop Nicolae Colan, Metropolitan Bishop Nicolae Bălan, dean Alexandru Baba, World War Two, the Wien Agreement, marshal Ion Antonescu, orthodox priests, refugees, ceded territory, evicted, Alba Iulia, Cluj, archpriestship, Abrud, Aiud, Cluj-Huedin, Câmpeni, Luduș, Lupșa, Luduș Turda, Zlatna.

ABSTRACT

The dramatic year of 1940 brought Romania significant territorial losses: Bucovina at North-East, Basarabia at East, Quadrilateral at South-East, and at North a part of Transylvania. The latter loss was decided by Wien Agreement of 30th August 1940 and directly affected the Diocese of Vadului, Feleacului and Clujului. The border traced after the dictate of Wien broke not only the Northern part of Transylvania from the body of the country, but also divided the diocese of Cluj in two almost equal parts. The part from the South of the new border, with over 200 parishes organized at the beginning in eight, then nine districts of archpriests, was created following the decision of the Diocesan Council of Cluj, in the Orthodox Vicariate of Alba Iulia. The institution thus created was after this moment under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Cluj, whose episcopate, Nicolae Colan, stayed with the clergy and Romanian believers under the foreign reign. The Vicariate of Alba Iulia, which lasted until the spring of 1945, represents the subject of the research contained in this work.

The first chapter of the work is an *Introduction*, divided in three subchapters. First it is about an argumentation of the choice of research subject. It results from argumentation the necessity of covering a void in the history of Diocese of Vadului, Feleacului and Clujului, void which overlaps exactly both in space and in time, the existence of the Orthodox Vicariate of Alba Iulia, part of the abovementioned diocese in the years of the second world war. The treatment of this subject had its advantages, given, on one hand, by the lack of vast studies on the subject, and on the other hand, the existence of the archive created by the Vicariate in the four years and a half of activity,

which had to allow bringing an original contribution to the history of the episcopal office of Cluj. The disadvantages were given by the same lack of far-reaching studies and of other original springs, which did not make possible the comparison and confrontation of several sources of information.

In the conditions mentioned above, the sources of documentation can be divided in two categories. The first one is made of published studies, referring to different aspects of the activity of Vicariate, to which is added a vast work referring to the Archpriestship of Alba Iulia in the same period, 1940-1945. The second category is represented by the documentary springs contained in the Vicariate archive, consisting of minutes, letters, reports, decisions of the Vicariate Council, annual reports of activity from the districts of archpriests and from the Vicariate, statistics, etc.

The revaluation of documentary sources (from the archive) raised certain issues which we tried to resolve logically, removing the possibility of creating confusions. We refer here to the use of documents which were not recorded by the Vicariate, were wrongly dated, apparently previously date or dated a long time after issue. We explained the case of each category and the way in which the issues occurred were solved.

The *second chapter* approaches the period of beginning of the Vicariate, the foundation itself and the first months of functioning. The Diocesan Council of Cluj decided on 6th September 1940, by resolution no. 5414, to found the Vicariate which was to lead "in material matters" the parishes which will remain in Romania, the "spiritual administration" remaining the same as until then. This decision actually consecrated the maintenance of the spiritual unit and the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Diocese of Cluj. The management of the part from Romania of the episcopal office was entrusted to a Vicariate Council whose president was appointed the archpriest of Alba Iulia Alexandru Baba, and the capacity of members of clergy was given to the archpriests Iosif Pop from Aiud and Romul Popa from Luduș. The three of them had as the first task to complete the number of members of the new Council with six other laic components. These six were recruited from among the members of the Diocesan Meeting of Cluj who had domicile on the territory of the Vicariate.

In the formation of the new church of Alba Iulia entered from the very beginning seven full archpriestships, in the form in which they functioned at that date. They were:

Abrud, Aiud, Alba Iulia, Câmpeni, Luduș, Lupșa and Turda. They were added parts of the dismembered archpriestships of Cluj (13 parishes), Huedin (17 parishes) and Târgu Mureș (5 parishes). In general, the parishes from Târgu Mureș were allotted to the Archpriestship Luduș, and the other ones created the new Archpriestship Cluj-Huedin, with the centre at Călățele. In the period which followed there were made some redistributions of parishes, depending on the archpriest centres with which they could communicate more easily. Given the facts, the Vicariate started off with a number of 202 parishes organized in eight archpriestships.

Among the priorities of the Vicariate Council, reunited in the first meeting on 10th September 1940, there was the recognition by the Ministry of Cults of the new church of Alba Iulia and the allocation of necessary funds for its organization and good functioning. If as far as the recognition was concerned, there were no problems, it was much more difficult to solve the problem of financing. Following the steps taken in this direction, the church of Alba Iulia received a loan of 20,000 lei from the Metropolitan Church of Sibiu, in October, then an aid of 100,000 lei from the same metropolitan church at the beginning of the year 1941. From the state it obtained a loan of 165,000 lei, payable in two instalments, in January and March 1941. They were the only amounts made available to the Vicariate in the first seven months of operation, in the conditions in which the budget of the Episcopal Office of Cluj, corresponding to the same period and in a proportion which corresponded only to the parishes that entered the componency of the Vicariate, would have represented the amount of 5,308,800 lei.

The activity of beginning of the Vicariate was carried out in inappropriate conditions determined by the absence of adequate space for the clerks and offices, in the office of the Archpriestship of Alba Iulia. At the end of November 1940 the Mayor's Office of Alba Iulia made available to the Vicariate a classroom from School no. 2 of the town. The space continued to be insufficient, but at least the archpriestship office was evacuated. The steps continued for the identification and acquisition of a suitable space.

In January 1941 a first change occurred in the componency of the Vicariate Council, following the resignation of the archpriest Iosif Pop from Aiud, motivated by the disagreement with the methods used in the steps for the organization of the institution. In the vacant position was selected the refugee archpriest of Cluj, Nicolae

Vasiu. Among the laic counsellors the lawyer Ioan Pop resigned for personal reasons, at the beginning of the year 1941, and was replaced with the teacher Lazăr Chirilă from Baia de Arieș.

On 24th September, on the occasion of holding the first plenary meeting of the Vicariate Council, four refugee priests were invited to fill the following positions of clerks in the new institution: secretary, accountant, cashier and registrar-sender. With this body of clerks started the activity of the Vicariate in September 1940.

The third chapter, the largest chapter of this work and a central chapter, at the same time, widely approaches the administrative issues of the Vicariate, after the passage of the period of organization from the first months of existence.

The inclusion of the Vicariate in the state budget was done gradually, in spite of the steps of the management of the Church of Alba Iulia. In the budget of the year 1941-1942 only the salaries of the priests from parishes were included. In the budget of the year 1942-1943 amounts of money were provided for the remuneration of the staff from the centre of the Vicariate, and the remuneration of all the clerks here was done in the fiscal year 1943-1944, when was allotted a corresponding amount for the expenses of the Vicariate Centre. The same situation was preserved in 1944-1945.

A true epopee was represented by the efforts to obtain a suitable building for the installation of offices. It was mainly a competition between the Vicariate and the Assistant Professor Ioan Voicu for the acquisition as tenants of a building requisitioned from a Jew who left for United States. True fight, here and there with dramatic accents, the confrontation ended in the summer of 1943, with a favourable result for the Vicariate.

As for the Vicariate staff, we divided it into two categories: the members of the Vicariate Council and the clerks from the Vicariate Centre. Among the members of the Council we recall the two referent counsellors in position in the summer of 1942: Nicolae Vasiu and the archpriest Romul Popa of Luduș. The latter, being put in the situation of choosing between the position of counsellor and the position of archpriest, in the conditions of allotting funds for the positions of counsellors in the fiscal year 1942-1943, chose to remain in the position of archpriest of Luduș. At the beginning of the same summer, the summer of 1942, the third counsellor, Sebastian Stanca, retired for limit of age. In this situation was a single vicariate counsellor in the autumn of 1942, two

positions being vacant. They were filled with the secretary Teodor Ciuruș, in November 1942 and with the refugee priest Aurel Mușat in July 1943.

With respect to the Vicariate clerks, we will say just that some of them, finding better possibilities of existence left for parishes, especially in the Diocese of Sibiu, being replaced with other, mostly priests. The only women hired at the Vicariate were the two typists who worked here until 1945, when they were integrated in the Diocesan Centre of Cluj, in the same positions. In fact, most of the clerks were hired in 1945 at the Diocesan Centre of Cluj. Exception was the deacon Ioan Popescu, who remained in Alba Iulia, where he was used as conductor of the choir of the central church.

Among the archpriestships of the Vicariate we mention here the Archpriestship Cluj-Huedin founded at the same time with the Vicariate, from the parishes left from the two archpriestships whose names they borrowed. We have seen that the Vicariate began its activity with a number of eight archpriestships. Their number changed in July 1943 when the ninth archpriestship was founded, the Archpriestship Zlatna, with a number of only nine parishes.

Two monasteries functioned on the territory of the Vicariate and we dealt with them in this work. The Monastery Sf. Ioan Botezătorul from Alba Iulia was founded in 1937 by the Military Bishop Ioan Stroia and left to the Diocese of Clujului. In connection with it there were some disputes related to the ownership right over it between the Vicariate, as representative of the Diocese of Clujului and the Military Diocese with the office in Alba Iulia. The second monastery to which we referred was the historic one from Râpa Râmețului, brought to life by the efforts of the monk Evloghie Oța, former inhabitant of Mount of Athos. He started the activity of reconstruction of the monastery since the autumn of 1940, when he began to work also as parochial administrator in the village nearby, to which the church of the monastery served as parochial church. After obtaining the necessary approvals from the Saint Synod and from the Bishop Nicolae Colan of Cluj, the monastery was officially opened in October 1942, on the occasion of the visit on the spot of the hierarch of Cluj.

The problem of administration and exploitation of Făget forest belonging to the Diocese of Vadului, Feleacului and Clujului, was extremely important for the Vicariate, because following this action it managed, on one hand, to significantly improve its

economic financial situation, and on the other hand, it gave a hand to its employees whom it helped to get supplied with fire wood in profitable conditions. In the summer of 1942 the Vicariate even managed to help the Diocese of Cluj procure from this forest the fire wood necessary for the winter of 1942-1943.

For the facilitation and cost-effectiveness of its pastoral mission in the parishes it administered, the Vicariate began in 1942 to take steps for the purchase or acquisition by allocation of a car. Eventually, in the summer of 1943, a car was allotted to it by the Great General Staff, by Army Corp 6 of Sibiu. Later on it turned out to be very costly, and in October 1944 it was requisitioned by the Soviet army.

Finally, on 1st April 1945, following the recovery of the territory of Northern Transylvania, it was high time that the Orthodox Vicariate of Alba Iulia stopped its activity and reintegrated in the administrative structures of the Diocese of Vadului, Feleacului and Clujului from which it was born in the exceptional circumstances of the autumn of 1940. Among the members of the Vicariate Council, Alexandru Baba remained with the old archpriest assignments in Alba Iulia, Nicolae Vasiu returned to his former post of archpriest of Clujului, Aurel Muşat was to retire, being of advanced age, and Teodor Ciuruş with the vicariate clerks were integrated in the positions from the Diocesan Centre of Cluj. Measures were taken for the transportation to the episcopal office of the archive, of the furniture and other things which belonged to the Vicariate.

The *fourth chapter* of the work dealt with the issues of pastoration and mission specific to our Church. The first part is dedicated to the bishop's visits that the Vicariate had. The metropolitan bishop Nicolae Bălan from Sibiu visited the Vicariate Centre three times, in February 1941, July 1942 and April 1944.

The bishop Nicolae Colan was allowed by the Hungarian authorities which ruled over Cluj to travel in Romania in the autumn of 1942. He also visited the Vicariate in the summer of 1943 and in January 1944, and during the fourth visit, in August 1944 he was surprised by the events triggered on 23rd of the same month and was forced to wait here for the situation to calm down, to be able to return to the Episcopal Office of Cluj.

Another category of canonical visits to which we referred in this chapter, is represented by the inspections made by archpriests in the parishes under their jurisdiction. From the reports made on these occasions we can see a multitude of aspects

of the life of parishes from the Vicariate. From here it results the importance of these visits and the reports related to them.

In this chapter we also introduced the problems of church discipline, with reference especially to priests. We followed the different aspects of this subject, using concrete examples extracted from the documentary material available. We could see the way in which the church authorities managed the reported cases of violation of discipline.

The fifth chapter deals with the social activities from the Vicariate, in the conditions in which, in the context of the Second World War, the order of the Saviour to search the sick, to feed the hungry, to dress the naked, seemed to be more topical than ever. The Church did not neglect its calling in this direction and we can see here the efforts done for the reception and sheltering of the refugees and the evicted from the areas invaded by foreign armies, or from the areas of fights. The Vicariate did its duty both towards the refugees of 1940, most of them from Northern Transylvania and towards the waves of refugees from the Eastern territories which the Soviet army invaded again in 1944.

The care for the refugees did not make the management of the Vicariate forget the wounded, whether they were Romanians or other nations. They organized several actions of visiting the wounded arrived in the hospitals of Alba Iulia, apart from the usual activity of granting spiritual assistance to the people from hospitals. It is impressive the episode related to the Russian wounded who expressed the desire to receive books of prayers and small icons. The Romanian wounded were procured materials for reading, helping them to get more easily over the period of convalescence.

A special importance is paid to the collaboration of the Vicariate with the Council of Patronage of Social Works and with Temperance League, the latter having the purpose of fighting alcoholism.

We also introduced in the chapter dedicated to social activities, the preoccupation of the Vicariate Council for the improvement of the material condition of the priests and poor churches from Apuseni Mountains. We followed the steps taken in this direction, as well as the results obtained. Without being spectacular and even more, without solving the problem, the aids with which the state intervened managed to bring a certain

improvement both in the condition of the places of worship from the mountains and the condition of servants of sanctuaries.

The sixth chapter of our work is dedicated to the cultural aspects of the life in Vicariate. An important subchapter deals with the school-related problems. We approached here the problem of the buildings of the former confessional schools of Transylvania, in the context of an attempt at nationalization. We allotted a generous space to the religious education from the primary and secondary cycle.

The prints be as they were of periodicals, such as the case of the official magazine „Renașterea”, or „Calendar” of Vicariate, or books of prayers or other types of books integrated in the subject of this chapter. We analysed their spread and circulation on the territory of the Vicariate. The parochial libraries are also present in the chapter dedicated to cultural issues. We made observations on the existence and their endowment in different parishes of the Vicariate.

Organizations of profile did not miss from the cultural landscape, such as Romanian Orthodox Brotherhood whose vicariate department was put under the management of the passionate teacher Lazăr Chirilă from Baia de Arieș, or Gheorghe Sion Cultural Foundation, with its real property from Slănicul Moldovei, which in times of peace could have been an important source of income for the Diocese of Cluj.

The cultural patrimony of the parishes from the Vicariate was envisaged in the discussions for its protection and sheltering. Measures were taken since 1941, that in case of evacuation, the parishes should have conditions for sheltering valuable things. However, in 1944, the losses of goods, objects, documents were quite significant. With their reporting I briefly presented the damages that were caused to the parochial buildings by the fights that were carried out in the autumn of that year.

In the end, I dedicated the *seventh chapter* of our work to interconfessional relationships. The adepts of cults with which the Orthodox priests and believers from the Vicariate came in contact most frequently were the Greek-Catholics and the Sectarians.

Although in most cases the relationships of Orthodox priests with the united priests or parishes were presented as good or, rather neutral, there were also cases of conflicts, especially between the priests of the two Churches, at the basis of them were personal vainglories or different interests.

As for the confessional passages made between the two Churches, at Vicariate level, they were in favour of Orthodox Church. On the other hand, it is known that such passages happened more rarely out of pure reasons of faith and beliefs, they were most often caused by other reasons (matrimonial, personal interests, misunderstandings between the priest and the believers, etc.)

The general impression which results from the study of these cases is that between the two Romanian churches from Transylvania there was a tension in dormant state, a smouldering conflict, which came out from time to time, in certain places, at moments which were "favourable" to such outbreaks.

In the matter of sects, the efforts of the clergy to restrain their spreading among their believers were also supported by certain measures taken by the state authorities. Because of these actions, the Sectarian phenomenon, which had begun to gather momentum in the period between the two world wars, was impeded in the years of the Second World War, in the direction that the number of adepts of different sects did not significantly increase during these years.

As for the relationships of the Vicariate with the Jews, although we cannot speak of direct significant relationships, we considered appropriate to approach this matter in the light of the attitude adopted by the Vicariate towards the Decree-Law 711 of March 1941, by which it was prohibited for the members of the mosaic cult to pass to any of the historical cults recognized by the Romanian state at that time. Rallying to the position expressed by the Metropolitan bishop Nicolae from Sibiu in this matter, the Vicariate considered that nobody, not even the state, had the right to stop someone who wanted to take benefit of the advantages of Christian teaching. Faithful to this belief, the Vicariate Council intervened twice for the exemption from the orders of seclusion in concentration camps of Jews converted to Christianity years before the appearance of the law to which we referred. Although in one case it was successful, in the other case, the authorities rejected the request of the Vicariate motivating that the changing of religious belonging does not bring changes in ethnic origin.

By the division of the documentary material studied and the results of research in the chapters presented above, we tried to cover the whole problematic issue resulting from the activity carried out by the Romanian Orthodox Vicariate of Alba Iulia in the

period of September 1940 – March 1941. We stopped in our step both over the general aspects found in the activity of any church institution and over the particular aspects given by the specificity of conditions in which the Vicariate activated during these years. We consider that, in the end of our study, we can rightfully say that the institution of Alba Iulia has fulfilled in abundance the mission for which it was founded in the conditions of "force majeure" of the year 1940. The institution and those who activated in it are worth our whole appreciation for the honourable way in which, despite the difficulties they had to deal with, they fulfilled the task traced for them by the management of the diocese to which they belonged.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. DOCUMENTE INEDITE

I.1. Arhiva Arhiepiscopiei Clujului, Fondul *Vicariatul Ortodox Român Alba Iulia*. Conține aproximativ 45.000-50.000 de documente înregistrate pe circa 75.000 de poziții electronice.

I.2. Procesele verbale ale ședințelor Consiliului Vicarial

1. Proces verbal din 10 septembrie 1940;
2. Proces verbal din 24 septembrie 1940;
3. Proces verbal din 16 octombrie 1940;
4. Proces verbal din 6 noiembrie 1940;
5. Proces verbal din 20 noiembrie 1940;
6. Proces verbal din 27 noiembrie 1940;
7. Proces verbal din 15 ianuarie 1941;
8. Proces verbal din 5 februarie 1941;
9. Proces verbal din 5 martie 1941;
10. Proces verbal din 3 aprilie 1941;
11. Proces verbal din 8 mai 1941;

12. Proces verbal din 11 iunie 1941;
13. Proces verbal din 24 iulie 1941;
14. Proces verbal din 10 septembrie 1941;
15. Proces verbal din 2 octombrie 1941;
16. Proces verbal din 12 noiembrie 1941;
17. Proces verbal din 11 decembrie 1941;
18. Proces verbal din 5 februarie 1942;
19. Proces verbal din 19 martie 1942;
20. Proces verbal din 24 aprilie 1942;
21. Proces verbal din 11 iunie 1942;
22. Proces verbal din 2 iulie 1942;
23. Proces verbal din 20 august 1942;
24. Proces verbal din 27 august 1942;
25. Proces verbal din 16 septembrie 1942;
26. Proces verbal din 3 octombrie 1942;
27. Proces verbal din 8 octombrie 1942;
28. Proces verbal din 19 octombrie 1942;
29. Proces verbal din 22 octombrie 1942;
30. Proces verbal din 24 octombrie 1942;
31. Proces verbal din 28 octombrie 1942;
32. Proces verbal din 30 octombrie 1942;
33. Proces verbal din 31 octombrie 1942;
34. Proces verbal din 13 noiembrie 1942;
35. Proces verbal din 18 noiembrie 1942;
36. Proces verbal din 2 decembrie 1942;
37. Proces verbal din 9 ianuarie 1943;
38. Proces verbal din 8 februarie 1943;
39. Proces verbal din 27 februarie 1943;
40. Proces verbal din 11 martie 1943;
41. Proces verbal din 18 martie 1943;
42. Proces verbal din 21 aprilie 1943;

43. Proces verbal din 28 aprilie 1943;
44. Proces verbal din 15 mai 1943;
45. Proces verbal din 9 iunie 1943;
46. Proces verbal din 17 iunie 1943;
47. Proces verbal din 5 iulie 1943;
48. Proces verbal din 24 iulie 1943;
49. Proces verbal din 28 iulie 1943;
50. Proces verbal din 2 august 1943;
51. Proces verbal din 11 august 1943;
52. Proces verbal din 17 august 1943;
53. Proces verbal din 7 septembrie 1943;
54. Proces verbal din 24 septembrie 1943;
55. Proces verbal din 5 noiembrie 1943;
56. Proces verbal din 2 decembrie 1943;
57. Proces verbal din 16 decembrie 1943;
58. Proces verbal din 30 decembrie 1943;
59. Proces verbal din 13 ianuarie 1944;
60. Proces verbal din 26 ianuarie 1944;
61. Proces verbal din 10 februarie 1944;
62. Proces verbal din 24 februarie 1944;
63. Proces verbal din 3 martie 1944;
64. Proces verbal din 27 martie 1944;
65. Proces verbal din 6 aprilie 1944;
66. Proces verbal din 20 aprilie 1944;
67. Proces verbal din 27 aprilie 1944;
68. Proces verbal din 6 mai 1944;
69. Proces verbal din 18 mai 1944;
70. Proces verbal din 1 iunie 1944;
71. Proces verbal din 8 iunie 1944;
72. Proces verbal din 23 iunie 1944;
73. Proces verbal din 7 iulie 1944;

74. Proces verbal din 21 iulie 1944;
75. Proces verbal din 27 iulie 1944;
76. Proces verbal din 3 august 1944;
77. Proces verbal din 18 august 1944;
78. Proces verbal din 4 octombrie 1944;
79. Proces verbal din 9 octombrie 1944;
80. Proces verbal din 21 octombrie 1944;
81. Proces verbal din 2 noiembrie 1944;
82. Proces verbal din 23 noiembrie 1944;
83. Proces verbal din 2 decembrie 1944;
84. Proces verbal din 7 decembrie 1944;
85. Proces verbal din 29 decembrie 1944;
86. Proces verbal din 8 februarie 1945;
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88. Proces verbal din 28 martie 1945;

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89. *Raportul despre activitatea Vicariatului de la înființarea lui (6 sept. 1940), până la 30 iunie 1941, Alba Iulia, 1941.*
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91. *Raport despre activitatea Vicariatului pe anul 1943, Alba Iulia, 1944.*
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I.4. Registre de procese verbale

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