

BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY CLUJ-NAPOCA
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

PhD Thesis

COORDINATOR,

CONF. UNIV. DR. ANA VICTORIA SIMA

PhD

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**THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND ROMANIAN SOCIETY IN
THE YEARS OF THE GREAT WAR. THEOLOGICAL
SCHOOLS IN BANAT AND ARAD.**

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Keywords:

Banat, The Great War, The Church, The School, The Romanian Society, Arad, Caransebeș

Summary

The issue of the First World War was a much more pronounced concern in recent years, in the context of the centenary of the Great War and the fact that the scale of the war was huge, compared to historical events lived until then, it had an unprecedented magnitude, being perceived as a unprecedented phenomenon.

However, the punctuation of the history of Banat and the participation of the people of Banat in the Great War, the manner in which the Romanian Orthodox Church in this province was involved and the way in which the military conflict influenced its destiny, such aspects remain little known in current historiography. The explanation can be found in the special territorial-political status of the Banat province, the fact that Banat was the Romanian space that endured the longest period of war, 1914-1919, because the military conflict was later succeeded by the Serbian and French occupation. , and in the administrative field the Hungarian administration was perpetuated, the one that activated simultaneously with the Romanian National Councils and Guards.

The "World War" changed the world, in its deep structures, dislocated domestic existence based on used formulas, traditional mentalities, customs, ingrained habits.

In the avatars of the beginning of the century, we witness multiple transformations, of the political world, of the geographical borders, of the mental canons. All of them are joined by the spiritual universe, readapted to the new conjuncture, to which the ecclesiastical elite is trying to bend. He does it on two levels: the inner, intrinsic, in an attempt to successfully face the new challenges caused by the military conflict, but also in terms of relationships with others, those who have

always sought support in the Church, hoped for divine help. and whose life was distraught by the great conflict. It thus resizes sensitive inner mechanisms, which have changed the reflection on the world around us and our fellow men.

The Romanians within the borders of the dualist Empire knew the horrors of the war "2 years earlier" - according to the already known phrase of Professor Maior, than those in the Kingdom.

A multiethnic and multi-confessional region, Banat thus illustrates the model of a space where the changes that took place were shaped by reference to this reality, in an attempt to accommodate the new political-administrative construction, after 1918, with the concrete zonal reality. Such a complex and unique socio-political and administrative reality, not found in the other provinces that will join the country in 1918, has influenced the history of Banat on multiple levels, including the education system, so through this doctoral thesis we will address more issues little known in relation to the assimilated information, already existing in historiographical terms.

Determined to crystallize the great Hungarian nation through the forced assimilation of Romanians, Serbs, Slovaks and other cohabiting ethnic groups in a vast territory, under centuries of Hungarian authority, the central administration drew up and imposed, systematically and consistently, the entire legislation to materialize such a desideratum. As such, the legislation on the nationality regime, the school laws adopted in the last two decades of the 19th century, as well as the civil status laws, all announced that in the next century the Hungarian state intended to adopt legislation in accordance with political principles on which targeted them. Trying to face the new politico-legislative challenges, the Romanian Orthodox world of Banat coagulated around the most credible institution, the Romanian Orthodox Church, which, at the same time, created its own structures, of great prestige, such as the Theological-Pedagogical Institutes, after which he supported with major efforts the confessional schools of all grades, finally creating cultural associations with artistic and spiritual identity values and maintaining permanent cultural relations

with similar associations in the Kingdom of Romania. From a material point of view, the Metropolitan Church of Transylvania did not have the necessary funds for an independent status, within the dualist monarchy. Dioceses received insufficient government funds each year, in the form of state aid, funds from which the salary of religious and auxiliary staff, teaching staff from diocesan institutes and even from denominational primary schools was paid. Such financial support provided by the state was systematically accompanied by an increasing control of the government in the organization and functioning of the Church, reaching to the evaluation and sanctioning of the behavior of the teaching staff, requesting in certain situations drastic measures against those without "attachment patriotic". The parliamentary elections of 1906, held in a tense and unequal political climate from the perspective of political logistics, meant, in fact, a real barometer of the maturity of the Romanian political class attached to the national cause, and on the other hand highlighted the government's pressures. in Budapest, but also the distrust of some of the people from Banat who joined the pro-government camp and, last but not least, the power of coercion of the authorities over those who publicly proved their attachment to the unifying Romanian creed.

Politically, at the beginning of the twentieth century there were significant changes for Romanians. Thus, after 1905, the Romanian National Party was reactivated in Banat and in Transylvania, by entering the forefront of the political struggle of the generation of the "new activism", an option that involved the activity of the Orthodox elite, priests and teachers, lawyers and officials, many among them elected in the diocesan Consistories, in the church and school senates or as members of the National Church Congress. The actions started as a result of the political activism of the Romanian National Party were also visible in the Dioceses of Arad and Caransebeș, a process noted in the above-mentioned parliamentary elections, following which 14 Romanian deputies from the two Romanian provinces entered the forum legislative body in

Budapest. From the end of the 19th century, the political leaders of Banat and the hierarchs of the two dioceses found that the school laws of 1879 and 1883 pursued nothing more than the transformation of confessional schools into state schools and the full Hungarianization of the educational process. With the presentation in the Diet, on February 21, 1907, of the two Apponian school laws, the desire for forced denationalization through school also took the legislative form. In the two dioceses, large protest rallies were organized by Romanian intellectuals, and in the Diet of Budapest the nationalist character of the laws of Count Apponyi was unmasked, requesting the withdrawal of those projects. The interference of the Hungarian authorities in the activity of the Church in the two dioceses could also be observed through the acts of rejection of some candidates for the episcopal see, validly elected by the synod, but rejected for their national creed and for respecting the autonomy of the Romanian Church. to assert them. We mention the importance of reactivating the synods, with the re-establishment of the Sibiu metropolitan seat. A hierarchical, community and sacramental body, the synod is a fundamental institution of the church, defined as such in the Organic Statute, which indicates its area of competence. In the Banat diocese, re-established by the imperial diploma of July 6, 1865, the principle of synodality materialized in 1870, when the first diocesan synod took place. The convocation comes after a long period of absence of synodal meetings in church life, always claimed in public debates, both in clerical circles, but especially by civil society, through its representatives.

Representative figures of the Romanian national movement were part of the structure of the Synod and the Diocesan Consistory of Arad and Caransebeș. In this sense, in the case of the Diocese of Arad, we mention Vasile Goldiș, Dr. Aurel Grozda, Aurel Lazăr, Nicolae Zigre, Sever Ispravnic, Iustin Marșieu, Ioan Russu-Șirianu, Anton Mocioni, Romul Veliciu, all of them bringing their mite their national and political experience in the leading forums of the diocese. Bishop Ioan I. Papp, who led the activity of the synods during the difficult period of the great world conflict,

enjoyed the support of these intellectuals in adopting decisions on the autonomy of the Church and supporting theological confessional education in Romanian. The same situation was registered in Caransebeș, where Bishop Elie Miron Cristea surrounded himself and relied on the opinions of a whole pleiada of intellectuals with national option, among them mentioning Dr. G. Popovici, Dr. Coriolan Brediceanu, Dr. Ștefan Petrovici , Dr. Aurel Novac, Valeriu Braniște, Dr. G. Dobrin etc.

Two years after the outbreak of the war, Romania entered the great world conflagration and determined the hierarchs of the two dioceses to take an attitude towards the new situation created, an attitude transmitted through a series of pastorals in order to maintain a pacifist mood among the parishioners they are at home or mobilized on the front. Even if some of the pastorals transmitted by the high hierarchs, during 1914-1916, displayed the call for loyalty and fidelity to the "Throne and Homeland", of combativeness and heroism in the theater of war, in reality such declarations of "good citizenship" "Aimed at preserving church institutions, denominational schools and theological-pedagogical institutes in the two dioceses. Against the complex and complicated background of the war, after Romania became the open enemy of the monarchy, the evolution of the two dioceses - Arad and Caransebeș - led by the two hierarchs and their governing bodies, followed a constant national path of perpetuating education in Romanian and the functioning of the two theological institutes. The mission of the Orthodox hierarchy was not easy, as the political situation was complicated, being doubled by the military context of the front and by the interferences in the life of the Romanian Orthodox Church through the pressures of violating the Organic Statute. Such aspects formed the background of the issue of our doctoral thesis entitled "The Orthodox Church and the Romanian society in the years of the Great War. Theological schools from Banat and Arad" . The central idea of our research, which we tried to argue through factual and historiographical content, draws attention to the following wording: even in the difficult context of hostilities on the internal and external front of the Great War, the Romanian

Orthodox Church, through the two Theological Institutes from Banat continued to defend their faith, identity, being and national creed, by serving the altar and the chair, regardless of the vicissitudes of the state of occupation or war. The two institutes of theological education represented the ferment of the conscience of faith and nation, they contributed to the formation of militant graduates of the ideal of national unification.

From a methodological perspective, our research aims at a critical analysis and an exhaustive highlight on the four years of war, a difficult period, which had repercussions on the state of theological education in Banat, which permeated the minds of communities in the two institutes of Caransebes and Arad. We are considering a positivist methodological option, in the sense of supplementing the information on the war period, taking into account the relevant research, older and newer, which we have identified in connection with this topic. Moreover, the methodology followed aimed at addressing aspects related to the central idea of this paper, those of a political, cultural and social nature, which catalyzed the dynamics of theological schools in Banat. Given these methodological landmarks, last but not least we proposed that our investigation be presented as an attempt at imagological history and history of mentalities, is an approach that takes into account the "lived history", narrated through the prism representations, feelings and emotions of those who were the direct actors of the events and who recorded them in epistles, memoirs or front journals.

The whole construction of our thesis was conceived in the form of a succession of five chapters, the first two developing the issue of the Church and the confessional and theological schools before the first world conflagration, and the last three chapters focusing exclusively on the organization and functioning of the two theological institutes. The dioceses of Arad and Caransebeş during 1914-1919. In short, our research in the first two chapters aimed at addressing the following issue: the evolution of the Metropolitan Church of Transylvania after its detachment from the Serbian

hierarchy, especially between 1868, with the adoption of the Organic Statute, until the outbreak of the Great War; the territorial-administrative organization of the Dioceses of Caransebeș and Arad and the evolution of theological education in the two dioceses until 1914, from the perspective of statistical data regarding the dynamics of students by school years; the brief radiography of the history of the two Theological-Pedagogical Institutes and the approaches of the lay and ecclesial leaders to detach the Church from the Metropoly of Carloviț; the school legislation regarding the steps of subordination and nationalization of theological education in Banat. In the next three chapters, the entire issue addressed focused on the functioning of theological education during the war, an investigation that aimed to address the following issues: the concern of local bishops, Elie Miron Cristea and Ioan Ignatie Papp, to support the Banat theological school in the difficult years of war; options for unitary organization of theological education by adopting similar programs, textbooks, circulars, as well as the need to open theological schools to an instructive-educational process of heuristic and not traditionalist-mechanical, which means an innovative approach, aligning the Orthodox teaching system to the line of modernity; the brief presentation of the biobibliographical personality of the teaching staff from the two specialized institutes, as well as the fluctuation of the teaching staff in the actual conditions of the war; the harmful, direct and immediate consequences of the internal and external front on the development of the instructive-educational process in the two institutes, the study-related and student accommodation spaces, the libraries and the functional aid funds during the war; the motivation of the choice towards theology and the social origin of the candidates from the two theological schools; vocation and mission in the priesthood, evaluation of students through partial and final exams; the attitude of the local bishops of the two dioceses towards “Throne and Homeland”, expressed through episcopal circulars and pastorals; mobilization on the external and internal front of theological teachers and students; the theological dimension of the priest and his mission in the community during the war

years; spiritual assistance, philanthropy and enlightenment efforts through the dissemination of books, a mission taken over by military priests; religious literature, religious prints and their circulation on the front.

In order to elaborate our thesis we used a consistent and tender documentary fund, provided by the National Archives of Romania, Caransebeş and Arad County Services, Archives of the Dioceses of Caransebeş and Arad, Archive of the Archdiocese of Timisoara, Archive of the Dacia Felix Diocese, Patriarchal Library Archive Romanian Academy. Regarding the County Service of the National Archives Caraş-Severin were accessed the Fund of the Diocesan Theological Institute from Caransebeş, the Fund of the Episcopate of Caransebeş, the Fund of the Reading Society, the Registers of the Teachers' Councils, the course and attendance diaries, all containing documents from and around The Great War. Within this service, from the library fund, the Yearbooks of the Theological-Pedagogical Institute from Caransebeş, related to the period 1914-1918, as well as the volume of professor Dimitrie Cioloca, Songs from the war, vol. I. 1915. At the National Archives, County Service In Arad we identified several documents regarding the state of theological education during the First World War. We considered in particular the files that contained significant data about a number of teachers and professors who were combatants during the war. In the case of the Diocese of Caransebeş, the County Service of National Archives provided us with the Fund of the Caransebeş Pedagogical School, the Fund of the Romanian Orthodox Diocesan Theological Institute Caransebeş, and within the County Service of the National Archives of Arad we managed to go through the Orthodox Fund. Romanian Arad. School documents, Roman R. Ciorogariu Fund, Document Collection Fund and also the Yearbook of the Pedagogical-Theological Institute from Arad. On the other hand, the Archive of the Diocese of Caransebeş provided us with the Epitropic Fund (V), the School Fund (IV) and the Church Fund (III). Within the Archive of the Romanian Patriarchate we could research a number of interesting

documents regarding the activity of Bishop Elie Miron Cristea, within the Patriarchal Cabinet Fund - Patriarch Miron Cristea, and in the Archive of the Dacia Felix Episcopate we consulted documents from the Vârșeț Archdiocese Fund of the Serbian ones in the reactivated Diocese of Caransebeș.

In gathering some data and information on the history of the Romanian Orthodox Church from the last decades of the 19th century until the end of the war, we then used a series of edited documents. The most efficient channel was the press of the time, through access to famous publications: "Diocesan Leaf", the official of the diocese of Caransebeș; "Church and School", the official periodical of the Diocese of Arad; "Drapelul", national-political newspaper from Lugoj; "The Romanian", the press organ of the Romanian National Party in Hungary and Transylvania; "People's Tribune" from Arad; "Metropolitanate of Banat" from Timisoara; "Gazeta Transilvaniei" from Brașov; "Romanian Telegraph" from Sibiu and others.

For the general context of the religious life in Banat and its placement in the context of 1865-1919, we used a series of works on church history. In this sense, we mention the works of the academic priest Mircea Păcurariu, of the historians Ilarion Pușcariu, Ioan Lupaș, George Popovici and Nicolae Iorga.

The issue regarding the experiences lived by students, their parents and teachers of the Orthodox Theological Institutes, as well as by the parishioners from Banat during the great conflict, has represented over time a subject little studied in historiography. Their participation in the war, both on the external and internal front, as well as the influence of the war on their life and activity, has not been one of the favorite themes in Banat historiography, being little frequented in Romanian historiography in general. In this sense, in the elaboration of our paper we resorted to the use of older and newer writings, referring to the Theological-Pedagogical Institutes from Caransebeș and Arad for the period of the First World War. A reference work, which deals with

the reactivation of the Metropolitan Church of Transylvania, the steps of Metropolitan Şaguna to recognize the autonomy of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the elaboration and adoption of the Organic Statute, the evolution of theological and pedagogical education in Arad at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, belongs to the historian Te V. Păcăţian. Another reference work was the History of the Normal School (Preparandia) and of the Romanian Orthodox Theological Institute from Arad, having as author Teodor Botiş, a work published in Arad in 1922; is a comprehensive volume, which brings together complex information on the Arad Orthodox School, data on the history, organization, internal structure, educational disciplines, exams and discipline of students, the evolution over time of the two Arad institutions, and the biographies of teachers, list of graduates, Reading Society, funds and foundations, condition of the building, accommodation and library. A similar work, regarding the Caransebeş theological school, is due to Fr. Prof. Vasile Petrica: the well-known volume Romanian Orthodox Diocesan Theological Institute Caransebeş (1865-1927), a work published in 2005 and in which the author writes a monograph of this institution in its historical dimension. The work is also interesting for the fact that the author identified in his archive research four regulations of the institute, elaborated in 1888, 1919, 1925, 1927, documents that highlight the functioning and modernization of the educational process in this institution, marking time stages in the evolution of the school. For the history of theological education in Arad, the works of Fr. Dr. Pavel Vesa. Bishopric of Arad. History. Culture. Mentalities (1706-1918), published in the Cluj University Press in 2006, presents the ecclesiastical historiography of Arad, the evolution of the Diocese of Arad until 1918, the internal organization scheme, the division into archdioceses and monasteries, the clergy and its culture, diocesan churches and mentalities collective. Another work by the same author, Theological Education in Arad (1822-1948), published by the Diocese of Deva and Hunedoara in 2013, presents the historiographical landmarks of this issue, the intellectual training of the clergy until 1822, then the

evolution of this institute in two distinct periods, respectively between 1822-1876 and 1876-1927. An interesting chapter in the history of the institution was the transformation of the theological institute into a theological academy.

The author makes a detailed presentation of the generations of graduates during 1822-1948, of the teaching staff that functioned in the school during this time, radiographs the national movement and the involvement of teachers-theologians in the act of the Great Union, library and bibliography of teachers. Rev. Dr. Pavel Vesa is the author of an anniversary volume, a reference for the history of the Arad diocese: the Bishopric of Arad. 1706-2006, book published by Gutenberg Univers Publishing House, Arad, in 2007, which presents in detail the personality of all the hierarchs in the Arad area, starting with the first bishop, IsaiaDiacovici (1706-1708), to the bishop and, later, the archbishop, Timotei Sevicu (1984-present), a very important excursion for our research because the volume offers unique information about the activity of some Arad hierarchs in supporting theological-pedagogical education, publishing publications in Romanian, supporting funds for enriching written book inventories in parish libraries and the library the institute.

Among the newer works that complete the historiographical research on the issue of detachment from the Serbian hierarchy we mention the volume of the bishop of Caransebeș, P.S. Lucian Mic, an editorial that exhaustively presents the relations of the Romanian Orthodox Church with the Serbian Church until 1900, as well as the evolution of theological education in Caransebeș until the beginning of the 20th century. Another volume aimed at researching the history of theological education in the Diocese of Arad, especially useful for our research, has as authors Cristinel Ioja and Marcel Tang, who restores the imaginary memory of theological Arad, arguing the strength of the Orthodox tradition and the historical, national and cultural value of this educational institute. The relationship between the two western bishoprics and the hierarchy of the Serbian Church was

leaked, the documentation being based on archival sources, but also on the published ones. In the case of the Diocese of Arad, in addition to the works already mentioned by the priest Pavel Vesa, the contributions of Gheorghe Ciuhandu and Gheorghe Lițiu are added. In the case of the Diocese of Caransebeș and the historian of its theological institute, we took into account the works of the researchers Gheorghe Cotoșman, Constantin Brătescu, Petru Bona, Nicolae Cornean etc. Of real interest in the realization of our work were the volumes published on elements of education and history of Banat education, in particular the confessional and theological one, by Ioan Munteanu and Angela Rotaru-Dumitrescu. Also for the Diocese of Caransebes and the theological school of this diocese, during the First World War, the work of priest Dr. Daniel Alic provides documentary information on the contribution of Hierarch Miron Cristea to protect the school and the Church in the difficult years of war against increasingly aggressive government interference in Budapest.

In recent years, numerous symposia on regional history have been organized, promoted by the "Eftimie Murgu" University of Resita in collaboration with the "Babeș-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca, with the support of Romanian institutions and foundations in Vojvodina, scientific events which was attended by Romanian researchers, from the country and abroad. The results of these international manifestations materialized in the publication of volumes that we could use, especially using those details on the evolution of the two theological institutes around and during the Great War. We consider that our research comes to enrich the complex picture of the evolution of the Banat province in the years of the first world conflagration, in particular the dynamics of the two theological institutes during the war years.

The choice of this research topic has the following motivations: firstly, the graduation of the courses of the Faculty of Orthodox History and Theology, which functioned within the Diocese of Caransebeș, an opportunity that brought us closer to the subject and facilitated the deepening of scientific papers presented at specialized symposia; to this subjective justification is added the

scientific side, the interest for the subject, the desire to know the connections of the Theological-Pedagogical Institute of Caransebeș with similar ones in the Transylvanian Metropolitanate in the pre-war period, not least, the curiosity to decipher the collective mind and the state of confessional education. Carășean during the First World War. Consequently, the topic subject to research, both in content and especially through its cultural interferences, falls into the category of applied regional historical research, at the confluence of modern history studies with contemporary history, because in essence the vast majority of information reflects events, facts and people from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The present investigation also presents an interdisciplinary facet (history-demography-economy-sociology-psychology-philosophy), if we consider the treatment of historical events and phenomena with reference to the different theological disciplines.

The basic hypothesis of our work, “The Orthodox Church and the Romanian society in the years of the Great War. Theological schools in Banat and Arad ”, which we tried to support throughout the research, consisted of the following statement: Despite all the interference of dualist governments before and during the Great War on the autonomy of the Orthodox Church in the Metropolitan In Transylvania, the Theological-Pedagogical Institutes of Arad and Caransebeș continued their natural functioning, with teaching in Romanian and in the interest / interior of the Romanian Orthodox cult. Starting from this working hypothesis, throughout our research we have supported and justified a fundamental idea, which turns out to be the keystone of the whole ideational construction and which can be compressed in the following judgment: the Orthodox Church, its theological institutes, as well as and all the confessional schools in the two dioceses (Arad and Caransebeș) were real catalysts to support the preservation and promotion of the national being and culture, even in the years of the First World War, through service, faith and education. Starting from this hypothesis, the general objectives pursued throughout the development of the ideational content of the theme refer essentially to the following aspects: 1.

highlighting the position of the Orthodox Church in Banat and Arad, priority of the leaders of the two dioceses, in the vicinity and during the war of the Throne and "homeland" - loyalty, duplicity or identity consciousness ?; 2. the extent to which the two theological-pedagogical institutes supported and promoted education in the Romanian language in the two dioceses in the context of the multiple difficulties generated by supporting the front; 3. highlighting some socio-demographic and psycho-social dimensions of the population of Banat and Arad in the last quarter of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century.

The strategy pursued in our construction undoubtedly remains a historical research based on a series of methods, techniques and procedures of investigation, so we considered mainly the study of documents, comparative method, qualitative and interpretive analysis of facts / events / personalities, case study. The use and interpretation of data provided by primary and published sources provided us with a huge informative material on the history of the two dioceses, their administrative-territorial and organizational structure, the history of the two theological institutes in the region, unique aspects during the 1906 elections and 1910, information on the structure of curricula and course materials in the two institutes, etc. The method of quantitative data analysis was the essential working tool in the case of exhaustive presentation of student enrollment in the two institutes in each school year from 1898-1919, then highlighting the amount of their participation on the front, the subject matter, demographic elements of quantitative-statistical invoice regarding the level of Romanians' presence in confessional schools and other levels around and during the war, etc. The method of qualitative and comparative analysis of data allowed us to make a complex picture of the Orthodox Church's relationship with the state and the efforts of the Romanian population in supporting the front, then the comparative analysis of the curriculum in the two specialized institutes and the teaching staff of each institute. . The process of the case study facilitated the sketching of the biobibliographic file of all the teachers from the two institutes, as

well as a brief biographical presentation of some high prelates of the time, especially Ioan Ignatie Papp, Elie Miron Cristea, Ioan Popasu and Vasile Mangra.