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CLUJ-NAPOCA, ROMANIA**

THE FACULTY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

Ph.D. THESIS

THE ORTHODOX DEANERY OF ALBA IULIA DURING 1940-1945

- Abstract -

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**CLUJ-NAPOCA
2011**

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KEYWORDS:

The Orthodox Deanery of Alba Iulia, The Romanian Orthodox Vicarage of Alba Iulia, Romanian Orthodox Church, Diocese of Cluj, The Second World War, the Vienna Dictate, orthodox priests, Dean Alexandru Baba, Bishop Nicolae Colan, Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan, general Ion Antonescu, Alba Iulia, Cluj.

INTRODUCTION

Argument

The theological training in the Alba Iulia environment, with its profound historical significances conferred by the by-millenary city, within which have happened unique events in the evolution of a people, left a strong spiritual and cultural mark on my humane and professional becoming. Therefore, this idea of the necessity of retrieving some fragments of the local history – époques, institutions, characters – which, so far, for different subjective or objective reasons were not the topic of research, became increasingly shaped within the area of my cultural preoccupations. Part of the research was materialized in studies concerning the Orthodox Deanery of Alba Iulia between 17th-19th centuries; Varlaam, Metropolitan of Bălgrad; clergy and laity figures of Alba Iulia involved in the anti-union movements in the mid 18th century; priests of the Alba Iulia Diocese imprisoned in the communist era; the reestablished Diocese of Alba Iulia, etc. A major subject was searching the past of the Deanery of Alba Iulia in the years of World War II when it had acquired a special status among other Deaneries (as “central”) – in the special circumstances of creating a Vicarage in Alba Iulia as a consequence of the dismemberment of the Diocese of Cluj after the Vienna Dictate – and when it had achieved outstanding results due to the possibility of activating different resources by the Dean Alexandru Baba, now head of the Vicarage.

Accustomed to extended monographies that discuss subjects covering wider periods of time – dozens, sometimes hundreds of years – this paper may seem, at least in the field of Romanian Orthodox ecclesiastical historiography slightly atypical with regard to time limit. However, it was possible and the main reason why it required these coordinates is because of the abundance of documentary material. A strong temptation was the aspiration, the tendency towards exhaustive which, given the circumstances was desirable and even “accomplishable”. However, we are aware of the *de plano* limitation of this kind of approach, valid in any research, especially in the historical one.

When drafting this paper, we used as primary source the documents from the Archive of Vicarage of Alba Iulia (1940-1945), held today in the Archive of the Archbishopric of Cluj, which, however, non-inventoried at time, have raised major “technical” problems related to their punctual identification, which was impossible in this case based on the criteria established in registry. Given the circumstances, only the work of selecting more than 40.000 documents, doubled by the photocopying and their electronic inventorying required almost two years, resulting in an archivist “fund” of approx. 12.000 electronic items. There may be other information in different places but we are certain – a certainty confirmed by the confrontation of these documents with other sources (“*Renașterea*” and “*Transilvania*” magazines, archives and parochial monographs, etc.) – that they may only contained very few aspects that we have not identified here.

Having the advantage of this new documentary, this present approach also has the inconvenience of reporting to singular sources caused by the inconsistency/lack of some essential reports and by the voidness of a bibliography of the topic. Therefore, the reconstruction of some episodes could not always be complete, missing some pieces from this *puzzle* which deprives both the researcher and the reader of the prospect of a complete picture. However, retrieving this original information, as consistent as it may be, can provide benchmarks, facilitating the reconstruction of the whole picture. This is the reason for which we believed that this approach is appropriate, his benefits prove to be greater than the inconveniences caused by the bibliographical /documentary deficiency. However, the research values new information from a historical perspective, but also in terms of heritage, referring to the buildings, land holdings, book collections, documents and other liturgical objects owned by the deanery’s parishes.

A different kind of challenge, except those technical and documentary, was the methodological one, required by the volume and disparity of information. Paying attention to the faithful relating to the document, to its direct statement which we had presented particularly in the footnotes, we could not provide extended excerpts from some ample reports and memories. Therefore, we call on the faithful synthesis of the content, given the informative quality of the document and also the tones, subtle or obvious, intentional or unintentional, sometimes accompanying the text. But of course the challenge involved a substantial stake towards maintaining the objectivity of the message.

One of the biggest inconveniences in the documentation process – that of the need of selecting the documents from a non-inventoried fund – also had advantages, in the sense that by imposing the instrumentation of each document was possible an abstract reading of the entire archivist fund, whereupon we found the existence of some analogies or even some duplications between the deanery of Alba Iulia and other deaneries of the Vicarage; these analogies are not

just procedural stereotypes, but also similarities regarding events and attitudes. From this point of view, the present topic is not just an illustration of the profile of a certain deanery, in this case the deanery of Alba Iulia, but to a certain extent, is the general expression of the evolution of Transylvanian deanery during that period. Moreover, the opportunity of finding out some general things from the addresses of higher church and laic authorities, which also implied different contextualizations and comparative analyses, has opened wide perspectives on specific segments which have exceeded the limit of provincial and extended towards national. From this perspective, we can say that this paper provides elements of general history of the religious life from the central Transylvania in the years of World War II.

Extremely laborious, often with technical-documentary inconveniences, the retrieving of characters or episodes from a certain era is not just an anamnestic projection of them, but also a pedagogical retrospection of the past with significance and applicability in each generation. Therefore, we hope that this paper will receive not only the endorsement of the profile scientific community, but will also serve as a *memento* for the current generation, as a consideration sign for those who have preserved the Orthodox faith and national values here in Alba Iulia.

The completion of this research is owed to a large number of factors, but also to chances, opportunities, happy circumstances in general, and especially to the support of some people – all these making the “intellectual asceticism” bearable.

The first person who deserves our gratitude is Revd. Prof. Ph.D. Alexandru Moraru, our coordinator, who initiated us in the not so easy but with huge scientific benefits art of archival research, guiding us step by step from signaling the documentary fund till the happy solving of some technological and methodological inconveniences.

We dedicate the fruit of the research work to the man and teacher who gave us the opportunity to learn not just professional reflexes – seriousness, exactness, scrupulousness – but also humane qualities – generosity, moderation, decency, nobility, generally a deep humanism which goes beyond mere bonhomie, being opened in the superior understanding of difficulties, “troubles” and tensions inherent in apprentices’ human and professional development – we thank him for the attention and discretion with which he guided us in all these years while giving us the freedom of expression and the possibility to develop and particularize the speech.

We would also like to thank all who have supported us in this endeavor, especially to Revd. Ciprian Filip, archivist at the Archive of Cluj Archbishopric and to those from the Library of the Faculty of Theology in Alba Iulia, for their help and expertise.

Last but not least, my gratitude, poorly expressed in words, however expressive they might be, goes to my family, wife and three boys, who were part of this effort.

Bibliography and Sources

A historiographic approach, in the strict sense of the term, is impossible because the papers devoted to this theme are almost completely missing.

The only monographic paper devoted to this institution so far, covering the interwar evolution of the deanery belongs to Mirela Iancău and is her undergraduate paper presented within the Faculty of History and Philology from “1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia (2001). Beyond the slight clumsiness, inaccuracies and inconsistencies, otherwise excusable by the level of the research, the paper has an obvious informational advantage obtained from the archival documentation, but it gives our theme just a few exploitable benchmarks. Therefore, our attention has turned to the monographies about Alba Iulia or about Military Diocese, but which we found to contain no reference about the deanery in the years of World War II. Our hope was the parish monographs (edited or manuscripts), but we had no luck because they contained general information especially about the building and not details of the evolution of parishes in the Second World War. At most, along with the monograph of Gh. Fleșer about the churches from Alba County, they helped us in verifying the data. Also “*Transilvania*” magazine contains quite a few clues about the evolution of religious, cultural and national life of the deanery’s parishes in these years. The only helpful bibliographic sources were a few small articles signed by the administrative apparatus of the diocese of Alba Iulia in the “*Îndrumător Pastoral*”, which however are very limited – two or three pages each.

Instead, the journal “*Renașterea*”, the official body of the Diocese of Cluj, which during wartime appeared in Alba Iulia, provides a broad and diverse range of information about the evolution of the Vicarage and Deanery of Alba Iulia. However, going with the principle of value and priority, we have firstly exploited the Vicarage’s documents, discovering later on that there is no information from those published in “*Renașterea*” journal that is not contained by these documents.

Finally, the studies signed by Revd. Prof. Ph.D. Alexandru Moraru who talks about the refuge of the clergy from northern Transylvania, and Revd. Teaching Assistant, Ph.D. Student Cosmin Cosmuța evoking moments about the organization of the Romanian Orthodox Vicarage of Alba Iulia, were the only ones that gave us clues and comparisons about the formation of the Vicarage. Then, the ample monograph of Revd. Prof. Ph.D. Alexandru Moraru about the church life of Orthodox Cluj was also very helpful and essential in learning about the development of the Diocese of Cluj and about the activity of Hierarch Nicolae Colan.

The lack of a proper bibliography provided this paper with a clear advantage in terms of documentary novelty, but also exposed it to the inconvenience of frequently reporting to singular

sources. Being mostly based on the documents which constitute the archive of the Vicarage of Alba Iulia (1940-1945), initially this retrieving approach had to overcome major “technical” difficulties. Thus, the mentioned documentary fund containing several books and approx. 40.000-45.000 registered documents, preserved today in the Archives of Archbishopric of Cluj, could not be inventoried at time because of the dramatic conditions of Second World War, making it impossible to identify the documents after preset criteria such as chronology, themes, etc.

Consequently, accessing a certain category of documents could only be made by full consultation of the fund, an effort that meant for just one or another theme discourages and goes beyond scientific benefits. This was also our situation – the only solution was to select all documents related to the deanery of Alba Iulia and to general aspects of religious life in these years, followed by their photocopying and their electronic inventoring. After this labour, which required nearly two years, has resulted a documentary “fund” of approx. 12.000 positions and 258 folders (the correspondent of the thematic and chronological categories that have never come to be operated by archivists) representing the basic material of this paper.

Of course each document that contributes to a greater extent in the process of historical reconstruction is valuable, but there are also fundamental, unique documentary pieces without which the retrieving approach suffers huge losses. Fortunately, such documents were mostly preserved in the researched fund. We have grouped them on distinct categories:

- Annual report about the Vicarage’s activity; general report on the situation of the Vicarage in its four and a half years of existence; annual church statistics of the Vicarage; the three registers of Vicarage Council’s minutes whose meetings during 1940-1942 were held monthly and in 1943-1944 were held twice and even four times a month, on different dates;
- Minutes of the meetings of the deanery of Alba Iulia; general reports on the situation of the deanery presented in these meetings; annual church statistics of the deanery; the 22 minutes of the “canonical visits” made by the dean Alexandru Baba at parishes in May-June 1943.

These documents have acted as “sketches” of the pastoral, cultural, confessional, social and demographic profile of the parishes from the deanery of Alba Iulia, but the consistency of color and shades were often given by “small” documents which, connected, provided us with the whole picture. Fortunately, this was possible due to a sufficient archival material, both extensive and diverse consisting of: individual charts, pension charts, biographical records, working records, schedule of payments, statements, applications, questionnaires, minutes from different situations (investigations, parish meetings, meetings of the Deanery Chair), memoirs, reports (especially from schools), telegrams, circular letters, orders, decisions, decrees-laws, addresses of civil authorities (of Ministers – especially the Ministry of Culture and Cults – and of Presidency of Ministers), addresses of higher church authorities (of the Central Council of Church, of the

Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan, of the Bishop Nicolae Colan), school documents (graduating certificates, diplomas) with all their civil annexes (certificates of baptism, marriage, nationality), registers, tally sheets, abstracts, tables (containing the records of Orthodox population, unoccupied parishes, church and school buildings, patrimony objects, cemeteries, “catechized” students, members of the meetings and Parish Councils, refugees and deportees, sectarians, collections, subsidies, taxes, donations, the income of the parishes, etc.).

Comparing each of these sources, where it was possible, has allowed us not only an argumentation, but also a verification of the information. However, there were situations when the absence of some synthetic reports or detailed information made impossible the satisfactory exposure of some topics. Unfortunately, these gaps proved to be not just particular, accidental cases, but general ones also found among all the other deaneries of the Vicarage. Consequently, the overall picture could be reconstructed from the general data that specify the background lines, the Vicarage’s activities applicable to a certain extent to each deanery, or from isolated data which, although present a fractional development of events, provided a general perspective of the subject.

Besides this inconvenience, there were also slight discrepancies identified between reports, statistics and minutes of the canonical visits, a thing that caused us difficulties accurately indicating the statistic data. Consequently, in the footnotes we have provided all cases accompanied by the explanation of choosing one or another source. But more regrettable proved to be the existence of some calculation errors in the global tables regarding pupils and the land holdings of the parishes, which led to a correction of the data reflected in the tables from Annexes. Precisely because of these deficiencies, caused by gaps, inconsistencies and errors, plus the disparity of information at the end of chapter with an increased statistical content we have operated synthetic recaps, doubled by comparative analysis meant to illustrate the situation from the deanery easier, but also to capture trends and congruencies or, on the contrary, accidents and particularities.

But, beyond these shortcomings, accessing these sources assured this paper with the advantage of documentation on novelty sources, therefore creating scientific benefits.

Technical Note

Imposed by the exploitation of the Vicarage’s documentary fund, some special dating and quoting problems need certain clarifications which we considered appropriate to present in these “technical” glosses.

A first problem is that of frequent discrepancy between calendar dates specified in the content of the text and the registration numbers of documents contained in the critical apparatus.

Therefore there are cases of apparent “ante-dating” – the document from the footnote having an anterior date than the moment invoked in the text which could create some confusions and imprecision, as an action signaled at a certain date can not be recorded before it happened. The explanation lies in the fact that some situations are anticipated (for example, in the liturgical programs) or have a late recording or resolution and we have presented them in their chronological, natural sequence.

There are also cases of unusual “post-dating” when the registration number notes a later date, several months after the moment cited in the text; this is because the document has arrived at the Vicarage with a significant delay or because it was recorded later by the archivist.

Another special situation is that on the reverse page of the document, besides the registration date operated by the Vicarage there are also two different dates: the resolution date and the expiration date (as an answer for the issuer or as an address for other recipients). In this situation, in order to avoid the agglomeration of the critical apparatus we have indicated in the footnotes only the registration date, although we made references to those dates within the text. We made all these in order to the chronology of the events.

In some cases, documents referring to a single issue – addresses, answers, resolutions – were recorded under one number and not separately, the archivist choosing the formula “*ad no. ...*” so the bibliographic reference covers all together. Although the dating is anterior or posterior with several months before the reported event, our reference is not wrong; the discrepancies are explained by the fact that a wider problem that could have been extended over few months was registered under only one number. Moreover, connecting the documents for a problem in a single file which has a single registration number is usual.

A technical inconvenient is represented by the errors made by the archivists when registering some documents. More frequently, errors occur at the beginning of a month or a year, when the registry omitted to update the monthly or annual date on the registration stamp cylinder. Some of these errors were identified by coincidence or after we noticed the inconsistencies between entry-issue data and were mentioned in the footnotes as “wrongly recorded.”

The documents unregistered by the Vicarage, containing only the registration number of the issuer (parish, deanery, etc.) or even those having no kind of registration number (especially the copies and drafts) were mentioned as “unregistered by the Vicarage.”

A difficult problem to manage were the documents which were not kept in chronological order or represented unregistered and undated drafts, working tables which may come from different years although they treat the same problem (for example, the annual subsidies for priests in the Apuseni Mountains). Here, we had difficulties especially in rearranging the documents as they were issued and in connecting them as fairly as we could, having no other benchmarks.

Finally, the problem of “*fr.*” and “*fv.*” to which we have not called because of the consistent way in which the documents were registered is as follows: the Vicarage’s resolutions and provisions are briefly drew by the Dean Alexandru Baba on the *recto* of documents, where we also have the address-act, the initial act. However, in most cases these resolutions and provisions are detailed by the adviser or secretary on the reverse page of the document (where the registration stamp is) and then countersigned (possibly adjusted) by the Dean of Alba Iulia. Consequently, in the bibliographic notes we have not resorted to “*fr.*” and “*fv.*” references. The situation was clear: the initial addresses are on the *recto* page of the document and the provisions for employers or addresses to other religious and civil bodies issued by the Vicarage are on the reverse page.

ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL CONFIGURATION, GEOGRAPHIC SETTING AND HISTORICAL LANDMARKS OF THE ORTHODOX DEANERY OF ALBA IULIA

Administrative-territorial configuration and geographical setting

After 1918, the Orthodox Deanery of Alba Iulia knew some radical changes concerning the administrative-territorial configuration imposed by the context of establishing the Bishopric of Cluj, when creating a new deanery in Aiud, and when the border between the Archbishopric of Sibiu and Bishopric of Cluj was set up on Mureş River. Given the circumstances, the deanery of Alba Iulia, situated at the limit of the two bishoprics, was narrowed down from 46 parishes to 21 (22) by yielding some parishes towards Aiud deanery (Bishopric of Cluj) and towards Sebeş deanery (Archbishopric of Sibiu). This configuration was maintained throughout the interwar period and in the years of World War II.

Located in the “heart of the country’s heart” Alba County was named this way because of its triangular shape and the deep historical resonances of this place; situated where the mountains meet the Transylvania’s Depression, the deanery of Alba Iulia was not very extended in the period we are considering (1940-1945) but was condensed, being limited by Galda Valley (at N), Mureş River (E and S) and Trascău and Metaliferi Mountains, both belonging to Apuseni Mountains group (W). As for the residence center, the city of Alba Iulia, “embraced” by a bend of Mureş River and propped up in the last relied waves of Apuseni Mountains, it is located in the eastern extremity of the deanery.

The parishes pertaining to the city were: Alba Iulia I Centru, Alba Iulia II Maieri and Alba Iulia III Partoş, a suburb situated in the southern part, on the banks of river Mureş.

In the northern part of the city we have the Ampoi Valley which continues flowing through a large turning towards west, within the Apuseni Mountains. Throughout the course of this valley the deanery of Alba Iulia held 4 parishes: Tăuți, Ampoița, Meteș and Poiana Ampoiului – the last parish from the mountains and one branch: Șard – the closest to the city.

In the northern extremity of the deanery, a different branch of localities, known as *Dumbravă*, beyond Ampoi Valley, on its left, included the parishes of: Ighiel, Ighiu, Țelna, Bucerdea Vinasă, Craiva, Cricău and Tibru (the last two are placed at the northern boundary), homogeneously located at the base of Trascău mountains, an area famous for its special flavored wines. These settlements are among the largest and richest in the entire deanery.

Finally, the southern part of the deanery included more scattered parishes, also smaller and poorer, located in the eastern part of Metaliferi Mountains, all of them were settled on the right side of river Mureș: Pâclișa, Inuri, Vurpăr, Blandiana, Acmariu, Răcățau and Sărăcsău.

Historical Landmarks

The Orthodox Deanery of Alba Iulia had a special status among Transylvanian deaneries given the political, cultural and religious significance of the city where this church body was established. The almost four centuries of the institution's attested existence include among the titulars prestigious people, real personalities of the Transylvanian religious life which themselves, made history surpassing the limits of the province: Vasiu (Vasile) (1680-1685) – the future Metropolitan Varlaam of Transylvania (1685-1692); Simion Stoica – collaborator of the monk Sofronie from Cioara and a defender of Orthodoxy (1761 - at least 1767); Nicolae Rațiu – the confessor of heroes Horea and Cloșca (1778?/1792?–1805); Nicolae Ivan (1892/1894–1897) – the future bishop of Cluj (1921-1936); Ioan Teculescu (1901-1922) – the future bishop of the Army (1923-1924) and of White Fortress – Ismail (1924-1932), and the dean-vicar Alexandru Baba (1925-1948).

Attested only in the mid seventeenth century, when the circumstances were dramatic for the Transylvanian Orthodoxy because of the interference of Calvinist superintendent in the attributions and jurisdiction of Metropolitan Simion Ștefan, the first dean of Bălgrad known by name is *Neacșu* (at least 1635-1647), registered in a book donation for the Bălgrad Metropolitan Seat. On July 7, 1647 by an act of conformation that stipulated the submission towards the superintendent and respecting the Calvinist conditions, he was taken under prince's protection. We do not know under what conditions and to what extent the dean Neacșu accepted the patronage of superintendent Geleji.

The evolution of the deanery of Alba Iulia in the second half of the seventeenth century is difficult to reconstruct from bibliographic sources because those are insufficient, the retrieving of this episode must be based on documentary research.

About *Toma Topai* (at least 1667-1680), a dean during the Metropolitan Sava Brancovici, we know that he was one of the vestrymen of Bălgrad Monastery, a person who, together with the jurors and notary of the high council was leading the Transylvanian ecclesiastical hierarchy of those times.

Fortunately, about the dean *Vasiu-Vasile* (1680-1685) we know more details based on the tensions created in the Transylvanian Church by the invalidation of the election as metropolitan of the dean Ioan Zoba of Vinț and by the prince's appointment of a Greek metropolitan without consultation and meeting of the high council. The dean of Alba Iulia was involved in these events, being against the metropolitan; he himself became metropolitan in 1685. In his new position, Vasiu-Varlaam was particularly noted for his cultural direction, initiating an editorial program aimed at strengthening the Orthodoxy (in 1689 was printed the first actual Romanian edition of the "*Molitfelnic*"). Also, his ability and beneficial opportunism in the cultural area are worth mentioning mainly because he managed to convert the constraints of the Reform in his own advantages and to direct the relation with the highly contested dean of Vinț towards an Orthodox area.

After two decades, another dean of Alba Iulia will make himself noticed, this time in an apologetic direction, in the ambiguous circumstances of accepting/rejecting the religious unification with Rome. Only recently translated into Romanian, the documents evoking the first two significant failures of the religious unification produced in 1707 and 1711, present the dean *Vasile* of Alba Iulia as protagonist (coryphaeus) of the action of returning to Orthodoxy, in which having the support of the high council managed to determine the bishop Atanasie Anghel to deny the unification twice. But later, when the unification with Rome was restored these gestures have cost him the deprivation of his function (notary of the high council) and the exclusion from the synod.

In the mid eighteenth century, in the confessional tumult of Sofronie's uprising, the dean *Simion Stoica* was noted (1761-1767?); he was the one who restored the orthodox dean's institution of Alba Iulia. His involvement in the preparations for the synod of Alba Iulia, 14-18 February 1761, his activity of reorganizing the orthodox hierarchy by "strengthening" his deanery with priests ordained in a Romanian region, his relations with the defenders of Orthodoxy, even with Sofronie, his relations with the leadership from Rășinari, the two religious trials – after one of them he was arrested – all these show that the dean of Alba Iulia was deeply involved in the

actions of reiterating the Orthodoxy, in which Apuseni Mountains and Alba Iulia have become again a citadel of it.

At the end of 18th century we have the image of dean **Nicolae Rațiu** (1778? /1792?-1805), engaged in projects of endowing the local Orthodoxy with religious buildings (the churches in Alba Iulia Centru and Maieri) – for those seized by the uniates – in cultural actions, but especially in the socio-political life of that time, remaining in our memories as the confessor of Horea and Cloșca – they confessed to him, he gave them the Holy Eucharist, he drafted their wills and offered them a last consolation and encouragement before their death, before they were wheeled.

His successor, **Nicolae Panovici** (1805-1808), dean of Târgu Mureș, Alba Iulia and Brașov, was one of the candidates for the seat of Transylvanian Orthodox Bishopric before the election of Vasile Moga.

Grigorie Rațiu (1836-1865) was the dean in the mid 19th century. We have limited information about him. Although it is said that he “fully” participated in the Revolution of 1848, his name is not mentioned in the documents related to Great National Assembly of Blaj from May 3-5, 1848. Instead, we know more details about his sons, both clergymen (Ioan Rațiu was noted by Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna who appointed him editor at “*Telegraful Român*” and teacher at the seminar), and about his sons-in-law: lawyer Rubin Pațiția and dean Alexandru Tordășan.

In the last half of the 19th century, the deans of Alba Iulia were: Alexandru Tordășan (1865-1892), Nicolae Ivan (1892/1894-1897) and Florian Rusan (1898-1901) about whom, as far as we know, there is no monographic study.

Appreciated by his brother-in-law Rubin Pațiția, with whom he has collaborated, **Alexandru Tordășan** was deeply involved in the creation and functioning of the “Astra” department in Alba Iulia. As for **Nicolae Ivan** who became assessor in Sibiu, then bishop of Cluj (1921-1936), researchers have studied especially his activity and personality and not his function as dean of Alba Iulia. Only Nicolae Josan makes some brief references about the dean’s attitude during the tense moments of the *Memorandum* trial, when in Alba Iulia people gathered to protest.

In the first half of the 20th century, the local Orthodox religious life was dominated by the strong personalities of Ioan (Iustinian) Teculescu (1901-1922) and of Alexandru Baba (1925-1948). We have more consistent bibliographical references about them and even a monograph showing the pastoral and cultural activity of **Ioan Teculescu** – referring to the support given to religious education and to the quality of the dean as president of the “Astra” Department in Alba Iulia – but especially his national-political activity during the First World War (when his house became the place where priests and teachers from the deanery met), and then around the Great

National Assembly on December 1, 1918 – the dean was deeply engaged in organizing the event, being the president of the Romanian National Council of Alba Iulia.

As for the dean *Alexandru Baba (1925-1948)*, he also has devoted a chapter in the mentioned monograph, in which are presented his achievements during 1925-1940.

Although it had prestigious titulars and from time to time remarkable moments with reverberations in the national history, the deanery of Alba Iulia is just at the beginning of scientifically retrieving its evolution. Under these circumstances, this present approach is an attempt to rebuild and retrieve a fragment of this picture.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

I. Church-administrative activity

As it represents an ample chapter, central to the topic, in the sense of a punctual recovery of information referring to the parishes of the deanery of Alba Iulia, “the Church-administrative activity” contains thematic subdivisions concerning the historical and statistical facts of the deanery’s parishes, along with slices of pastoral life, members of the Parochial Assemblies and of the Parochial Councils, Priests’ Assemblies, Priests’ conferences and missionary circles, patrimonial, financial and jurisdictional aspects.

Among all of these, the topic referring to the historical and statistical facts of the parishes, together with that of religious education in schools, represent the largest and important subchapter of this thematic unit and also of the whole paper.

Heavily technical, with a broad information palette, it makes the most of the centralized facts from the minutes of the “canonical visits”, supplemented luckily with *Questionnaires*, Pay lists and priests’ Individual records, which made it possible to compare the sources and, consequently, to verify and enlarge the information. The result consisted in obtaining important details on the Church’s buildings and real estate, book patrimony and objects of rite, main aspects of pastoration, the cultural and school activity, the confessional configuration, etc. in each community.

Besides these historical and statistical facts, we also inserted a few slices of pastoral life, which dwelled in the memory of the respective community and in the archive documents, due to their preeminence. Most of them refer to the effort of building a new place of worship or a new parochial house, to the inconvenients generated by the absence of a titular priest or to the tensions created in the context of choosing a new priest. The final was reserved to the

information inventory and to comparative analysis, which offer a synthetical perspective on the topic.

Recovering all this information aims at being a contribution to the recomposition of the history of these parishes, not only in the analysed period (1940-1945), but also going back to earlier periods, through the references to the patrimony owned by these churches.

Analysed separately, the monastery “Saint John the Baptist” in Alba Iulia, the only monastic settlement in the Vicarage in the first years of this institution, astonishes through the extremely difficult itinerary it had to follow during the war years. It was an itinerary marked by jurisdictional litigations, caused by the representatives of the Military Diocese, by almost insurmountable indigence, which made it difficult for the settlement to develop, but also for monks to establish there. In these conditions, perpetuating monastic life in this place and preserving the destination of the foundation of the Military Bishop, Dr. Ioan Stroia, represents in itself a success, the first merits being due to archpriest Alexandru Baba (the monastery fell into his direct jurisdiction within the radius of parish Alba Iulia I Centre). The latter took a special interest in the settlement, defending uncompromisingly the property right of the Diocese of Cluj versus the jurisdiction claims of the Military Diocese – at the risk of declining the relations with the Military Bishop, dr. Partenie Ciopron. He interceded several times with the Minister of Cults in order to budget certain positions and to put the monastery in possession of land, intending to settle a candle factory here (in 1942), or appealing to various administrative authorities so as to protect it from the barbarious devastations of the Soviet soldiers (in the autumn of the year 1944). In the end, in a rather difficult undertaking caused by the lack of summarising lists, we drew up a chronological display of the personnel changeover, managing to retrace the integral list of the people living in the monastery during this period.

With obvious advantages this time, recomposing the lists of the members of the Parochial Assemblies and Parochial Councils has been facilitated by the existence of some global tables containing the names of all the members of these parochial bodies. Unfortunately, because of the degradation, appeared probably as a result of inadequate storage, in a damp environment, some documents were extremely difficult, in some cases even impossible to read.

Reading the general reports presented in the annual Priests’ Assemblies we could recompose certain aspects insufficiently pointed out in other sources, aspects concerning the religious life in the deanery’s parishes. These reports have also provided the information on the priests’ conferences and missionary cercles. One notices that special attention was paid to these religious-cultural events, because they were organised in important parishes of the

deanery and were accompanied by sermons and lectures presented by priests having vast theological studies and pastoral experience. It is worth mentioning that Bishop Policarp Morușca was present twice at these conferences, which turned the respective moments into ample religious events.

The themes of the lectures, the discussions that followed the conferences and missionary cercles in the deanery of Alba Iulia, and the manner in which they took place, show a real concern of the Church authorities and of the priesthood to improve the pastoral instruments and the development of the catechesis programme among the faithful.

Another part of this chapter refers to patrimony. Due to the readiness of the Vicarage in its relation with the State Under-Secretariate of Romanization, Colonization and Inventory, but also to the insistence of archpriest Alexandru Baba upon the priests in his subordination, we have the tables including the detail inventory of each deanery in the Vicarage, both real estate and mobile goods. One can also consult the annual investments in the building and repairing of the places of worship and of parochial houses.

During the war years these works proved to be extremely troublesome, because of the excessive price of the construction materials and of the manual labour, but also to the rigorous restrictions in this direction. Despite all these, a few works of wide scope unfolded in the deanery of Alba Iulia. The year 1943 is surprising through the spectacular investments figures, which represented two thirds of the sum budgeted by the parishes in the whole deanery for the construction of churches, respectively 40% of the sum budgeted for repairing churches. As concerns parochial houses, the deanery of Alba Iulia had a better situation than the average in the Vicarage.

The last subchapters, more reduced as length, concern the parish funds, most of them moderate. The annual augmentations of taxes were insignificant. The jurisdictional aspects bear witness to a high sensitivity of the relations between the Alba Iulia Vicarage and the Military Diocese because of the interference of the military clergy in the attributions of the parish priests in the centres which had military garrisons (especially in Alba Iulia), reaching even the point when archpriest Alexandru Baba expressed his suggestion for the Military Diocese to be transferred to Bucharest.

The Church-administrative chapter ends with *the annual Church statistics* and the situation of cemeteries. Especially important from a documentary point of view, the Church statistics have offered us the possibility of recovering facts concerning the population in the deanery of Alba Iulia, with special reference to the Orthodox. This information could be compared to the ones found in synthetic tables, questionnaires and general reports, but also supplemented with the ones provided by the *Questionnaires* and *Individual records* drawn out

by priests. Just as in the case of the information obtained from the minutes of the “canonical visits”, these facts have the quality of recomposing the pastoral, cultural-educational, demographic and confessional profile of the parishes in the deanery of Alba Iulia from a statistical point of view.

II. The pastoral-missionary activity

This chapter starts with the biographical records of the clergy and of the church singers in the parishes of the deanery of Alba Iulia. Drawn out following preset rigours, apparently uniform, the biographical records have always proved out indubitable documentary value in sketching the profile of those in question and came in useful for researchers. Even though they do not belong to the gallery of personalities, it is worth the effort of recovering, even partially the biography of the clergy in the deanery of Alba Iulia, all the more so as some of them excelled in various fields of activity, their names reaching beyond the provincial and echoing at the level of the Vicarage and of the entire diocese in Cluj.

Not at all easy, because of the disparity of information, recomposing these records has still been possible due to the existence in the archive of sufficient material, as large as various.

The final of this subchapter suggests a comparative analysis, meant to illustrate aspects concerning the personal, domestic and professional profile of the priests in the deanery of Alba Iulia, in a synthetic manner. This could not be done at the level of a detailed presentation of the individual biographical record, the most interesting aspects being in the area of studies, positions held before ordination and family situation.

As concerns the church singers, the perspective of budgeting aroused an increasing interest from these in occupying the positions with a salary from the State, in this sense, some of them sitting in for the special exam of church singing diploma, others attending the Church singers school.

The pastoral-missionary activity is then illustrated through various themes, such as: the Diocesan visits of Bishop Nicolae Colan in the Vicarage, insisting on the visits to Alba Iulia (some moments of Bishop Policarp Morușca’s pastoration are unknown, not being signalled by any of the researchers who wrote monographies about him); liturgical aspects; discipline and morality of the clergy; matrimonial matters. One of the most interesting subjects is the programme of the religious services in the central church in Alba Iulia, which became in all these years an authentic cathedral programme, of exceptional quality, with hierarchical services, solemn religious services on the occasion of various feast moments, with daily services, programmed sermons, choir participation and liturgical practice for the

students of the Church singers school. This special liturgical dimension conferred by the *sui-generis* statute of the central church could not be found anywhere else in the Vicarage, not even in the Coronation Cathedral. The servants of the altar were archpriest Alexandru Baba and the clergy in the administrative body-we identified 25 servants in the 4 years and a half of the vicarage institution.

Besides these subjects, largely illustrated in the stock of books in Cluj, we identified a series of aspects pertaining to the pastoral thematic, or even belonging to this, but not consistent enough: the Church's relation to public servants, to public administration, to village life and youth, Sunday's rest, qualification and competence exams for priests. Some of them are punctually illustrated with cases in the deanery of Alba Iulia; others are general, at the national level, but influencing the church life in the parishes of this deanery. Although insufficient as length and consistency to form separate chapters, we considered it desirable to recover these adjacent or fragmentary aspects, due to their quality of being complementary to the pastoral topic.

The pastoral-missionary chapter ends with the radiography of the refugees phenomenon, which represented a gloomy reality of World War II. After presenting a general frame concerning the situation of the clergy refugees from the Diocese of Cluj in the Vicarage, we analysed the particular case of the deanery of Alba Iulia. A considerable number of members of the clergy were placed here (35 members of the clergy and Church singers were refugees during the war, out of whom 13 came from Northern Transylvania and 22 from Bessarabia, Bukovina and Moldavia). In most cases, one notices a tireless concern of the priests and parishes in the deanery to integrate the refugees in the local community. Therefore, this episode remains a lesson of solidarity and concrete commitment to the national and evangelic ideal, accomplished by protecting their brothers in blood and faith.

III. Cultural–religious activity

Made up of subchapters referring to moral-religious education in school, cultural-religious associations and events, church press, libraries and stock of old books in the deanery of Alba Iulia, the chapter concerning the cultural-religious activity is the largest part of the paper, due to the rich information preserved. The largest subchapter here, but also of the whole paper, presents religious education in schools, illustrated here and there with activity reports of the religion teachers.

At the beginning of this chapter we approached the controversial issue of the buildings of the former confessional schools in Transylvania and Banat, first sketching the historical-

juridical frames and then going into the details of the concrete situation in the deanery of Alba Iulia, based on the statistical identified facts.

The source of tensions on this issue has been mainly the juridical and patrimonial controversial situation of the buildings of the former confessional schools which served as establishments of the State primary education. Another problem was the inequity and inconsistency of the rent payment by the town hall.

The Ministry of Culture and Cults attempted twice to confiscate the property title, then the right to use the property which the Church had on these buildings, which caused strong protest reactions. Finally, this led to the dismissal of Minister Radu Rosseti. The correspondance preserved in the archive reveals, on the one hand, the strong personality of Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan, the most fervent opponent of these ministerial resolutions, but also the figure of archpriest Alexandru Baba. On the other hand, one notices the constant interest in the cause of the former confessional schools' buildings, cause which involved not only the Metropolitan See, but also the Vicarage and its ruler in numerous claiming actions, materialised in memorials and protests addressed to ministries and local authorities and letters sent to parishes in which priests were asked to strive to protect the Church's property rights.

In the deanery of Alba Iulia, half of the parishes owned schools buildings, in a good state, which they rent to political parties. However, the political parties often refused to draw up a rental agreement, thus being relieved from the rental payment, which was anyway moderate in most cases. The most conflictual situation was signalled in Ighiu, where there were huge back payments, the equivalent of almost half of the building's worth, the town hall was brought to trial and the parish won the case. In such circumstances, in which the administrative bodies approached the matter in an unprincipled manner, starting with the year 1943 the idea appeared to change the destination of the former schools' buildings to parish houses or community homes. Hence, the experience was a painful one for the Church, considering that at a legislative level one attempted to confiscate the Church's property right and then the usage right, and at a concrete level, the local administrations neglected the payment obligations towards the parishes which were owners, despite the existing legal dispositions in this direction.

The second subchapter, the largest in the paper, presents religious education in primary and secondary schools in the deanery. Preceded by segments dedicated to the religion teachers' statute in primary and secondary schools, to the inspection of the catechesis in schools, or to preacher Nicolae Puia from Partoș, Alba Iulia, the ample picture of religious education in primary schools reveals tendencies, phenomena or educational accidents, having multiple causes and/ or consequences - at a pastoral, cultural and social level. However, these

were closely linked to the dramatic metamorphoses during World War II which influenced the Romanian society as a whole. By no means facile, the recovery undertaking benefitted from the indubitable advantage of using unprecedented sources of documentation, but also suffered inconveniences determined by the labour necessary to centralise and correlating facts from hundreds of pages of documents containing especially tables.

Religious education in the secondary schools of the deanery is a subject largely covered, presenting the situation of the religion departments in the highschoools in Alba Iulia and their teachers, the “catechetical” activity reports, the reactions against the attempts to restrain religion in schools and the project of a high school chapel in Alba Iulia.

Something to appreciate is the professional and personal quality of the religion teachers, who had theological and laic studies (pedagogical, philological and philosophical) at outstanding universities and also the overt interest in forming the students in a Christian spirit. From this point of view, Ioan Pop from “Mihai Viteazul” High School and Livia Bica from the Girls High School in Alba Iulia, are, undoubtedly, models of religion teachers.

As concerns the “catechetical” activity reports, these give us the chance not only to identify the names of the religion teachers or other statistical facts about students, school results, etc., but also to discover the educational models and techniques, extracurricular applications, ways of liturgical integration of religious education, etc. which were used in those times.

The memorial written by Father Ioan Pop, teacher at “Mihai Viteazul” High School in Alba Iulia, in which he protested against the attempts of the Ministry of Education to reduce the religion classes in schools and to change the didactic status of the subject, followed by a similar reaction of the religious leaders, represents the third part of this topic. We believe this can become at least a comparison term for researchers, but also for the present generation of religion teachers, all the more so as religion’s position in school has repeatedly been a subject of discussion after December 1989.

Another topic linked to “catechesis” in school is the religious education of sectarian students, which represented a difficult test for the Orthodox Church during World War II, because of the ambiguous and artificial situation created at a confessional level by the December 1942 Decree of dissolution of sectarian associations. Then, at least at the level of the Vicarage, the initial approach of the matter was not very flexible, including the pedagogical point of view, in such a delicate situation as that of the “former sectarian” students. It is true that the defficiencies of the Decree of dissolution of sectarian associations, which omitted the chapter of the religious education of the former sectarian students, the faulty, partial implementation of the dispositions, the State’s contradictory measures are all to

blame for their opposite effects. Despite all these, the strategies suggested by the Vicarial Council in Alba Iulia – the compulsory baptism, elimination – were not viable solutions either, being extreme, abusive measures. Even if they had been applied, they would not have brought the Church any real benefits, since the students' adherence would not have been an authentic one.

Fortunately for the Orthodox religious and educational activity, eventually, the leaders of the Vicarage came to formulate and apply the most efficient solution in this direction: the consistent pastoral effort of the priesthood to determine both the sectarian students and their families to convert to the Orthodox Church by conviction and not as a consequence of external constraints and forms of pressure.

The chapter related to school ends with topics such as “The Church singers school” and “Contiguous school issues”. Led by archpriest counsellor Nicolae VasIU, having well-trained teachers, some of them with high competences in the field “even Music Academy studies”, “The Church singers school” in Alba Iulia, even if it had a short-lived existence (less than two years) managed to maintain, at a small scale, the tradition created in the Cluj eparchy by the Church singers school in Nușeni, but mostly to provide a superior standard of professional training of musical and ritual competences for the Church singers in the Vicarage, especially for those in the deanery of Alba Iulia (most of them came from here).

As concerns the deanery of Alba Iulia it is worth mentioning the insistence of archpriest Alexandru Baba in this direction, but also the interest manifested by priests themselves, by sending students to classes and by propagandizing the School.

The third subchapter of the cultural topic refers to the cultural-religious associations and events, in which one ascertains the participation of the priesthood in Alba Iulia at the cultural life, in collaboration with specific associations, under various forms and on several occasions. For example, the desiderata of the Alba Iulia section of the ASTRA association were adopted by the clergy in the deanery, especially by its leader, archpriest Alexandru Baba. In the same way, the cultural-religious programmes of the “Romanian Orthodox Brotherhood”, whose section in Cluj was reactivated in the Vicarage, the public conferences in the Great Lent in 1943 and 1944 represent an important step in reaching the spiritual and cultural aim of the association, by the generosity and contemporaneousness of the themes. Essential in the success of the action was archpriest's Alexandru Baba's involvement, who turned Alba Iulia into a pilot-centre in this programme, in which the faithful in Alba Iulia had the chance to listen to the most important theologians of those days: Dumitru Stăniloae, Liviu Stan, Grigorie T. Marcu, Ilarion V. Felea, Gheorghe Stănescu și Petru Deheleanu.

The “Andrei Şaguna” Association of the Romanian Orthodox clergy in Transylvania, the Cluj section, reactivated in Alba Iulia in 1942, also benefitted from the attention of archpriest Alexandru Baba, chosen president of the organization after counsellor Sebastian Stanca gave up this position.

Church choirs also fall into the cultural category, not only with liturgical, but also cultural importance and application, illustrated in various artistic events. The most appreciated choir in the whole Vicarage was the one from the parish Alba Iulia I Centre, led by members of the clergy with special musical qualifications, with music academy studies.

Another topic refers to the cultural, national, anniversary and commemorative events which took place especially in Alba Iulia, which were always attended by archpriest Alexandru Baba and the vicarial delegates, who did not just make an appearance, but also consolidated the image of the Orthodox Church through their prestige. A special moment was the ample anniversary the Vicarage Council in Alba Iulia organised in 1943, celebrating Bishop Nicolae Colan’s 50th anniversary. In Alba Iulia, the programme included archpriest Alexandru Baba’s gratulatory allocution, a religious festival and the lecture of Father Prof. Grigorie T. Marcu from the Theological “Andrei Saguna” Academy. The way in which archpriest Alexandru Baba chose to honor the worthiness of his contemporaries, but also the memory of the departed, did credit not only to him, but also to the institution he led, setting an example for his generation, as well as for the future ones.

The subchapter ends with the statistics of the cultural-religious associations in the deanery of Alba Iulia and a synthetical perspective on the problematics, ascertaining the clergy’s involvement in the organization and activity of these associations. The result of this involvement was a significant increase of the number of branches in the period analysed.

The fourth cultural subchapter deals with the Church press and colportage in the Vicarage, paying special attention to the “Renaşterea” magazine and to the *Calendar*, both of these belonging to the Cluj Diocese, which took refuge in the Vicarage after the Dictate.

Going beyond the limits of an official newspaper, just informing and communicating with the clergy, through its overt aim to form the clergy’s sacerdotal and national conscience, “Renaşterea” magazine meant a pastoral balance factor in the new conjuncture of the artificial partition of the Cluj Diocese. Despite numerous inconveniences, first of all financial ones, the magazine continued to appear, the efforts in this direction involving several figures, clergy and laymen from the deanery of Alba Iulia, led by archpriest Alexandru Baba. As concerns the vicarial *Calendar* one notices the varied contents and the large objectives, the publication representing a means of communication with the masses, but also a pastoral instrument and guide in cultural and social-economic problems.

Using the media not just as a communication instrument, but also as a pastoral one, the leaders of the Vicarage managed to obtain various applications (apologetical, catechetical, cultural, national and even social-economic) in one of the most difficult context, such as World War II.

The last cultural subchapter presents the parochial libraries and the personal libraries of priests, as well as the stocks of old books. Correlating the data has offered us the possibility of establishing hierarchies and comparative analyses concerning libraries, but also of perceiving certain tendencies (mainly linked to the respective parish's possibilities or the priests's interest in books) or certain accidents (for example, some communities' total lack of interest in the parish library).

Finally, the inventory reports regarding the stocks of old books in the deanery of Alba Iulia gave us the chance to recover certain facts concerning the patrimony. We believe that these, together with the final stock-takings, classifications and comparisons, can offer the researchers the opportunity to re-evaluate this topic, by appealing to an unprecedented inventory, which may contain titles unknown so far, or, on the contrary, signal the disappearance of certain printings.

IV. National-political aspects

Made up of two subdivisions - the involvement of the clergy in national-political actions and aspects about the war and its direct effects - , the chapter discusses the priesthood's active vocation in the national direction, the clergy's adherence to the "Legionary Movement", the attitude of its members towards the war and their implication in supporting national funds or the passive defence programmes, the social and religious assistance of the soldiers and *Reîntregirea's* heroes, and finally the goods requisition and the patrimony lists prepared for the goods' evacuation and refuge.

The years of the second world conflagration were extremely difficult from a political point of view. Thus, in 1940, one of "the most tragic years of the Romanian nation", was marked by the loss of huge territories (Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, Northern Transylvania and the south of Dobrudja) and by profound political metamorphoses (the government's resignation, the appointment of general Ion Antonescu as president of the Council of Ministers, September 4; King Carol II's abdication and the enthronement of King Michael, September 6; Romania's pronouncement as "national-legionary State", September 14). The year 1941 brought about "the legionary rebellion" (January 21-23) and the formation of a new, military government (January 28) and Romania's entering the war (June 22). The

state of spirit of the years 1940-1941 was very well defined by the archpriest in Câmpeni, Sorin Furdui, in the Priests' Assembly in 1941: "...the war's anxiety... has spread much farther than the war itself". The next years were also very hard ones, 1943 being the year of the sacrifices on the front line and 1944 being defined as a year of political and economic insecurity.

In such conditions, the Government asked for the Church's support. The Church meant the guarantee of the preservation of the national feeling's vigour, so necessary in war circumstances, as well as the most credible partner in ensuring a balance, an internal stability from a national and social point of view.

It is interesting to notice the vision of the political leaders and of the Church hierarchy on the national vocation of priesthood and the Church's role in society, especially in preserving the national conscience and in maintaining a social balance. This active function of the Church in the Romanian space is, in these years, an explicit and assumed reality, both at the level of the political conscience and at the Church level.

The political factors, emphasizing the catalyst role of the Orthodox Church, defined the Church as "guardian of national solidarity" and the priests as one of the most important socio-professional categories, which represented "the supporting force of the entire nation", its spiritual and social assistance being considered an important feature in the country's consolidation work. As for the priests themselves, they were obviously animated by these national feelings, as proved by the involvement of the priests in most varied activities, some of them conjunctural, determined by the war's effects.

An important part of this subchapter refers to the clergy's adherence and participation in the "Legionary Movement". The documents used illustrate the general atmosphere installed after the legionary "Rebellion", thus providing important information on the attitude of the clergy in this area during the tumultuous events at the beginning of the year 1941, but also afterwards.

In the deanery of Alba Iulia, six priests were part of the "Legionary Movement". However, none of them took part in abusive acts, protests or sabotage and subversive actions during the "Rebellion". Besides, in the subsequent investigations, none of them was found guilty or was sentenced. It was mentioned that these did not militate in favour of legionarism, but they were only part of the social assistance in the movement, therefore, after the events in 1941, all of them left the movement. A case is shocking as atypical: that of priest Savu Savu from Vurpăr, a former member of the Legion, who was mentioned by the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie in a national address as an extreme situation: the peasants in Vurpăr refused to enter the church until the worship place in which priest Savu Savu

celebrated was not consecrated again. The priest's moral exoneration had a slow evolution, the faithful's distrust lingering for a long time. As concerns the vicarial leadership, starting with archpriest Alexandru Baba, one notices not just its punctual absence at the moment of the "Rebellion", but also a lack of involvement, a general absence in the movement's political programme.

The second subchapter, concerning the attitude towards the war and its direct effects, presents first the vision assumed at the level of the clergy's conscience on the battle in which Romania was involved. Understood not only as an expression of the preservation of national identity, as a battle for the country against the Russians, who had taken Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, but also as a reflex of preservation of religious identity, as a fight for faith, against atheist Bolshevism, the war was defined by archpriest Alexandru Baba, on various occasions, as an effort "to protect the Church, the Altars and the ancestral faith [...] so that we can defeat the power of Bolshevism's darkness."

A theme with profound national-social significance is that of the soldiers' religious and social assistance, materialised in campaigns to purchase goods for the army and collections for the soldiers in the front lines or programmes of support for the wounded soldiers in the military hospitals, for the invalids and their families. The deanery of Alba Iulia was in many of these actions in an exemplar position.

The topic "Reîntregirea's heroes" was also paid special attention from the clergy. Archpriest Alexandru Baba replied promptly to the dispositions of the Ministry of Culture, through which they requested reports with the heroes in each parish. Containing the names of 80 heroes fallen between July 1941 and November 1942, the list offers precious facts concerning the profession, civil status, age, date and place of death or these soldiers' rank in the army.

The next part of this chapter deals with the priests' involvement in supporting national funds under the form of loans taken by the State from the citizens in order to obtain the necessary financial resources to endow the army and cover the defence expenses. Conceived as funds ("Loan for army endowment", "Reîntregirea Loan"), these loans were practised in the deanery of Alba Iulia, the priests impelled the faithful in this direction, moreover, some of the priests contributed with money personally, besides those taken from salaries.

The national-political chapter ends with valuable information regarding the patrimony of the churches, information gathered from the tables drawn out by each parish in case of evacuation. The chapter also contains information about the confiscation of some goods from five parishes in the deanery of Alba Iulia in the autumn of the year 1944. The most important, prejudices, more severe than their material value were those from Alba Iulia III Partoş- where,

apart from the damages, were taken files with documents, and those from Meteş, where they confiscated registry books and records and destroyed books from the library. The most dramatic scenes occurred in the parish Sărăcsău, where the Russian soldiers shot and killed a person and beat another one severely. This dramatic situation was not singular, therefore one can qualify the respective actions as robberies. This feature was confirmed by the general behaviour of the Soviet soldiers, behaviour which had nothing to do with the normal requisitions. Besides the five parishes of the deanery, there is also the case of the monastery "Saint John the Baptist" in Alba Iulia, which was devastated in September 1944 by a division of Russian soldiers, settled on the monastery's territory.

V. Social and philanthropic aspects

The chapter starts with an introductory component, meant to sketch the picture of the social conditions during the war and then we analyse the special social case of the clergy in the Apuseni Mountains (which is also the largest subchapter here). The following topics refer to the involvement of the Church in general and of the parochial communities in the deanery of Alba Iulia in particular, in various philanthropic programmes and actions: the partnership with the Social Work Patronage Council, the recovery of the alcohol addicts, placing the refugees or collections for various humanitarian purposes.

The first years of World War II were extremely difficult for the Romanians, from a social point of view because of the recession, which brought about the appreciation of products and the monetary devalorisation, to which added the poor crops and the appreciation of the manual labour in all fields, against the youth assembly, generating the premises of a major economic instability. In such circumstances, the government imposed drastic measures, which affected the standard of living dramatically.

Unfortunately, for the inhabitants of the Apuseni Mountains, the crisis was emphasized by aggravating circumstances, specific to the area, which forced the standard of living to the limit of degradation. It is true that the Ministry of the Cults was preoccupied by the issue of the social instability of the priests in the mountains. The Ministry showed availability for the settlement of the crisis; however, the assigned sums of money were insufficient or risible most of the times. This caused protest reactions from the beneficiaries, announcing the imminence of the exodus of the priests from the mountain area.

As concerns the precise case of the deanery of Alba Iulia, even if situated at the geographical limit of the Apuseni Mountains, which brought it advantages compared to other deaneries, situated in mountain areas approachable with difficulty, one notices a highly

pronounced social risk. The total annual list of the priests who could benefit from help contains 8-13 cases in this area, which constitutes a fairly great percentage of about 50%, compared to the total number of parishes in the deanery.

The only constant supporter of the clergy and of the poor parishes in those years remained the leadership of the Vicarage, which attributed various allowances. A few parishes in the deanery of Alba Iulia benefitted from large subventions, because of the indigence they claimed.

A chapter with deep socio-philanthropic significance is represented by collections initiated in the deanery of Alba Iulia, some of them being the limited scale expression of some ample programmes, unfolded at a national level, others forming into spontaneous solidarity reactions, having the character of local campaigns for the soldiers in the front line, for the military hospitals, the invalids and their families, for priests who were refugees, for people in need or various institutions or persons. In most cases one notices a consistent, sometimes even enthusiastic involvement in the social work act. The imperative of helping the underprivileged often represented a moral and social catalyst for the masses.

In the majority of the situations, comparing the reports and the tables, the deanery of Alba Iulia was situated on top of the contributions list in the Vicarage, sometimes archpriest Alexandru Baba himself or the central parish in Alba Iulia, whose shepherd he was, set an example in this respect. One can say that certain charitable actions placed the deanery of Alba Iulia in the position of a model of involvement, becoming, as on other occasions, a sort of “pilot-centre” in the Vicarage. It is worth mentioning archpriest Alexandru Baba’s vision, which went beyond the reductionist perspective of the social work act, understood as a punctual, singular solution for some primary, temporary needs, revealing the other aspects of the issue, such as psychological support and social reinsertion of the beneficiaries. Here is an ample vision sending to the modern principles of social work!

It is no wonder that in these circumstances the Church was invited to collaborate with the State through the Social Work Patronage Council. The Church was considered the most viable partner and the guarantee of social work. This collaboration was established in the autumn of the year 1943 and acclaimed as opportunity to “Christianise social work”, as basis for “a national Christian social work”.

The fact that during these years social work has been a priority for the Church in general and for the deanery of Alba Iulia in particular is shown by the involvement of the priests and of the faithful in various projects and collection campaigns, despite the recession and the “hard times of sacrifice”.

VI. Inter-confessional aspects

The picture of the inter-confessional relations in the deanery of Alba Iulia, generically understood, as biunivocal and irenic reference, could not be retraced because of the lack of this type of information. Consequently, the inter-confessional perspective turns out incomplete today, revealing only moments of tension, even of divergence between the Orthodox communities and the other cults.

The most delicate problem in the war years regarding these aspects was the spectacular evolution of the sectarian phenomenon, which changed dramatically afterwards, as a consequence of the extreme dispositions given by the State government on the issue of sectarian organisations.

During the first years of World War II, the sectarian phenomenon proliferated on account of the permissive legislation, which admitted followers of forbidden cults to form religious organisations and associations, behind which, the neo-Protestant denominations could mask their proselytism. However, in a few years, the sects issue came to be considered as having national implications, which is why, the State asked the Orthodox Church for help in order to counteract the neo-Protestant offensive. The Church lent the State an aid, but claimed the lack of support from the public local authorities, to which added the huge colportage unfolded with the approval of the Ministry of Cults.

In such circumstances, the State authorities imposed extreme measures, culminating with the Decree no.927 from December 28, 1942, through which, sectarian organisations were dissolved. Acclaimed by the Church's representatives - archpriest Alexandru Baba considered it "satisfaction given to the Church"- unfortunately, the measure did not have the expected effects, rather causing ambiguities and artificiality at a confessional level. Only a small part of the sectarian followers (re)-converted to the historical cults - showing, however a reserved attitude- most of these continuing to activate in a clandestine way, expressing aversion to the priests' intention of converting them and expecting a reparation of their confessional situation. It so happened that in 1944 one discovered surprisedly that, even if they had been legally dissolved, the sects continued to exist in parishes in a disguised way.

In striving to combat sectarianism, the main preoccupation was to set up a colportage body, as an efficient means of counteraction to the sectarian offensive. One of the most representative cases as concerns the distribution of anti-sectarian booklets in the Vicarage is the deanery of Alba Iulia, which had the best results as concerns the colportage of religious objects.

At the level of the deanery of Alba Iulia the situation of the confessional transfers from Orthodoxy to the sects was better than at a national level and at the level of the Vicarage, that is, the confessional identity of the Orthodox communities was not altered. Even if there were a few strong Baptist communities (Pâclișa, Acmariu și Tăuți) and the sectarian danger could not be neglected, between 1940 and 1943 the conversions were minimal (only three cases). It is true that the conversions of the sectarian to the Orthodox Church could not be considered special achievements either (with a few exceptions). Instead, it is worth praising that the priests managed to preserve the confessional identity of the faithful, which is a pastoral success.

As for the relation between the Orthodox Church and the Greek-Catholics, in the deanery of Alba Iulia there were a few tense cases, against the confessional deficit felt increasingly by the Greek-Catholic Church in this period. In two situations (Blandiana and Bucerdea Vinoasă) one finds even major confessional divergences, investigated by the ministry. In each case, the Greek-Catholic priests were accused of being unprincipled, lending themselves to illegal and dishonest actions, together with teachers and representatives of the public local administration. Unfortunately, these conflicts affected not only the inter-confessional relations, but also the social ones and the normal educational process.

It is worth mentioning that the most numerous conversions in the deanery of Alba Iulia were from Greek-Catholicism to Orthodoxy and vice versa. The Orthodox Church was in a spectacular ascension (80% of the converts were Greek-Catholic converted to Orthodoxy and 20% were Orthodox converted to Greek-Catholicism). It is interesting to analyse the confessional mobility and the frequency of the conversions in certain parishes of the deanery, especially the urban ones.

Several factors contributed to these achievements: archpriest Alexandru Baba's concern for the preservation of the confessional identity of the deanery's faithful, demonstrated in the directives and suggestions for the priests, the clergy's interest in this direction, noticeable in applying various means of pastoration, one of the most efficient being the colportage (here, the results were among the best) and last but not least, the attachment of the people to their own faith.

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