

Cristinel Ioja, Marcel Tang, *Orthodox Theological Education in Arad. Itinerary. Forms. Perspectives*, Publishing House of the Archdiocese of Arad, 2016, 298p.

The living ferment of the whole process of preserving and promoting the spiritual and cultural values that make up the Romanian nation was an uninterrupted activity carried out by militias coming from the body of this people. They found, despite all the trials of time, the power of consciousness of the accomplished mission, in the service of both their brethren and God.

The activities that the scholars carried out in the Church or in the school and cultural institutions had the expected result only when they worked with the emancipation stemming from the love of nation. The fact determined the spirit of sacrifice in the struggle for the education of all in order to bring into being the complex process of cultural and spiritual emancipation. For this, it was necessary to create the possibility of acquiring material welfare, which in turn would allow the formation of future servants of churches and schools serving the whole nation.

In such a context, Arad enjoyed the fruits of the distinguished scholars who worked with dedication to contribute to the spiritual, cultural and national emancipation of their nation and became the oldest bastion of the ancestral faith and the preservation and promotion of the Romanian culture, from the intra carpathian space, through the opening of the courses of Preparandia in 1812, and especially of the Theological Institute, in 1822, as illustrated by the original work

This begins with a *Foreword*, signed by pr. prof. univ. dr. Cristinel Ioja, who is also the author of three of the five chapters of the paper.

The first chapter (pp. 8-28) is entitled even the *Orthodox Theological Education in Arad. Itinerary. Forms. Perspectives* and is structured by the dean father, Cristinel Ioja, as follows:

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- I. The role of Arad's theology in the context of the nineteenth century
- II. The role of Arad's theology in the context of the first half of the 20th century
- III. Year 1948 - Abolition of the Theological Academy - And yet, a resistance!
- IV. Year 1991 - Faculty of Orthodox Theology (1991-2016):
 1. The reinvention of the thread of history of the theological education in Arad
 2. Church-Theology-University
 3. Specificity of Orthodox Theology in the University
 4. Orthodox theology in the University of Arad: a) Educational spaces b) Chapel C) Specializations d) Teachers e) Students f) Library g) Research activity h) Anniversary - 25 Years Theology in the University i) Perspectives

At the same time the photos of the first hierarchs of Arad are presented: **Pavel Avacumovici (1786-1815)**, **Bishop Iosif Putnic (administrator 1818-1828, 1830)**, who had the purpose of shaping and forming the theological school here, as the faces of the hierarchs of Arad will be presented throughout this illustrated history.

The second chapter (pp. 31-34), *Preparandia from Arad - the space for the formation of priests and teachers in the west of the country (1812-1822)* is due to Mr. Lect. univ. Dr. Marcel Tang. He points out that the opening of the institution, on november 3/15, 1812, is due to the cultural-political context of the beginning of the 19th century and the current Enlightenment of the Habsburg Empire, and was the result of the work of the scribes who had lived and worked in this old city .

The series of "illuminists" of the first half of the 19th century, which served the newly created institution, is illustrated with the presentation of the very great scholars who contributed to its opening: **Constantin Diaconovici -Loga** (photographic portrait), who fought for The introduction of the Romanian language as a language of worship, as well as the introduction of Latin script and his contemporary **Dimitrie Ţichindeal** (photographic portrait) from Becichirecul Mic, who was a "quahette" and headmaster, along with **Iosif Iorgovich**, professor of geography and mathematics and **Ion Mihuţ**, professor of pedagogy and methodology. The "local" headmaster was **Sava Arsici** in the house (image) of which Prepandia worked in the first two years - as it is can be seen in the pictures.

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As a result of this, **Dimitrie Țichindeal** propagated “in the most daring way in the midst of dangers and sufferings, the gospel of Romanian culture and the national church“, was that in the spring of 1814 he was dismissed from the chair, accused by propagating “Romanian nationalism”.

In his place were named as catechists in 1815, **Gregory Lucacic**, and in the following years **Dimitrie Constantini, Alexandru Gavra, Atanasie Șandor** and **Ioan Rusu**.¹ It is also worth mentioning that all of them were at the head of the fight for the Romanian bishop seat in Arad.

Preparandia affirmed itself as a school of faith, launching special cultural-spiritual projects. The first and most important one was related to the ideal of union and the second was related to the romanianization of the Episcopal seat in Arad, occupied more than a century by Serbian hierarchs. Among its supporters, **Moise Nicoara** detached from Arad, who did not abandon this desideratum, despite all the injustices, the devices and the pressures he was exposed to, until the establishment of Romanian bishops in 1829 in Arad in the person of **Nestor Ioanovici**).

Bishop Nestor Ioanovici (1829-1830) (photo portrait), Maxim Manuilovici (bishop of Arad 1830-1835) (photo portrait)

In such a context, the establishment of the ancient presented in the third chapter (pp. 39-189), the *Theological Institute in Arad forms the historical itinerary and the models (1822-1927)* by the univ. lecturer Dr. Marcel Tang

The fact that the first teachers were **Gavril Raț - Gherasim Raț** (1835-1850) (photographic portrait) and **Gavril Giuliani** made the real problems of the school known directly by the one who was to be one of the first romanian bishops of Arad. He took special care and turned Arad into an eparchial center in which there was a clean romanian environment.

The special care that he manifested in the theological school in which he had begun as a teacher was materialized by bringing to his chair, after his ordination as a substitute, **Dimitrie Iacobescu**, the Protossel **Grigory Chirilovich** and the priests **Petru Varga** and **Petru Popovici**.

Starting with the school year 1839-1840, the Institute entered a new stage by promoting, through the care of the then hierarchs, the young **Patrichie Popescu** and **Ghenadie Popescu**. They themselves graduated from the institute, were well prepared for the cultural uplifting of the future priests, the first being owed the care for the founding of a library.

¹ T. Botiș, *op. cit.*, p. 2-42.

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Among the teachers that worked at the Institute in Arad are presented: **Ioan Rusu** (1851-1882), **Iosif Goldiș** (1869-1874) –photographic portrait, **Augustin Hamsea** (1875-1901) –photographic portrait, with a six-year interruption, **Vasile Mangra** (1875-1893) –photographic portrait, **Ioan I. Papp**, professor (1875-1876) –photographic portrait, **Dr. Ioan Trăilescu** (1885-1894), **Dr. George Proca** (1894-1901), **Roman Ciorogaru** (1880-1889, 1891-1917) **Teodor Papus** (1900-1922), **Trifon Lugojan** (1892-1919 with a few interruptions), **Gheorghe Ciuhandu** (1902-1903), **Lazar Iacob** (1908-1922), **Nicolae Popovici** (1922-1946), **Iustin Suciu** 1938-1948), **Teodor Botiș** (1900-1940), **Ilarion V. Felea** (1938-1948) and **Petre Deheleanu** (1935-1948), all presented with separate biographies and accompanied by the image of their monumental works.

Another new fact is the presentation of some less known teachers at present, **Simeon Sofroniu (1822-1840?)**, **Arsenie Popovici**, **Petru Varga (professor: 1844-1845)**, **Ioan Raț**, **Petru Raț**, **Dimitrie Antonovici**, **Ioan Mezei**, **Ștefan Puris**), **Ierotei (Iosif) Beleş**, **Andrei (Alexandru) Papp**, **Petru Popovici**, **Vichentie Schelegean (born ? –died 1902;professor 1874-1875)**, **Gheorghe Vuia**, **Ioan Trăilescu**, **Dr. Traian Puticiu**, **Dr. Aurel Demian**, **Romul Nestor**, **Valeriu Magdu**, **Dr. Gheorghe Dragomir**, **Traian Vașian**, **Alexiu Vesalom**, **Mihai Păcățian**, **Nicolae Bâru**, **Caius Turicu**, **Atanasie Lipovan**, **Dr. Atanasie Brădean**.

Following are the photographers of the hierarchs: **Patrichie Popescu**, professor and headmaster of the Theological Institute of Arad (1839-1844), then vice bishop of Arad (1850-1853)

Bishop Procopy Ivașcovici (1853-1873), **Bishop Miron Romanul (1873-1874)**, **Bishop Ioan Metianu (1875-1898)**, **Bishop Iosif I. Goldiș (1899-1902)**, **Bishop John I. Papp (1903-1925)**.

The paper states that the duration of studies was lifted in 1825 from two to three years of study. This three-year study structure, integrated into a Theological Institute, the first of its kind in Transylvania, as well as the existence of valuable teachers, has brought the school a growing prestige. The fact is particularly important if we take into consideration that among its graduates there were: **Ghenadie Popescu**, **Constantin Gurban**-photo portrait, **Vasile Mangra**, **Romul (Roman) Ciorogariu**-photo portrait. They became teachers themselves and some of them even hierarchs in Arad, respectively in Sibiu, or in the case of **Nicolae (Nifon) Bălășescu**, professor and headmaster of the Bucharest Seminar. **Vincentiu Babes** (1821-1907),

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Dr. Aurel Crăciunas (1877-1943), **Dr. Emil Petrovici** (1899-1968), **Dr. Vasile Lăzărescu**, **Dr. Gheorghe Cotosman** (1904-1977).

The operation of the Institute took place in various rented houses situated in the Mureș area, near the former cathedral, until after the direct involvement of **bishop Ioan Mețianu** and his collections, the building was built at the right of the Cathedral Square of the city, where in 1876/1877 the two theological and pedagogical institutes were united. In this way, the Diocesan Theological and Pedagogic Institute was established, under the direction of father **Ioan Rusu**, until his retirement in 1882.

Ioan Mețianu sent the best graduates to study abroad for the formation of a generation of teachers corresponding to the overwhelming mission they had to accomplish, but he continued the steps for building up another building that would correspond fully to the requirements that they were imposing. Thus, in 1885, the “Seminar Palace” took place, where the courses of the Institute and of the Theological Academy were held until 1948. It establishes complementary institutions that will help the school activity (press Church and School, January 30 / February 11, 1877, Diecezane Printing House, work done in 1879, bookshops, libraries), the setting up of organizations and meetings for cultural activities in schools and villages.

Although in 1919, the training courses of future teachers separated from those of the Theological Institute, from this time operating separately as the “Orthodox School with 8 classes”, yet the two institutions continued to be under the rector’s direction, **Teodor Botis**. This situation would have lasted until 1927 when *the Theological Institute was to be transformed into the Theological Academy, as it did until 1948*.

There are presented: The paintings of the epoch, showing pictures of the institutions that were then functioning, as well as the photographic portraits of the teachers and graduates of that period, the scholarly testimonies, etc., and the photographers Bishop Dr. Gregory Comsa (1925-1935), Bishop Dr. Andrei Magieru (1936- 1960).

The presentation of the fourth chapter (p.190 -252), the *Theological Academy of Arad (1927-1948)* belongs to prof. univ. Dr. Cristinel Ioja.

The transformation of the Theological Institute into the Theological Academy, carried out in 1927 by the graduation of four years of study, points out that between 1927-1948 in Arad was formed a solid teaching staff, well trained and involved in the development of the Romanian Or-

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thodox theology. One hundred years after the founding of the Theological Institute, Father **Teodor Botiș** published the well-known work - awarded by the Romanian Academy - *The History of the Normal School and the Romanian Orthodox Institute in Arad* (Arad, 1922, 744 p.) Illustrating the historical roots. It is worth pointing out the note of pr. Dean on the fact that at that time, the remarkable representatives of the theology leadership headed by the Arad bishops responded to at least three major contextual challenges: 1) the expansion of rationalism and militant atheism; 2) the sectarianism and expansion of neo-protestant groups in western Romania; 3) multiculturalism and pluri-confesionalism amid the assertion of Romania as a national, unitary state. These three great coordinates we encounter in the theological works of the professors in Arad, recognized in the Romanian Orthodox theology.

Dr. Simion Șiclovan (1898 - 1918, professor: 1925-1948), **Vintilă Popescu** (1895 - 1971, professor: 1926-1948), **Dr. Gheorghe Popovici** (born.1889 - d.1972 Professor: 1927-1948), **Dr. Ioan Petreună** (1904 - 1983, father confessor and professor: 1930-1934 and 1940-1941), **Petru Bancea** (1861 - 1978, professor: 1938-1948), **Demian Tudor** (born.1912 - d.2001, prefect of studies: 1937-1938, professor: 1938-1940, confessor: 1991-1994), **Cornel Givulescu** (born.1893 - d.1969, professor: 1940-1941), **Dr. Ștefan Munteanu** (bprn.1890 - d.1948, professor: 1940-1941), **Dr. Ștefan Lupșa** (born.1905 - d.1964, professor: 1940-1941), **Ioan Ageu** (born.1917 - d (2010: Professor: 1942-1948).

The Gardens of the Theological Academy (1940), The Chapel of the Theological Academy, with the patronage of Saint Hierarch Nicholas (1940) - are presented in pictures.

The dissolution of the Theological Academy in 1948 resulted from the publication of the Law of Cults on 4 August of the same year. All the steps taken promptly, in devotion and courageously by Bishop Andrei Magieru (himself a graduate of that institution), which had the official support of the Banat Metropolitan Synod, had no success. However, in the period 1948-1953, it was allowed here to operate a Center for the guidance of the clergy

The fifth chapter (p.266-269), the *Faculty of Orthodox Theology (1991-2016)* is also made up by the Father dean Cristinel Ioja

The setting up of this new form of education is presented as the fruit of the work of this playad of illuminated teachers, some true martyrs who

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face the vicissitudes of the past contributed to the knowledge of the past of our people, to the strengthening of the conscience of national unity and to the defense of the language of the nation and the Orthodox faith, and which could not be erased from the consciousness of the generations that followed. They have made numerous efforts to state authorities and have written memos in order to create the necessary framework for the establishment of higher education institutions in Arad. The present bishopric, the current Archdiocese, together with the humble, computed and equally implacable in the will of the will, the accomplice of work for the benefit of the peoples and God, the High Priest Timothy Sevicius, undertook the necessary steps to the law forums and to the Holy Synod of our Church.

Decision 567 The Government of Romania of 18 May 1990 on the establishment of the Arad Higher Education Institute granted Arad the right to open the gates of higher education institutions. To this was added the answer of the Holy Synod, which through address no. 560/21 February 1991 responded to the address no. 141/1 January 1991, requesting the re-establishment of the Theological Institute of Arad. It requests the Arad Episcopate “to undertake all necessary steps to ensure the necessary space for the organization and functioning of the new institute, to ensure the material basis, the teaching and administrative body”, based on the protocol concluded with MEN.(Ministry of National Education). This protocol constitutes the birth certificate of the current Faculty which has evolved so much to become today the expression of tradition at the time being.

Concluding, we note that the presentation in words and images of the pleyad of theological personalities who served the Theological Education of Arad sums up more than 70 bishops, professors and spiritualists who have kept alive the theological consciousness along with the national-church values. This album therefore illustrates the fact that Arad has a vigorous Theological Tradition, recognized by historians and theologians, evident in the numerous journalistic and theological and cultural contributions that live witness to its vocation and continuity. At Arad, not only the national ideas were created and defended, but the values of Romanian Orthodoxy in the confessional and multicultural context specific to this part of the country were defended.

Such a work illustrates that the Faculty of Orthodox Theology at Aurel Vlaicu University in Arad is the expression of tradition at the time being, and one of the central sources of local history, irradiating light and spiri-

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tual identity, being able to restore and update permanently the theological
memory of Arad and we express our conviction that this complex album
will be received as such.

Rev. Lect. Dr. Valeriu Gabriel Basa