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ROMANIAN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN TRANSYLVANIA (END OF THE 18th
CENTURY – MIDDLE OF THE 19th CENTURY). AN APPROACH FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF REFORM PROJECTS AND TEXTBOOKS

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Starting from the idea that although an institutionalized form of Romanian education to prepare the future priests did not exist in Transylvania until very late, they managed to acquire what was necessary to practice the ritual in another setting, we will try to see to what extent the education under the influence of the reforms managed to make the transition from the priest who possessed only minimal knowledge and whose training focused only on the transmission of the practice acquired from older priests, to the priest who belonged to an elite category, whose intellectual training was carried out in an organized framework and aligned with the priest model required by a changing society, but also how the textbooks used evolved, from church books necessary in the performance of the ritual and which had the role of textbooks, to manuals complexes used in the teaching of theological subjects with the two subdivisions: practical disciplines and theoretical disciplines.

All these trends can be related to the objectives that the present project has proposed. Initially written within some obvious limits, he sought to differentiate religious education from theological one and to focus on the period of the imposition of the latter in a systematic manner, starting from the textbooks used in the educational process and taking into account the possible influence of reform projects of education initiated in the territory of the Habsburg Empire during the period of reformism. But the research of the sources led me to the conclusion that something more can be done than to make yet another contribution to the historiography of a subject that was, perhaps, already rich enough. That is why I now propose some questions, which emerged during the research and which I will try, as far as possible, to answer.

1. First of all, is there, or rather was there, a theological dimension of education, which was essential for the formation of young clerics, and if so, how can it be perceived only on the basis of the few preserved written texts?

2. Secondly, what can these texts tell us today, almost incomprehensible for a secularized society like the current one, for which religion is no more than an object of criticism and disputes of all kinds? And is the traditional narrative of the knowledge and translation of the sacred texts really complete or missing some connection?

3. Finally, can the established historiographical scenarios be contested or even rewritten, when the consultation of primary sources imposes some conclusions that are hard to avoid? Without having the slightest intention to open Pandora's box, i.e. to enter into the controversies related to the phenomenon (or concept) of the Școala Ardeleană, a question that is imposed is the one related to the explanation of the "forgetting" of some noteworthy representatives of creation cultural from the period dominated by this School.

Starting from these questions, the research assumed by the present doctoral project now distinguishes between three stages:

1. The first is the one in which the main role was played by the massive theological manuals published in Cyrillic characters during the Enlightenment period, more precisely between 1796, the year of the appearance of Samuil Micu's Moral Theology and 1811, when the last volume of the Dogmatic Theology was printed, due to the effort of the still young (at that time) Dimitrie Caian junior and his collaborators.

2. The second is the predominance of manuscript texts in the Romanian and Latin languages, which say something about the desire of their authors to know and understand the sacred texts and secondly to explain to others the principles of this knowledge and understanding .

3. Finally, the third stage was the one in which Timotei Cipariu assumed the courage to abandon the traditional approach to sacred science, in order to adapt it, as he himself said, to the stage of biblical sciences at the European level. More precisely, he resumed the effort to publish some textbooks in Romanian dedicated to the main theological disciplines, already differentiated in the mid-19th century, in the context of the disputes between the followers of traditional cultural forms, those of the etymological language and the Latinizers, which I mentioned earlier .

Thus, the project proposes the investigation of the transition from textbooks printed in Romanian during the Enlightenment period to the new Romanian textbooks from the atmosphere of romanticism, through the stage of courses in Latin, which can constitute the missing link in the narrative devoted to the problem of knowing the sacred texts in our space. In addition, the research can address both the final autograph texts, perceived as texts, i.e. documents, extremely little known today, and those preserved in copies, lecture notes or working versions. Indeed, in some cases one can surprise the author's effort to reach the best writing, intended for printing. In others, the manuscripts reflect only the concept stage. In any case, these manuscripts are useful for understanding the relationship between their authors, representatives of the educated clergy, and those to whom they were addressed, that is, the mass of believers. Or, in other words, they say more to today's lecturers than the authors of the texts had said to their auditors at the time.

And another conclusion, related to these manuscripts, is that they began to be written not only by the most educated, possibly for didactic motivations, but also by representatives of the middle cultural level, who were also concerned with similar matters representatives of the elite. Sometimes these are fragmentary manuscripts, which cannot be attributed and are even

more difficult to decipher, due to the much less neat writing. Precisely because of this, I could not even preliminarily analyze all of them for now, only wanting to point out their existence.

The issues addressed in the present work are dealt with in three chapters. The first chapter is devoted to a historiographical retrospective on the topic of education, focused especially on the institutional dimension, and structured on the four periods in which the wider historical context influenced the evolution of the Greek-Catholic Church, and implicitly that of education. The first period was characterized by the publication of bibliographic contributions related to the issue of the establishment of schools in Blaj and their founding documents, the role played by the Basilian monks in education and the school structure. It should be noted that the established schools were addressed on the one hand to those who wanted to dedicate themselves to the clerical career, but also to all those who were desirous of training. On the other hand, the analyzed authors took into account to a lesser extent the problems of rural schools, or the comparison with the school network of Hungarians and Germans in Transylvania. A direction of analysis inaugurated now was the one concerning the manual works published at the printing house in Blaj. The second period between 1918-1948 represented a time of repositioning the Greek-Catholic Church, which had to face the attacks from Orthodox historians and, on the other hand, justify the evolution of its own Church in the context of the debates regarding the status of the confession, related to the provisions of the 1923 Constitution or to the debates raised by the conclusion of the concordat with the Holy See. Characteristic of this period are the problems of detail addressed by the historians who analyzed the history of the Greek-Catholic confession. Opened by the abusive abolition of the Greek-Catholic Church in 1948, the post-war period meant a drastic limitation of the possibilities of studying the history of this Church, the historians of the period could at most approach the topic indirectly through researches within cultural history, or the history the national emancipation movement. Another noticeable feature was the influence of materialist-dialectical and historical ideology on the interpretation of facts, but also the role of communist censorship and the imposition of very strict interpretive limits. The period between 1990-2020 meant the return to the study of the theme from the perspective of the history of the Greek-Catholic Church, including through the reflection of the subject within the monographic works devoted to some of the Greek-Catholic bishops, but also the attempt of methodological adequacy to the approaches of European historiography.

The differentiation between religious and theological education emerges more clearly from the analysis devoted in the second chapter to the coordinates of religious education until the establishment of the schools in Blaj, which gradually prepared the transition towards a

systematic theological education. It is therefore followed the stage of the establishment of the schools and then their institutional evolution, in essential lines, until the first part of the 19th century, when the Episcopal High School began to function, a fact that marked the maturation of the education system in Blaj.

The analysis then of the regulations in the field of education and the projects developed in the context of reformism is intended to explain the characteristics of the evolution of theological education, as it is reflected in the published textbooks, and first of all in the Moral Theology of Samuil Micu, which illustrates as much as possible well the extent to which a textbook of moral theology could receive the reforming influences, likely to at least complete, if not modify, the essential profile of the faithful and especially of the priests. The importance of the treaty therefore lies primarily in this attempt to transpose into the Romanian language, therefore in the meaning of the Romanian believers, a theological discourse deeply influenced by the spirit of reformism. Hence the weight that the analysis of this treaty occupies in the present work. And I dare from now on to advance a hypothesis that remains to be confirmed, namely that such an influence could not be limited to the level of a single didactic treatise that I will refer to below, but it had to overwhelmingly influence the manner of perception of the role of the priest, and therefore to be reflected in other religious works or treatises. It remains to be seen whether this happened in the case of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church in Transylvania.

Precisely to trace the reception of this influence, the third chapter is devoted first to an analysis of the dissertations on sacramental and dogmatic theology published until the beginning of the second decade of the 19th century. Next, this chapter analyzes another category of sources that reflect the educational approach, namely the manuscript of a course in Romanian, held by Dimitrie Vaida, and others of the courses in Latin held by Teodor Pop, including the copies or versions representing course notes of students who attended the courses of the second. I paid more attention to two other manuscripts in Romanian, belonging to the same Teodor Pop, which seemed to promise, at least according to the title of one of them, the possibility of discovering a manual of the confessor, which was expected to have been influenced by the reforming trend disseminated through Moral Theology.

The last part of the thesis actually address another issue, which completes the analysis in the present work, namely the features of the revival of theology through the courses held and published in the middle of the 19th century by Timotei Cipariu, also preserved in the form of the original manuscripts. They also reflect the small "linguistic revolution" promoted by Cipariu, who aimed to impose the Latin alphabet, without falling into the excesses of the

Latinists of the period. They thus open a perspective on the linguistic approach of these texts, as in the case of Teodor Pop's texts.

The work is completed by several appendices, the first of which parallels the content of Teodor Pop's *Historie evanghelicească* manuscript with similar topics in Moral Theology by Samuil Micu and Dogmatic and Moral Theology about the Sacrament of Penance. Four other appendices present the detailed structure of three of the manuscripts of Teodor Pop's courses, for two of them the comparison is also made with manuscripts of course notes with the same content; the fourth appendix describes the preliminary version of the three courses, also preserved in the form of course notes.

Overall, the analyzes carried out confirm the hypotheses initially formulated regarding the three stages of evolution and especially the fact that, during them, several theological disciplines of first importance were clearly outlined: moral theology first, reflected in the Moral Theology of 1796, and the pastoral theology somewhat later, after in the first stage (1800-1811) it was linked to the sacramental and dogmatic, its individuality was confirmed by the annex to the Evangelical History from 1816 and especially by the Instruction for the Confessor, but also by the treatise published before them by Bishop Ioan Bob, *The Form of the Clergy and the Good Shepherd* (1809). For biblical exegesis, a first tenet of differentiation is Dimitrie Vaida's Teaching in 1809 and then the courses written by Teodor Pop in 1816, continued with the in-depth exegesis of the Gospel according to Matthew until 1830. However, we must not forget the previous concerns in this direction, such as the one mentioned by Benedict Fogarasi from 1797-1798, or the remarkable earlier biblical studies of Samuil Micu, occasioned especially by the effort of translating the Bible. First concerns can also be noticed in the direction of biblical hermeneutics, even if a systematic approach can only be spoken of once with the course of Teodor Pop, and later with those of Timotei Cipariu, who continued his predecessor at the chair and in direction of exegesis. Finally, dogmatic theology, involved in all the mentioned stages, obviously confirms its individuality through the treatise published by Dimitrie Caian senior and his collaborators, between 1804 and 1811. A little later, church history becomes individualized, with a first manual only in 1854, and the right canonical, even if concerns with remarkable results have existed in these directions since the Enlightenment period, through the same tireless scholar Samuil Micu, but also through others.

Beyond this summary assessment, the correspondence of the evolution of Romanian Greek-Catholic theology with the principles of the reforming programs in the Empire, which referred, for example, in the case of Rautenstrauch, to the difference between theoretical and practical disciplines, they emphasized the importance of knowing the biblical languages,

hermeneutics, the customs of the Jews and the first Christians, the history of the Church, patrology and theological literature, etc.

However, the analyzed sources also stand out due to their textual quality, through the beauty of linguistic forms, through the appeal to biblical languages to explain notions, etc., the concerns culminating in the cultural exercise of the new translations of the Old Testament books by Teodor Pop. All this proved that religion was assumed in the fullness of its meanings, by the discussed authors, but also by others. And this fact proves the interest, at least of some members of the clergy, in theological issues. On a broader level, this interest was related to the practical aspects, related to the pastorate, and therefore the practical dimension is also specific to the published dissertations, which do not take the multitude of references from the original works, because there was not such a deep interest on the part of those to whom these works were addressed. Even the comparison between the autograph forms of the courses and the lecture notes of those who heard them reflects the tendency to omit the more difficult exegetical matters, which remain only a testimony of the authors' concerns in this direction. However, it is important to attest the existence of such concerns for in-depth exegetical approaches, related to sacred texts or apocryphal literature, as we saw in the case of Teodor Pop.

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