

***THEOLOGIAN FROM BANAT AT CERNAUTI UNIVERSITY  
END NINETEENTH CENTURY AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY  
A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE***

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*Abstract: At the turn of two centuries several young men from Banat went to Cernauti to begin the theological studies at the freshly established University on 1875. This was under the patronage of Emperor Franz Joseph - Alma mater Francisco-Josephina and the name has been kept for 43 years, until 1918. The University had several academic programs in the field of: law, philosophy and theology. These were transferred from the Putna Monastery Theological Institute founded by Vartolomeu Măzăreanu. The theological line at Austrian University Deutschsprachige Nationalitäten-Universität from Cernauti becomes the only Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the center of the leading theological university from: Romania, Transylvania, Bukovina, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Dalmatia. The teaching theologians from this University become later well-known in their native provinces. Moreover, the Faculty of Theology from Cernauti had an advantage over other theological institutes: the Doctoral School.*

**Keywords:** *The Diocesan Theological Institute from Caransebeș, New Testament, Bible, Theology, Church.*

The theological education system in Historical Banat was official on 1822 when was founded the theological schools in Vârșeț with the educational programs in two languages: Romanian and Serbian. This was an old desiderate of the Caransebes Diocese. At these schools have taught personalities of spiritual and cultural life, among which: St. Andrei Șaguna, the future Metropolitan of Transylvania; Nicolae Ticu Velia, author of the historical prestigious theses *"Istorieară bisericească politico-națională"*, Sibiu, 1865; Ignatie Vuia, previous vicar of the Diocese of Vârșeț; George Peștean, cultural personality and so on <sup>1</sup>.

After reactivation of Caransebes Diocese, in 1865, through the metropolitan Andrei Șaguna's efforts, and Consistory decision on September 23, 1865, the first bishop Ioan Popasu is transferred to Caransebes, Romanian section of the Theological School of Vârșeț.

In fact, behind this decision was as well the metropolitan of Sibiu, which officially suggested through the council's decision from Sibiu on August 16, 1865: "The future of Romanian department will be under the direct care of Father Bishop of Caransebes"<sup>2</sup>.

We can state that from 1865 until today there has been a continuity of theological education in Caransebes. Do not forget that in Vârșeț theological studies were initially two years and Bishop Ioan Popasu had turned this into a Diocesan Theological Institute of three years.

On the other side, the Theological Institute in Arad was established in 1822 <sup>3</sup>. Thus, at the beginning of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy (1867), the Institute already had nearly half a century of activity. No doubt that the theology in Arad was a landmark for some of the historical Banat territory. Why? For the simple reason that the historical Banat, as a

<sup>1</sup> Viorel Dorel Cherciu, *Biserică și societate*, Editura Marineasa, Timișoara, 2003, p. 183-192.

<sup>2</sup> Viorel Dorel Cherciu, *Biserica în modernitate. Episcopia ortodoxă de Caransebeș (1865-1889)*, Editura Marineasa, Timișoara, 2004, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> Pavel Vesa, *Învățămintul teologic de la Arad (1822-1948)*, Editura Episcopiei Devei și Hunedoarei, Deva, 2013, p. 11.

territory, was under the jurisdiction of two Episcopal entities: Arad and Caransebes. Therefore a good part of historical Banat was under the canonical jurisdiction of Orthodox Bishopric of Arad.

These details were mentioned in order to illustrate the educational opportunities offered to a young man in the theological field. However, the two theological schools (Arad and Caransebes) which recruited young men for educational programs, were poor classified by several men eager to learn the mysteries of theology. The imperial prestige and patronage of the University of Cernauti acted as a magnet in attracting students. Of course, the inviting offer was not available to every interested person. This detail was obvious because of the distance and material possibilities from the era to which we refer. However, few scholars from Banat have made an intellectual and material effort to study at the best schools. Therefore, we see that all those who attended the courses from Cernauti, had then attended the Faculties of Theology courses in: Leipzig (Saxony Kingdom) where they could listen to Constantin von Tischendorf; Budapest (Austria-Hungary); Vienna (Austria-Hungary) etc.

## **1. Doctors of Theology in Bible Studies, from Caransebes Diocese, at University of Cernauti**

### **1.1. Iosif Iuliu Olariu (1859-1920).**

The first to enroll to the classes from Cernauti, from Caransebes Diocese jurisdiction was Iosif Iuliu Olariu. In the fall of 1880, Iuliu went to Cernauti to begin his theological studies, supported by Bishop Ioan Popasu. The courses were taught initially in Romanian and then was imposed to be taught in German, with one exception: The Practical Theology. There Iuliu found a atmosphere conducive to learning with dedicated theological teachers: Vladimir Vasile de Repta (Study of the New Testament), Eusebiu Popovici (The Universal Church History and Statistics), Emilian Voiutschi (Moral Theology), Vasile Mitrofanovici (Pastoral and Liturgical Theology), Juvenal Stefanelli (Catechetical), Constantin-Clemente Popovici (Church Law) and Isidor de Onciul (The Study of the Old Testament and Oriental languages)<sup>4</sup>. During this time he is financially supported by metropolitan Silvestru Morariu-Andreievici, who offered him accomodation to the metropolitan residence from their own income<sup>5</sup>.

A major role to the cultural formation of Iuliu Olariu had the University Library. The metropolitan Silvestru Morariu Andreievici explained in the letter addressed to Iuliu's parents, Parascheva și Iosif Olariu<sup>6</sup>, that the attendance to the Library had propelled him among the first students from Romania and Bukovina. He had an affinity for the future academician and metropolitan Vladimir de Repta, which certainly was a milestone in the New Testament research for the the young theologian.

<sup>4</sup> Pavel Vesa, *Protopop dr. Gheroghe Ciuhandu (1875-1947)*, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Aradului, Arad, 2011, p. 29-31.

<sup>5</sup> Vasile Gheorghiu, *Marele teolog Dr. Iosif Iuliu Olariu (1859-1920)*, Tipografia Glasul Bucovinei, Cernăuți, 1943, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> „*Studiază eminent, fiind după zisa profesorilor, cel dintâi între toți colegii săi din Bucovina și România...*”. Vezi *Foaia Diecezană*, an. XXXVI, 1920, nr. 47, p. 2.

Undoubtedly that the environment and the cultural climate of the University of Cernauti were most favorable. Therefore, Iuliu completed his theological studies in 1884, and then extend his knowledge in Lipsca (Leipzig)<sup>7</sup> and Erlangen<sup>8</sup> in Germany.

This was possible due to a scholarship supported by Bishop Ioan Popasu. In the next period Iuliu had new achievements. Driven by the succes he had in Bukovina, Iuliu acquired new knowledge in the New Testament<sup>9</sup> Studies area in Germany. Then he returned to Cernauti to support his PhD thesis<sup>10</sup>, on 30 March 1885. Fifty-eight years later Vasile Gheorghiu had emphasized „ Iuliu was the first student from Banat that reached the highest academic degree in the faculty of theology from Cernauti ".<sup>11</sup>



\* Foaia matricolă eliberată de Universitatea din Cernuți a teologului Iosif Iuliu Olariu. (Fig. 1)



<sup>7</sup> Direcția Județeană a Arhivelor Naționale Caraș-Severin (D.J.A.N.C.S.), Caransebeș, *Fond – Colecția de documente bisericești (Nicolae Cornean), Acte școlare ale lui Iuliu Olariu, profesor al Institutului teologic din Caransebeș*, pachet F 1, 1873-1885, f. 13-15.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 17.

<sup>9</sup> Ioan David, *Viața și opera lui Dr. Iosif Olariu*, în *Tribuna Graniței*, nr.3/1934, p. 4

<sup>10</sup> D.J.A.N.C.S., Caransebeș, *Fond – Colecția de documente bisericești (Nicolae Cornean), Acte școlare ale lui Iuliu Olariu, profesor al Institutului teologic din Caransebeș*, pachet F 1, 1873-1885, f. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Vasile Gheorghiu, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

\* D.J.A.N.C.S., Caransebeș, *Fond – Colecția de documente bisericești (Nicolae Cornean), Acte școlare ale lui Iuliu Olariu, profesor al Institutului teologic din Caransebeș, pachet F 1, 1873-1885. (Fig. 2)*

### 1.1.2. The attitude of Bishop Ioan Popasu towards the talented students.

Another aspect that caught our attention is the approach of Bishop Ioan Popasu towards the young theologians who had an insight in the development of theological studies from the historical Banat. The vision of Bishop Ioan Popasu on Caransebes Theological School was reflected in the attention he had for Iosif Iuliu: noted his potential, referred him to the Cernauti scholarship and to the local metropolitan, acted as a support during his studies in Germany and sustained him for the doctoral completion. Also, the Bishop had an impact on his integration as a temporary teacher on September 3, 1885 and then as a full time professor on December 21, 1889. Therefore, Iuliu had served with devotion and sacrifice Theological Institute for 35 years.

In addition, during his studies, Iosif Iuliu Olariu had a financial support from the Bishop, as his family did not have the financial possibilities offer him this. In this regard are kept in the archives few letters between the two (Olariu-Popasu), letters attesting the economic involvement of Bishop Popasu. This is another reason the Bishop Popasu remained as a great Bishop in the the consciousness of the followers.

### 1.2. Petru Barbu (1864-1941).

Attended first Orthodox religious school in Lugoj. He becomes a model student of the following schools: Hungarian School from Lugoj, High School Beiuș, High School Blaj and the Romanian High School from Brasov where he passed the maturity examination (baccalaureate). Then he joined the famous institution of higher education from Cernauti at the Faculty of Theology, where he completed his PhD studies in 1891. He specialized further on in the Universities from Germany and Austria: Graz and Berlin.

Through decision no. 2076/16 July 1892 he was appointed interim professor of Caransebes Theological Institute. An year later he promoted the examination tenure. As a theology professor in Caransebes taught the following subjects: Biblical Studies, Church Law, Church Accounting and History.

Due to his attitude towards the Hungarian government politics, Petru Barbu was forcibly retired at 30 April 1911, at just 47 years. His removal from the Church could also be a result of his adhesion to Iosif Traian Badescu's party, that was in opposition to Iosif Iuliu Olariu and Ionescu's brothers party. After the events of 1918, dr. Petru Barbu returns to church structures, acting as a director and teacher at the Theological Academy in Caransebes until 1937, when at the age of 73 years had retired.

### 1.3. Dimitrie Cioloca (1874-1963).

A graduate of Roman Catholic High School Piarist Timisoara (1886-1894), Caransebes Theological Institute (1894-1895), Faculty of Theology (1895-1900) and Philosophy (1900-1903) in Cernauti, Doctor of Theology at Cernauti (1905), Dimitrie Cioloca becomes then the employee of the "Drapelul" newspaper in Lugoj; " Viitorul Graniței" in Caransebes; "Fruncea" in Banat; "Justice" in Timisoara; "Romanian Telegraph" in Sibiu; "Novel" in Arad;

"Romanian Renaissance" in Cluj; "Romanian people" in Budapest and so on. He married Elena, the sister of the famous theologian Vasile Loichiță.

Eager to study since he was student at Cernauti, under the guidance of the great Nicolae Iorga, Dimitrie had taken the thirst for research from the distinguished Romanian historian. There are several numbers of „Foii Diecezane” paper that contain requests such as: „I purchase the whole collections or one paper of Albina (Vienna), Luminătoriul (Timișoara), Tribuna (Arad), Drapelul (Lugoj) și Renașterea (Caransebeș), in order to complete my partial collections, Dr. Dimitrie Cioloca, professor, Caransebes.”. In fact Professor Dimitrie Cioloca was recognized that holds one of the most impressive libraries in Banat.

After supporting the thesis, the 7th doctor from Cernauti Faculty of Theology, Demetrius Cioloca is recruited since 1905 by the Bishop Nicolae Popea to his administrative team. After Petru Barbu’s removal from the Institute, Dimitrie Ciloca is employed as of September 1, 1908 as a interim professor. Through decision no. 175 B, issued on February 7, 1909, he is tenured as a professor at the Department of Bible study, teaching the following subjects: Isagoge, Exegesis, Archeology and Morals.

#### 1.4. Iosif Traian Badescu (1856-1933)

"The last șagunist" as he called Nicolae Iorga, Iosif Traian Badescu was originary from Banat, and had university studies in philosophy and law at Pesta, Cernauti and Vienna. He becomes doctor in theology in June 10, 1889, at the University of Cernauti. Badescu was one of the most cultivated and appreciated Professor of New Testament from his era. After his ordination as a celibate deacon on 21 October 1890 and particularly after he becomes monarch (1902), remains the entire life in the service of the Church, holding various positions, step by step, up to the episcopate stage. Due to Romanian National Party support, in conjunction with the intrigues around his counter, remains unconfirmed as bishop of Caransebes, chair that will return Miron Cristea. For ten years (1909-1919) he had been very active in the diocese headed by the future patriarch, as a: professor at the Theological Institute for the New Testament Exegesis and Dogmatic disciplines; director of the school between 9 September, 1917 and September 1, 1918 (replacing Iosif Iuliu Olariu) etc. The decade '09 -'19 will propel Iosif Traian Badescu as one of the most inspiring theologians of the diocese, for which in the days before the Great Union of December 1, 1918, Miron Cristea prepared the documents and ordains him as the Archimandrite December 25, 1918.

In fact, the recent studies are proving that Iosif Traian Badescu led Caransebes Diocese after the death of Bishop Nicolae Popea, as the elected Miron Cristea let all episcopal administration to Archimandrite Badescu account.

### **Doctors of Theology in Bible Studies, from Arad Diocese, at University of Cernauti**

#### 2.1. Traian Putici (1865-1912).

Was born on February 17, 1865 in Lipova, where his father Darie was a teacher. He graduated the primary education in his hometown and the Greek Catholic secondary school in Beiuș, where in 1883 he took his baccalaureate. At the intervention of the Bishop Ioan Mețianu, Traian Putici was sent to the Faculty of Theology, University of Bucovina. After graduating

the theological school, he earned the doctorate in theology. Traian started to work as teacher on December 3, 1887, when the diocesan council appoints him as a professor of calligraphy and drawing and then for the church singing typical for the Theological Institute in Arad. On 25 July, 1889 he was elected as a professor at the department of Exegetical and Historical Theology and in 1891 was nominated as dean of Timisoara. As dean, he was concerned with restoring and building churches.

As dean, Traian Putici was involved in the ASTRA activities. Thus, these activities from Timisoara, was the first one organized in Timis. On October 6, 1898, the Central Committee of the Association entrusted Emanuil Ungureanu with the coordination of ASTRA activities meeting. This designation is the result of sustained efforts of the Romanian dean Traian Putici as a member of the Association. He died in 1912 at only 42 years.

### 2.2. Iustin Suci (1873-1953).

Born on February 8, 1873 in Șiștarovăț. He attended the primary school in his hometown, then went to schools in Radna Arad, Beiuș and Sibiu. On February 2, 1898 became doctor of theology at the University of Cernauti. Between 1900-1917 he taught biblical studies at the Theological Institute in Arad. As a cultural adviser published several biblical works.

### 2.3. Gheorghe Popovici (1889-1972).

Born on August 16, 1889 in Nerău, attending the high school "Andrei Saguna" in Brasov, and theology in Cernauti, where in 1916 was promoted as a Doctor in Theology. He taught biblical subjects at the Theological Institute in Arad. It was noted through his numerous articles published in " Biserica și Școala."

Therefore, all scholars discussed above, doctors in biblical theology at the University of Cernauti, returned to the bishops of Arad and Caransebes. Most have taught Bible studies, or at least contributed with relevant articles to the development of the press time.

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