

GALA GALACTION - AVATARS OF A UNIVERSITY CAREER**Florin Onica, PhD Student, "Babeş-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca**

Abstract:*The manner of selection and integration of academic elite is a privileged element of analysis, because it gives us the amount of reasons which terminate in cooptation or rejecting of an individual. These preconditions are quite ambiguous and they also canceled in practice the existence of an unique model of promotion. And the look has generated numerous conflicts that have taken place within the academic world, becoming true public „scandals”, polemical subjects which often has put in discussion the very validity of the principle of meritocracy. Therefore it seems necessary to distinguish for each case some of the mechanisms that have acted in this direction. „Case” Galaction becomes relevant in this context, in order to enlighten what it means becoming professor after 16 years of waiting and encourages questions and seek answers grievous to be made when it comes to personality of this magnitude.*

Keywords:*professor, education, academic career, history of elites, theology.*

Gala Galaction offers us the example of a man honest with himself, even with the risk of beseeming a misfit against the tendencies of the epoch he lived in. The characteristics of his inedited profile, often perceived as a mixture of contrasts, can be carved from the physical and spiritual portraits of the characters he created. Famous for his literary writings and especially for having translated the Bible, priest Gala Galaction (Grigorie Pişculescu) has had an interesting and lesser known academic career. Rebuilding the diverse sequential aspects of his collegiate path will contribute to the reconstruction of the whole, comprising the light and dark sides inherent to any biography. It is necessary to understand the mechanisms of each situation which led to obtaining a professorial chair, given that it there does not exist a unique advancement model¹.

Graduating from the doctorate with the „ausgezeichnet mit Stimmeenlinhelligkeit”² grade in 1909 has put an end to the long and sinuous course of his studies, which he started in 1886. It was the first time when the Faculty of Theology in Cernăuți gave this distinction to a

¹Lucian Nastasă, *Intellectualii și promovarea socială: (pentru o morfologie a câmpului universitar): sec. XIX-XX [Intellectuals and social advancement (for a morphology of the academic field): XIX- XX Centuries]*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Limes, 2004, p. 185.

² eminent unanimously

doctor in Theology in the Old Kingdom, who advanced in this way even the Primacy Metropolitan Athanasius. The circumstances of his formation are better delineated, considering the fact that the path of his life has been definitely decided after meeting Zoe Dimitriu Cocea, a monastery Sister at Agapia monastery, who was preparing to become a nun. It is hard to understand how the passion he had for this woman made him meditate upon monachism. It might be that the spiritual metamorphosis resulted after meeting her did not allow him to imagine that Sister Zoe, twelve years older than him, will someday renounce to the monastery life in order to become his wife. He considered himself ordained for a monastic life, given that the wish to become a monk followed him several years. He has even chosen his monachal name: *Galaction*, which he has written in the *Journal*, together with its meaning: “*Your monachal name shall be Galaction,/Be your life as white as milk*”.³

Being the embodiment of Doru Filipache from the novel entitled *La răspântie de veacuri* (*At the Cross of the Centuries*), the tumultuous life with songs, beer and spending time in cafés, common to the young students, did not attract him at all. He has spent his studentship sending carefully elaborated letters to Sister Zoe, which caused a bland idyll to blossom between them. His literary talent played an essential role in conquering the heart of the one who was preparing to become a nun⁴. Before graduating from faculty, in the fourth year of his university studies, he renounced to monkhood and to an eventual career as Archbishop and married to Sister Zoe Dimitriu Cocea⁵. The marriage proved to be an agent of stability for Gala Galaction, as he remained loyal to Theology and literature for the rest of his life, unlike his friend, Tudor Arghezi, who could not comply with the monastic life more than four years.

The administrator of the House of Schools, Mihail Popescu, had a considerable contribution to the completion of the last phase of this theological preparation. Thanks to his recommendation, two months before passing the second doctorate exam, Gala Galaction has been put in the function of ecclesiastical defender of the eparchies of Râmnic and Argeş by Spiru Haret, Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction of those times. This activity was meant to be a temporary one: “But my thought and that of my professors (especially those from

³Gala Galaction, *Jurnal [Journal]*, vol. I, Bucureşti, Editura Minerva, 1973, p. 284.

⁴*Idem*, *Jurnal. 1947-1952, Pagini inedite cenzurate [Journal. 1947-1952, Unpublished censored pages]*, Bucureşti, Editura Vestala, 2007, p. 10.

⁵ On 17 April 1903 they made the civil marriage in Bucharest. On 23 April 1903 they made the religious ceremony at the Agapia monastery.

Cernăuți) was that someday I will become a University Professor. Everything seemed to take me there.”⁶

Thirty years later, in 1940, referring to the first trial to become University Professor, Gala Galaction writes in his Journal: “The first time, there were plans to become professor at Bucharest, immediately after graduating from the doctorate in Theology, meaning after 1909, when the *New Testament* chair was being vacant.”⁷ The affirmation is surprising, given that the situation was completely different. The chair was occupied by PhD Ioan Cornoiu, who has graduated from the Faculty and the doctorate in Cernăuți. Between 1885 and 1913, besides Introduction and Exegesis to the New Testament, he also taught Encyclopaedia and Methodology of the Theological studies. He had public functions as well, as director in the Ministry of Cults and Public Instructions. Between 1909 and 1913 he also professed at the Nifon Seminary. He was absent from the Faculty of Theology between the 1st of November of 1910 and the 1st of May 1911 because of an illness. During this time, he has been supplied by professors Dumitru Boroianu and Ioan Mihălcescu⁸.

Even though he returned from Cernăuți with the strong decision to become priest⁹, the doctor in Theology, qualified with the highest distinction by the University of Cernăuți, did not obtain the vacant post at the church “Domnița Bălașa” (*Lady Bălașa*) of Bucharest. Primacy Metropolitan Athanasius Mironescu (1856-1931) later motivated his decision affirming that the young theologian was “too clever and too audacious”¹⁰. He became undesirable in the context of the ecclesiastic crisis which began in 1909 because he published a brochure very similar to a manifesto in favour of a law initiated by Spiru Haret. Conceived as a transformation of the synodal law in 1872, it promoted the idea of building the Supreme Consistory, with attributions which since then were common only to the Holy Synod. The intrusion of the political world into the ecclesiastical administration was obvious, since this Consistory was given rights to decide in all the material and administrative problems of the Church and all the emitted documents were to be signed by the Minister as well.

Planting himself on a autonomous position both towards the synodal transformation and the opponents’ party, Gala Galaction closely analyses the memoir of Bishop Gherasim

⁶Dumitru Caracostea, *Mărturisiri literare: organizate în anii 1932-1933 la Facultatea de Litere din București* [*Literary Confessions: organized in the years 1932-1933 at the Faculty of Letters in Bucharest*], București, RCR Editorial, 2013, p. 282.

⁷Gala Galaction, *Jurnal* [*Journal*], vol. II, București, Editura Minerva, 1977, p. 313.

⁸*Anuarul Universității din București pe anul școlar 1910-1911* [*University of Bucharest. Yearbook on 1911-1912*], București, Noua Tippografie Profesională, Dimitrie C. Ionescu, 1912, p. 3-4.

⁹Gala Galaction, *Jurnal* [*Journal*], vol. I, p. 633.

¹⁰Ioan Massof, *Gala Galaction despre el și despre alții* [*Galaction about it and others*], în *Rampa* [*The Ramp*], XIII, 1928, 25 decembrie, p. 1-2.

Safirin, reaching the conclusion that his vision is an ideal one, but, at the same time, *anachronic and inaccessible to our concerns*. Trying to render the shade between theory and imperfect life, he was not supporting the law for being the work of a governing party, but for the philanthropic and progressionist principle which it was representing. The situation in the other Orthodox Churches and that in the Mitropoly of Transylvania were concordant with this principle. He makes the apology of the new law with great freedom both in his way of thinking and in his attitude, talking in his name and on his honour: “I can well understand the gravity of my manifesto and its possible consequences. But not everybody is fated to die at home, with his head on the pillow.”¹¹

Together with retrogrades, who were dissentient when the law was approved, Tudor Arghezi and Nicolae Iorga were also supporting the Bishop of Roman county. Being a supporter of the autonomy of the traditional Church, the great Romanian historian has chosen to be on the side of Bishop Gherasim Safirin, whom he named “the holy Bishop”¹². In his manifesto, Gala Galaction agrees that N. Iorga is a large-hearted and courageous person, but adds that “No matter how varied and imposing his knowledge is, he knows little about Theology. And his errancy can lead to many others’ errancy as well”¹³. This remark was to transform the young doctor in Theology into “one of Nicolae Iorga’s injustices and phobias”¹⁴.

Being spread only by the author’s efforts, the manifesto has generated echoes in limited areas only, counting few adherents. The Primacy Metropolitan did not seem to be very enthusiastic at the initiative of the young theologian, with whom he had the chance to travel from Predeal to Bucharest in September 1909. On that occasion, Gala Galaction informed the Metropolitan about his wish to become a priest, advising him, at the same time, to forgive two of the professors from the Faculty of Theology¹⁵. Because of this, the clever and audacious doctor in Theology did not receive the priest ordination. Moreover, due to his sedulity, he was

¹¹Gala Galaction, *Apologia unei legi și mai presus de ea: a unui principiu* [Apology of a law and above it: a principle] în Gala Galaction, *Opere, vol. VI, Creștinism, Sionism, Socialism* [Works, vol. VI, Christianity, Zionism, Socialism], Ediție îngrijită, note și comentarii de Teodor Vârgolici, București, Editura Minerva, 2000, p. 65.

¹²Cunescu Gheorghe, *Gala Galaction* [Gala Galaction], Galați, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului și Dunării de Jos, 1989, p. 129.

¹³Gala Galaction, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

¹⁴Perpessicius, *N. Iorga și bilanșurile de fine de an* [N. Iorga and the final balance of the year], în *Cuvântul* [The Word], 18 ian 1931.

¹⁵Gala Galaction, *Jurnal* [Journal], vol. I, p. 642-643.

been compared to Don Quijote: “Don Quijote in Orthodox clothes; as restless as the old one, because of his great expectations”¹⁶.

After this failure, Gala Galaction has spent ten years as ecclesiastical defender, an activity which gave a positive course to his artistic destiny. The fact that he travelled a lot, as was the Minister’s delegate for making various researches on the people of the Church, reactivated his literary talent, which he tried hard to govern during those ten years of theological studies. The world he enters in will be transposed in his short stories and narrations. Given that he begins to write and to publish literature, the plans for an academic career have been neglected: “My theological projects and the works I had to do in order to obtain a chair in the University have slipped from the first place¹⁷ [...] past the process-verbaux of the researches and the Consistory meetings, an invincible rush of imagination, legends and graceful phantasms were mantling and overwhelming the poor ecclesiastical defender! [...] This is how in 1910, the barriers of my theology have fallen and a river of narrations and epopees has effused into the plain of Romanian literature... During this year I have written the following: *De la noi la Cladova* (*From here to Cladova*), *Gloria Constantini* (*Gloria Constantini*), *Lângă apa Vodislavei* (*Near the Water of Vodislava*), *În pădurea Cotoșmanei* (*In the Cotoșmana Forest*) and others¹⁸.

The administration of the Ministry did not seem to feel uncomfortable with the literary activity of the ecclesiastical defender. However, the representatives of the theological environment were having a different view upon such inclination, since he was doctor in theology and candidate to a possible university chair. After reading his writings, one of his protectors in the theological field remained deeply indignant: “This good friend of mine, a profound person and willing to see me well prepared in as many fields of knowledge as possible, has rent his hair when he read my short story *De la noi la Cladova* (*From here to Cladova*)! [...] I am anxious for you to publish that study on Saint Paul and to find your place in the University and you commit yourself with nonsense and with subjects unworthy of a theologian!”¹⁹

According to the confession he made in the Journal, dated on the 11th of August of 1921, the Council of the Professors the Bucharest Faculty of Theology has decided in 1913

¹⁶Lascăr Sebastian, *Don Quijote în strai ortodoxe* [*Don Quijote in orthodox garb*], în *Adevărul* [*The Truth*], XLIII, 1930, 25 ianuarie, p. 3.

¹⁷ In order to obtain a theological university chair Gala Galaction wrote and published the study *St. Paul in Athens*, in *The Romanian Orthodox Church*, XXXII, 1909, January, p. 1108.

¹⁸D. Caracostea, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

¹⁹*Ibidem*, p. 284.

that the most righteous candidate to occupy the *Exegesis of New Testament* chair, remained vacant after the death of professor Ioan Cornoiu on the 13th of June of 1913, would be Gala Galaction. The young doctor in Theology was to receive a three year preparation scholarship in Athens, Germany and Russia. But the Government changed. At the House of Churches came a Bishop in order to occupy the function of administrator. It was him who has received the professorial chair as well, since he needed no special preparation: “the professors from Theology observed, with intimate satisfaction, that they can wisely save money and time, giving apart the scholarship, the toilsome three years preparation and me. The Archbishop did not need any preparation. He was the exceptional man to whom you could consign any theological chair!”²⁰ He was talking about Stănescu Vartolomeu Băcăoanul, who has been entitled Professor at the Faculty of Theology of Bucharest through the Royal decree no. 7016 on the 20th of December of 1913. He was occupying the *Exegesis of the New Testament* chair, *Introduction into the Books of the New Testament, Biblical Hermeneutics and Greek Grammar*²¹.

Without foreseeing in the near future the chance to obtain a university chair or a parish, during a travel he makes in 1914, he tries to become a teacher in a high school in order to obtain more stable subsistence. Surprisingly, the deserved subject was not religion, but German language. The love for another woman was deterring him from following the life he has chosen fifty years ago. In this period, he falls in love with Ileanuța, with whom he had an extra-conjugal relation for almost six years. On the 26th of March of 1919, he writes in his Journal: “There are five years since I love this child who has sacrificed herself for me, body and soul. There are five years since I think about the fact that I cannot reach any conclusion from by actual marriage, which ended sixteen years ago...”²²

Obtaining a German teacher position in a high school in Bucharest would not have to be difficult for Gala Galaction, given that his ex-classmate from Saint Sava High school, I. G. Duca, was leading the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction from the 4th on January of 1914. However, the first two trials have failed. The Minister motivated that it was too late, since the position has been already promised to someone else. The third time, Secretary General of the Minister of Public Instruction, I. Simionescu, has promised him the vacant

²⁰Gala Galaction, *Jurnal [Journal]*, vol. II, p. 91.

²¹*Anuare Universitare, Universitatea din București 1915/16-1923/24 [Yearbooks, University of Bucharest]*, București, Tipografiile Române Unite, 1924. p. 45.

²²Gala Galaction, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

position at the Constructions School “Mihai Bravu” of Bucharest. However, Minister Duca preferred someone else this time as well²³.

Having no other alternative, he dedicated his energy in writing texts with moralistic value, rather than aesthetic. Both before and after World War I, he had a prolific journalistic activity; he collaborated to various publications, mostly laic, but theological and Church related as well. He has published various articles, feuilletons, book reviews, memorials, essays, interviews, travelling notes, theological studies, meditations and letters. On the 25th of October of 1918, he noted in his Journal: “I write almost daily. My acquaintances are surprised and compliment me – some with a certain concern, others with a kind of jealousy – for such literary vim. I smile and I say: I write because I need to; I write because I need to bring daily at home potatoes, butter, apples, cheese, candles and sewing thread! I write because I can hardly do with my salary as ecclesiastical defender for ten of the thirty days a month has”²⁴.

The Romanian administration, re-established in Bucharest once the World War I completed, begun the retributions against those suspected for having cooperated with the German authorities between 1916 and 1918. The writers and the journalists who have collaborated in a way or another with the newspapers and the magazines published in the Capital during the German occupation have been judged and condemned together with the politicians who have formed the guarantor government. Primacy Metropolitan Conon Armănescu-Donici has been obliged to abdicate on the 1st of January of 1919 because during the war, on the 24th of July of 1917, he has signed a demobilizing manifesto²⁵ to the Romanian army and advised it to cease the attacks on the Germans and their allies. As a consequence, the Romanian Government considered him to be a traitor. Entitled *Chemeara Mitropolitului Primat (The Call of the Primacy Metropolitan)*, this document was a very compromising one for the churchmen in Bucharest²⁶. This is why the agreements between the hierarchs who remained in the occupied area and those who took refuge in Iași (and who have organized themselves in an ad hoc Synod of the “still free Romania”) have broken for a period of time.

²³Dima Alexandru, *Scrisori către G. Ibrăileanu [Letters to G. Ibrăileanu]*, București, 1982, Editura pentru Literatură, p. 13-14.

²⁴Gala Galaction, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

²⁵Two copies of *The Call of the Primacy Metropolitan* are found in Archives Lupu Kostaki: NBR Saint-Georges fund, CXI, File 2 f. 29 and CCCLXXX, File 1, f. 157

²⁶Lucian Boia, „Germanofilii”. *Elita intelectuală românească în anii Primului Război Mondial [„Filo Germans”]. Romanian intellectual elite during the First World War*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2010, p. 86.

Gala Galaction has been accused of filogermanism and of having made pacts with the occupying armies, being considered to be the author of the manifesto parachuted behind the Romanian front in Moldova. He did write the draft of the manifesto, asked by Virgil Arion, but it has been later modified and the final author of this document is unknown²⁷. At Court-Martial, where Gala Galaction has been heard, the ex-minister, Virgil Arion, assumed all the responsibility of the Manifesto.

Although he has not been condemned, the new Minister of Public Instruction, PhD Constantin Angelescu, asked him to resign from the function of ecclesiastical defender because of his negative attitude, meaning pacifist and progerman²⁸. Besieged by poverty, he reached the extreme limits of resistance and tautness: “Here I am, abominably poor [...] with no clothes, no shoes, no shirts [...] And above all this – the crown of national disqualification!”²⁹

The adversities did not discourage him, and continued to fight. He was forced to survive only from his publicist activity for several years. Between 1919 and 1922, he established a record in the Romanian press, given that he collaborated with more than twenty-five publications. More than the pains caused by the war, having been obliged to leave his function and all the material vicissitudes, what hurt him the most were the sentimental aspects: “I confess before God that the only bristle I feel is the one of my sentimental situation. [...] What digs and threatens me is the tragedy of my situation. How can I leave Zoe, since I bounded to her through the four children we have? How can I exclude Ilenuța from my life... when I feel her so deeply engrained in my heart!”³⁰

The denouement of this drama occurred on the 18th of December of 1919, after a medical operation to which Ilenuța did not resist. On the 1st of January of 1925, he writes in his Journal: “We were both slaves of the sin and death came to release us. [...] We were defying God and people with our relationship. [...] Five years have passed since then... Maybe there will pass twenty as well – if the Lord shall give me the chance to pay in small rates my debt –, but I will forever feel this debt heavy and unpaid...”³¹

Deeply moved by this lost, he dedicates with an overwhelming passion to a new translation of the Bible into Romanian, as he had informed Ibrăileanu: “from 1920 on, I shall

²⁷Gala Galaction, *Journal [Journal]*, vol. II, p. 34-42.

²⁸Gala Galaction, *Jurnal. 1947-1952, Pagini inedite cenzurate [Journal. 1947-1952, Unpublished censored pages]*, p. 84.

²⁹Gala Galaction, *Jurnal [Journal]*, vol. II, p. 74.

³⁰*Ibidem*, p. 75.

³¹*Ibidem*, p. 153.

either do great things, or I shall stop writing.”³² After reaching the conclusion that the old translations were incomplete or written in a difficult language, he began to publicly expose this idea, which he supported in many publications³³. He managed to convince himself: “As I was writing article after article and preaching that it would be a pity to keep on postponing the new translation of the Bible, I contrived to convince someone to begin working on it. That person was I.”³⁴ The initial plan was to translate two hundred and fifty pages a year of an English translation of a thousand pages from which the deuterocanonical books were missing. Helped by the business man Aristide Blank, he began translating the New Testament in September 1920.

By dedicating himself to this hard work of translating the Holy Book of Christianity written by the Israelite prophets, evangelists and apostles, Gala Galaction began to empathise with the Jewish nation, chosen by God to receive His embodied Son, Jesus Christ. He pleaded for pacific coexistence between the Romanians and the cohabitant nations, based on closeness, understanding and friendship. He supported this idea with biblical quotations regarding the Christian and human duty to love and help strangers. Thanks to Christian spirituality, he got to sincerely love the Jewish nation and to support Zionism. His articles published in *Mântuirea (The Salvation)* (1919-1922), *Lumea evree (The Jewish World)* (1919-1920), *Știri din lumea evreiască (News from the Jewish World)* (1924-1925) and *Adam (Adam)* (1929-1939) are proves of this inclination; he there militates for fighting against anti-Semitism and for understanding and supporting the renaissance dream of the Israel State.

He has held conferences at the Jewish Universities pertaining to the Union of Native Jews (U.N.J.) and to the Union of Romanian Jews (U.R.J.), which have functioned in Bucharest between 1919 and 1922. He has taught History of Romanian Literature and Philosophy and held conferences about Eminescu, Cragiale, Coșbuc and Dobrogeanu-Gherea at the U.N.J.’s community centre³⁵.

Being that he was chosen Bishop of Râmnicul Noului Severin on the 17th of March of 1921, Vartolomeu Stănescu has renounced to the professor chair at the Faculty of Theology of Bucharest and the *Exegeza Noului Testament (Exegesis of New Testament)* chair remained

³²Dima Alexandru, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

³³ Especially in the newspaper *The Renaissance* has published several articles: *We do not read the Bible* (no. 59, August 25, 1918), *Interest for Bible grows* (no. 87, September 22, 1918), *Around a biblical issues* (no. 122, October 27 1918) etc.

³⁴Gala Galaction, *Biblia mea englezească și traducerea Noului Testament [The English Bible and the New Testament translation]*, în *Viața românească [The Romanian Life]*, an. XVI, nr. 11, noiembrie 1924, p. 218.

³⁵Cunescu Gheorghe, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

vacant. Being continually preoccupied by improving the quality of the Romanian theological education, Primacy Metropolitan PhD Miron Cristea has supported Gala Galaction's candidature and recommended him to the Ministry of Instruction in June 1921, describing him as "well prepared for exegesis and biblical study"³⁶. The Primacy Metropolitan's action surprised Gala Galaction, making him draw out from the theological absenteeism in which he was stagnating since 1913: "And now, besides my work of translator paid in rates, look at me bound to choose a subject from the New Testament adequate for being developed in a way of: *habilitationstheses*."³⁷

Before becoming a professor, in the autumn of 1922, when he was 43 years old, he decided to enter the clerical order, which provoked a certain surprise to his friends and relatives: "It was a taught which was to materialize after twenty-five years of preparations, expectations, postponements, changes of mind, but ceaseless and abiding ascension"³⁸. Maybe his precarious material situation has been as well a reason for taking this decision, since he did not have, at that time, any stable function. However, he has fully assumed priesthood, indentifying himself with it from all points of view. He was so Oriental in his traditional Orthodox priesthood, that, when he went to Jerusalem, he noticed that he was being "more Oriental than the native Orientals!"³⁹ Although he had beard before, after becoming priest, "my beard and hair did not meet the barber and the hair dresser's art, not even for adjustments on special occasions"⁴⁰. After becoming priest, he never changed the cassock with civil clothes. Nobody saw him dressed in other clothes neither at home, nor when he was spending time with his family or friends, nor when he was travelling or participating to literary or academic meetings.

The exam for occupying the *Exegesis of New Testament* chair has been announced on the 1st of February of 1927. From 1921 until September 1924, it has been supplied by Dragomir Demetrescu, and starting with the 1st of October of 1924, by I. Popescu-Mălăiești⁴¹.

³⁶Arhiva de Stat București, Fond Ministerul Instrucțiunii, Dosar Nr. 156/1920-1924, f. 30-31 [Bucharest State Archives, Fond Ministry of Education, File no. 156 / 1920-1924, f. 30-31].

³⁷Gala Galaction, *Jurnal* [Journal], vol. II, p. 92.

³⁸Gala Galaction, *Scrisori către Simforoza* [Letters to Simforoza] (IV), în *Viața românească* [The Romanian life], an. XV, nr. 7, iulie, 1923, p. 62.

³⁹*Idem*, *Scrisori către Simforoza – În pământul făgăduinței* [Letters to Simforoza - In the promised land], București, 1930, p. 153-154.

⁴⁰Cunescu Gheorghe, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

⁴¹*Anuare Universitare, Universitatea din București* [Yearbooks, University of Bucharest] 1915/16-1923/24, București, Tipografiile Române Unite, 1924, p. 45.

Gala Galaction has been the only candidate⁴² who has gone in for the exam⁴³: “On the 6th, 7th and 8th of October, I have presented before an examination commission some proofs of theological science – because I am, dear God, candidate for the vacant *Exegesis of New Testament* chair...”⁴⁴

The commission has been constituted ad-hoc by: I. Popescu-Mălăești – dean of the Faculty of Theology of Bucharest –, His Grace, Platon Ciosu Ploieșteanul – Bishop of Râmnic and Noul Severin –, I. Mihălcescu, D. Boroianu, N. M. Popescu, PhD Vasile Gheorghiu from Cernăuți and the president was His Grace, Vartolomeu Stăneascu. The commission, unanimously and by preces-verbal, named Gala Galaction professor at the Exegesis of New Testament chair⁴⁵. For the decision to be valid, according to the then law regarding university studies, it was needed for the University Senate to confirm it. As he was waiting for its decision, he has not published anything at all for three months – October, November and December –, renouncing in this way to the income which helped his family subsist: “Wise people have advised me (and I foolishly listened to them): Calm down for a while... Stop writing annoying articles and publishing them in Jewish newspapers...”⁴⁶

The decision of the Senate has been communicated three months after the exam. During the meeting held on the 15th of January of 1926, the University Senate of Bucharest, with eight votes against, five for and two abstinences did not approved Gala Galaction and Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban to be professors at the Faculty of Theology of Bucharest. According to the process-verbal, those who votes for the two candidates were C. Rădulescu-Motru, N. M. Popescu, D. Boroianu, I. Mihălcescu and I. Popescu-Mălăiești. Those voted against were: Rector E. A. Pangratie, Toma Ionescu, C. Stoicescu, G. G. Mironescu, D. Hurmuzescu, C. Moțaș, D. Dumitrescu. Those who abstained from voting were C. Chiricescu and V. G. Ispir⁴⁷. The reasons of his rejection were his attitude during the war and the German occupation and the moral responsibility regarding the Manifesto of Primacy Metropolitan Conon⁴⁸. Moreover, there was a group of “nationalist” students manifesting against Gala

⁴²Arhiva de Stat București, Fond Ministerul Instrucțiunii, Dosar Nr. 480/1925, f. 7 [Bucharest State Archives, Fond Ministry of Education, File no. 480/1925, f. 7].

⁴³Arhiva de Stat București, Fond Ministerul Instrucțiunii, Dosar Nr. 419/1925, f. 56 [Bucharest State Archives, Fond Ministry of Education, File no. 419/1925, f. 56].

⁴⁴Gala Galaction, *Jurnal [Journal]*, vol. II, p. 157.

⁴⁵Arhiva de Stat București, Fond Ministerul Instrucțiunii, Dosar Nr. 480/1925, f. 20 [Bucharest State Archives, Fond Ministry of Education, File no. 480/1925, f. 20].

⁴⁶Gala Galaction, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

⁴⁷*Ibidem*, p. 159.

⁴⁸Arhiva de Stat București, Fond Ministerul Instrucțiunii, Dosar Nr. 480/1925, f. 2-3 [Bucharest State Archives, Fond Ministry of Education, File no. 480/1925, f. 2-3].

Galaction in the University Square, near the window where the members of the Senate were deliberating, accusing him of embracing Zionism and of having written for money in “Mântuirea” (*The Salvation*), a Zionist newspaper, and then broke the windows of the editorial offices of the newspapers the candidate was collaborating with⁴⁹. After the failure of Gala Galaction and Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban, the theologian students have protested by a three-day strike. Some newspapers have also talked about the two, but their arguments were not very convincing⁵⁰.

Helped by Ion Petrovici, Minister of Instruction and his ex-class mate at St. Sava high school⁵¹, in the autumn of the same year, he was named locum tenens of the *Exegesis of New Testament and Biblical Theology* chair of the Faculty of Theology of Chişinău, which has then been established as a constitutive part of the University of Iaşi. The other professors were: Vasile Radu (*Vechiul Testament (The Old Testament)*), Toma Bulat (*Istoria bisericească universală (History of Universal Church)*), Constantin Tomescu (*Istoria Bisericii Române (History of Romanian Church)*), Cicerone Iordăchescu (*Patrologie (Orthodox Patrology)*), Valeriu Iordăchescu (*Morală (Ethics)*), Ioan G. Savin (*Teologie Fundamentală (Fundamental Theology)*), Iuliu Scriban (*Omiletică (Homiletics)*) and Nichifor Crainic (*Literatură religioasă modernă (Modern Religious Literature)*)⁵². Gala Galaction has been named Director of the theological boarding house from Chişinău. In 1928, he was named titular professor of the *Exegesis of the New Testament and Biblical Theology*⁵³, being as well Dean of this Faculty between 1928 and 1930⁵⁴.

In 1929, the commission of the National Literary Award, headed by poet Octavian Goga, decided to award Gala Galaction, but they changed their minds two days later. This decision was taken because of the intervention of a person who everybody feared of and to whom the translator of the New Testament was being a *persona non grata*. On the 29th of November of 1940, Gala Galaction was noting in his Journal: “Nicolae Iorga has honoured me for forty years with a growing enmity. [...] Iorga could not forgive me! [...] After

⁴⁹*Tulburările studenţeşti de ieri. Studenţii împotriva numirii a doi profesori [Yesterday student disorders. Students against the appointment of two teachers]*, în *Dimineaţa [The Morning]*, 17 ian. 1926, p. 1.

⁵⁰Gala Galaction, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

⁵¹Ion Petrovici, *Prin meandrele trecutului: evocări inedite, pgini memorialistice [Through the meanders of the past: unpublished evocations, memorial pages]*, Bucureşti, Editura Cartea Românească, 1979, p. 236-246.

⁵²Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române [Romanian Orthodox Church History]*, vol. III, Bucureşti, Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1994, p. 454.

⁵³*Anuarul Universităţii din Iaşi [The Yearbook of the University of Iaşi] 1926-1927 şi 1927-1928*, Iaşi, Institutul de Arte Grafice şi Viaţă Românească, 1929, p. 145.

⁵⁴*Ibidem*, p. 180.

receiving the National Award for Literature, he has fought against me for ten years and has systematically discarded me... It was necessary for the sovereign to intervene for the scandal to stop and Arghezi's and my literature to be put in the light of the national recognition."⁵⁵ In the 40s, Iorga's discord was still so intense, that, when he saw a portrait of Gala Galaction on a wall at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, he put it down and trampled on it⁵⁶.

In 1929, in order to avoid the numerous travels to Chişinău, he asked to be displaced at the Faculty of Theology of Bucharest, where the *Exegesis of New Testament, Introduction into the Books of the New Testament, Biblical Hermeneutics and Grammar of the Greek Idiom* chair was vacant. The Council of the Professors of the Chişinău Faculty and the University Senate of Iaşi approved the transfer⁵⁷, but the Council of the Professors of the Bucharest Faculty, where N. Iorga was Rector, was against it⁵⁸. The Dean of the Bucharest Faculty of Theology and at the same time the titular of the *Exegesis of New Testament, Hebrew Language, Biblical Archaeology and Introduction into the Books of the New Testament* chair was I. Popescu-Mălăieşti. He was supplying the *Exegesis of New Testament, Introduction into the Books of the New Testament, Biblical Hermeneutics and Grammar of the Greek Idiom* since the 1st of October of 1924⁵⁹.

In 1940, after Soviet Russia annexed Bessarabia, the Faculty of Theology of Chişinău conjoins with that of Bucharest. Gala Galaction registers in Journal this event as well: "The today newspapers (Sunday, the 4th of August of 1940) inform about my displacement to the Faculty of Theology of Bucharest, together with my chair."⁶⁰ This note indicates that he was going to teach in Bucharest but, at the moment, the titular of that chair was being Haralambie Roveţa. But the *Old Testament* chair was being vacant since 1939, when its titular, Fr. PhD Professor Ion Popescu Mălăieşti retired. The situation was difficult, since his colleague from Chişinău, Fr. PhD Professor Vasile Radu, who had specialized studies in Paris and who was being translating from Arabian and Hebrew, has also been transferred to Bucharest. Given this situation, Gala Galaction asks himself: "by which means did Minister Caracostea manage to

⁵⁵Gala Galaction, *op. cit.*, p. 345-346.

⁵⁶*Dialog cu Elena Galaction [Dialogue with Elena Galaction]*, în *Observator Cultural [Cultural Observer]*, Nr. 260, martie, 2005.

⁵⁷*Anuarul Universităţii din Iaşi [The Yearbook of the University of Iaşi] 1926-1927 şi 1927-1928*, Iaşi, Institutul de Arte Grafice şi Viaţă Românească, 1929, p. 42.

⁵⁸Arhiva de Stat Bucureşti, Fond Ministerul Instrucţiunii, Dosar 533/1929, f. 24-25, 28-29 [Bucharest State Archives, Fond Ministry of Education, File 533/1929, f. 24-25, 28-29].

⁵⁹*Universitatea din Bucureşti [University of Bucharest]*, 1928-1929, Bucureşti, Tipografia „Bucovina”, I. E. Toroutiu, 1930.

⁶⁰Gala Galaction, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

decide transferring the professors from Chişinău to Bucharest.”⁶¹ On the first day of 4th of August he has written in his Journal about the inner torment he was facing at that moment: “I don’t know exactly if I should feel joy or fear regarding this mutation from Iaşi to Bucharest [...] I ask myself as well if this ministerial decision or this exceptional law is enough for this to happen.”⁶²

The unexpected death caused by a bronchial edema of Professor Vasile Radu, his colleague from Chişinău, which occurred on the 4th of September of 1940 did not offer him the certainty that he will remain in Bucharest. It seemed that once with the changing of the Minister of National Education, Cults and Arts, Dumitru Caracostea, the royal decree, by which the transfer was made, for “exceptional merits”, will be annulled. While he was waiting for the decision of Minister Traian Brăileanu he participates though – on the 1st of October of 1940 – to a meeting of the Council of the Professors from the Faculty of Theology of Bucharest: “What an ironical situation! Among these colleagues, who have obtained a chair in the Faculty thanks to some political party or to some academic interests conducted by Iorga, Toma Ionescu, Dragomir, etc., among these colleagues with master and collar, I was the only one without master and collar, representing the occasional nomad, today still titular at the Faculty of Theology of Bucharest and maybe tomorrow resent to Iaşi.”⁶³

Gala Galaction has occupied the *Exegesis of the Old Testament* chair at the Faculty of Theology of Bucharest from 1940 until 1947. Overwhelmed by how the situation changed, Gala Galaction has confessed in his Journal the following: “At first I was become professor at Bucharest immediately obtaining the PhD, meaning in 1909, when the *New Testament* chair was being vacant. Then, 16 or 17 years ago, I had an exam in order to obtain this chair, enthusiastically and unanimously approved by all the members of the examination commission. The University Senate, conducted by Toma Ionescu, rejected me... This was the irony of ironies! [...] The third time, when I was being a titular professor at Chişinău, I asked, according to the law, to be displaced at Bucharest and to occupy the similar vacant chair. Mr. Iorga was, by that time, Minister and priest Popescu-Mălăieşti the Dean of the Faculty of Theology. They have answered me that the Faculty of Theology of Chişinău was not equal to that of Bucharest! But today, when I only have three years of academic career left, I am brought to Bucharest to animate and instruct our young Levites! [...] It is so sad for someone

⁶¹*Ibidem.*

⁶²*Ibidem.*

⁶³*Ibidem*, p. 324.

to enter in his rights only after 30, 20, 16 years! It is like you would finally meet the one whom you have so much loved when you were young and now you find her gray-haired!”⁶⁴

Evan though he was being kept for a long while at the suburbs of the social and ecclesiastical life because of the “unappeased enmity of some powerful and proud people”, that who has spiritualized the Romanian prose has remained optimistic, realizing that “God’s plans are always to our good and salvation”⁶⁵. Thanks to hard work and perseverance, he has finally obtained what he was wishing to: becoming a professor, the National Award for Literature, having been accepted at the Romanian Academy etc.

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⁶⁴*Ibidem*, p. 313.

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