

Important Hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church Who Studied at the Spiritual Academy in Kiev

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Abstract:

The present study describes briefly the intellectual, ecclesiastical and scholarly evolution of some of the graduates of the kieviene Academy in the XIX-XX century, emphasising, especially, the major contribution of their intellectual and theological formation in kieviene Academy and, also, the ecclesiastical and cultural contacts they have cultivated with Russian Church and theology. Thus, are presented aspects from the life and work of great ecclesiastical personalities as for exemple Scriban Filaret (1811-1873), Melchizedek Stefanescu (1822-1892), Sylvester Bălănescu (1838-1900), Nicodemus Munteanu (1864-1948), Visarion Puiu (1879-1964) in a painting that evokes the close cooperation between the Romanian and Russian Orthodox churches in past centuries.

Keywords:

Academy of Kiev, Romanian students, Filaret Scriban, Melchizedek Stefanescu, Sylvester Balanescu, Nicodemus Munteanu, Visarion Puiu.

Among the Romanian students who studied at the Spiritual Academy in Kiev, to whose organization and development the Romanian noble prince Petru Movilă (Peter Mogila), Metropolitan of Kiev, Galicia and All Russia between 1620-1646, played a decisive role, stood out a number of personalities who held prestigious hierarchical seats, up to the Patriarchal Seat, within the Romanian Orthodox Church. In fact, the relations between the Romanian Church with the Eastern Slav Orthodoxy have known a significant constant development and the Romanian

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presences in Kiev and the positive continuous note the Ukrainian Church held among the Romanian hierarchy confirm this fact.

In what follows we will refer to several former students of the Spiritual Academy in Kiev, who have distinguished themselves as prestigious hierarchs of our Church.

Hierarch Filaret Scriban (1811-1873). He was born in Burdujeni (now a suburb of Suceava) in 1811, in the family of the priest economo Ioan Artimescu and his wife Pelagia, born Bogatu, who died young. Filaret received the name Scriban when he was a student at the Academy of Iasi, from his teacher Bob Vasile Fabian, being afterwards taken on by his brother Neophyte and other relatives¹. Between 1830-1837 he learned at the Vasilian School from the Three Hierarchs and at the Mihailean Academy in Iasi, and, for his outstanding qualities, during this period he was in charge as substitute teacher of French at the Normal School of the Three Hierarchs, Grammar, Arithmetic and Catechism to the pupils of the *beginner classes*, Rhetoric, Poetry and Mythology Elements at the Mihailean Academy in Iasi. He also helped cupbearer G. Săuleascu during his Course of History².

Wishing to complete his theological studies abroad, the Moldavian Metropolitan Veniamin Costache sent him at the Spiritual Academy in Kiev where he stayed from 1839 until 1842. He heard the renowned professors Ivan Scvortev and Jacob Amfiteatrov, father of the Russian homiletics. He was a colleague of Makarios Bulgakov, the future Metropolitan of Moscow, and Alexei Novoselov, the future bishop of Ecaterinoslav. He made many friends among teachers and students, being well known that he maintained correspondence with Innocent Borisov Archbishop of Odessa, former rector of the Academy, when he began his studies, and with his successor, Demetrius Muretov, who also came on the seat of Odessa.

Intending to write an Ecclesiastical History of the Romanians he sought and collected bibliographic and documentary material from several Russian libraries and archives, convinced that he will find many information about the Romanian Church.

Aspiring to receive a magister's degree in theology, he asked Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow the monastic tonsure. With the permission of the Metropolitan Veniamin Costache, Metropolitan Filaret ordained him into monk in the Cave of St. Anthony from the Great Lavra of Kiev and then deacon and hieromonk in Kiev.

¹ George P. Samureanu, "Familia Scriban (The Scribans)", in *Revista literară (The Literary Magazine)*, no. 31, 32, 33 and 34 and from 1890.

² Filaret Scriban stood out in this period as a master of the pen, constituting several lectures and didactic or literary works, some of them printed, others remained in manuscript. See M. Păcurariu, "Arhiereul Filaret Scriban (Hierarch Filaret Scriban)", in vol. *Studii de Istorie a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (Studies of History of the Romanian Orthodox Church)*, vol. I, Academy Publishing, Bucharest, 2005, p. 112.

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In April 1842 the Spiritual Academy in Kiev declared him *magistru sacrosanctae Theologiae humaniorumque litterarum*, being the first Romanian declared magister in theology by a theological academy in Russia³.

Returned home, in September 1842, was appointed professor and rector of the Seminary of Socola, a position he held for 18 years (until 10 November 1860), followed by his brother Neophyte Scriban. Shortly after, he was raised to the rank of Archimandrite, with the right to wear cross and miter during services. Also, he was entrusted the hegumeness/ abbotship of Socola Monastery, a position he held until 1862⁴. He organized the seminary on two cycles, with 8 years of study, the pupils being recruited from 12 “Catechetical Schools” founded by him. A new educational reform, concerning the seminary, was carried out by Scriban Filaret in 1851. It consisted not only in improving and expanding the educational process with new disciplines and advanced study programs, but also in forming an elite teaching staff. For this purpose he sent the best graduates of the seminary to study in Kiev, Petersburg, Athens, Halki and Paris, and who, upon their return, received important positions within the Seminary and the Church. In Kiev he sent Hierodeacon Melchizedek Ștefănescu, who returned with a magister’s degree in theology and letters, became Bishop of Roman and active member of the Romanian Academy⁵. Due to the large number of professors of theology formed with his support, we can speak of a true “school” of Filaret Scriban⁶. Also, between the years 1843-1858, 1075 students graduated from Socola Seminary⁷.

Endorsing a thorough theological training, Filaret Scriban taught at the seminary some of the most important disciplines such as: Dogmatis, Ethics, Canon Law, Fundamental Theology, Rhetorics, Homiletics, Hermeneutics and History of the Country. For this he was concerned about the compiling of suitable textbooks, being a pioneer in this field also. Of course, for the composition of the numerous educational works, printed or remained in manuscript, he turned to the textbooks used during his studies in Kiev. For the Ecclesiastical History of the Romanians, which he intended to write extensively, but approaching the end of life has published only a compendium, he turned to his bibliographic documentary

³ *Ibidem*, p. 114. Veniamin (Pocitan), “Episcopul Melchisedec ca scolar în Seminarul de la Socola (Bishop Melchizedek as a Student in the The Seminar from Socola)”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română (Romanian Orthodox Church)*, no. 5/1932, p. 314.

⁴ The original documents are in the Romanian Academy Library, Ms. 735, f. 24, 28 and 32.

⁵ Veniamin, patriarchal curate, “Studenti teologi moldoveni la Academia spirituală din Kiev (Moldavian Theology Students at the Spiritual Academy in Kiev)”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română (Romanian Orthodox Church)*, year LXIII (1945), p. 562.

⁶ A list of those sent by Filaret Scriban studying abroad is at the Romanian Academy Library, Ms. 738, f. 124-125.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

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material gathered from the libraries and archives in Kiev⁸. It is worth mentioning that he has made a new translation from Russian to the *Orthodox Confession of the Apostolic and Catholic Eastern Church*, written by Metropolitan Peter Mogila, published at Neamt Monastery, in 1844, and which was used as textbook of Dogmatics at the Seminary of Socola.

In 1860, being established the University from Iasi, which had also the first Faculty of Theology in the Romanian space, hierarch Filaret Scriban⁹ was appointed professor for the Study of the Old Testament, Biblical Archaeology and Hebrew Language, while being also Deputy Rector, until 1863. In 1864 he retired permanently from all functions and lived until his death (March 23, 1973) as retired bishop at his vineyard in Bucium, near Iasi. He was laid in state in the Church of the Monastery Talpalari, in Iasi (March 25, 1873), and buried in the church he founded in Burdujeni. In his will, the vineyard would remain to the church in Burdujeni and his library (488 books, of which 130 in Russian) was given to the Seminary in Socola¹⁰.

For his merits in the development of the Orthodox theological education and his erudition particularly known in the Russian space, hierarch Filaret Scriban was elected honorary member of the Society of History and Antiquities in Odessa in December 15, 1858¹¹.

Bishop Melchizedek Ștefănescu (1822-1892). Originally from Gârcina, Neamt County, the future bishop Melchizedek Ștefănescu was born on December 12, 1822 in the family of the priest Peter and Anastasia Ștefănescu, as the second of their 11 children¹². After graduating from the Seminary in Socola, where he distinguished himself especially in front of the Rector Filaret Scriban, hierodeacon Melchizedek¹³ was sent for studies at the Spiritual Academy in Kiev where he ar-

⁸ Details about the literary work of Filaret Scriban, see M. Păcurariu, *op. cit.*, p. 117-120.

⁹ At the request of Prince Grigore Ghica of Moldavia and in recognition of his merits, the Metropolitan Sofronie Miculescu ordained him holder bishop, with the name Stavropoleos, even since 1852, but he was never offered a bishop seat, although he fully deserved it. Cf. M. Păcurariu, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

¹⁰ See the will, in C. Erbiceanu, *Viata si activitatea si scrierile Prea Sfintitului Filaret Scriban, tratată din punct de vedere religios, moral si literar (Life and Work and Writings of His Grace Filaret Scriban from Religious, Moral and Literary Points of View)*, Bucharest, 1892, p. 90-93.

¹¹ Diploma in original at the Romanian Academy Library, Ms. 735, f. 137-139.

¹² C. Mosor, "Episcopul Melchisedec Ștefănescu – 150 de ani de la nastere (Bishop Melchizedek Ștefănescu – 150 Years after His Birth)", in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română (Romanian Orthodox Church)*, no. 3-4/1972, p. 335.

¹³ On July 10, 1843 he delivered in Latin the festive speech at the end of courses, speech dedicated to the Rector Filaret Scriban. On December 24, 1843 he was tonsured a monk and given the name Melchizedek, and on August 16 1844 was ordained deacon in the Church of "Transfiguration" of the Monastery Socola, by Metropolitan Meletios, cf. Al. Ioniță, *Episcopul Melchisedec*

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rived on September 4, 1848¹⁴. He was especially concerned about the study of the Old Testament, but arduously studied all branches of Theology and Philology. On May 27, 1851 he was declared by the Academy of Kiev “magister in Theology and Letters” based on the thesis entitled: “Interpretation on Prophet Isaiah VII, 1-8”¹⁵. The paper made such a great impression among the professors from Kiev, that one of them remarked that “after Filaret Scriban, Melchizedek is the most gifted of all Romanian students who have studied at the Kiev Theological Academy or other higher schools of theology in Russia”¹⁶. To this is added the fact that the living memory of the presence of Melchizedek in Kiev was marked by placing his picture alongside the great hierarch Peter Mogila, in the Academy Hall¹⁷.

Just as in the case of Filaret Scriban, with the approval of Metropolitan of Iasi, Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev ordained Melchizedek as hieromonk on October 3, 1851 in Lavra Pecerskaja from Kiev.

Returning home with such a thorough training, he worked as a professor at the Seminary in Socola, teaching, in addition to the subjects related to the study of the Old Testament and Dogmatics, Church History, Homiletics and Latin Language, while taking care of new textbooks for the Seminary, thereby enhancing the editorial program initiated by the Rector Filaret Scriban. For his efforts, he was awarded the rank of Protosinghelos and then Archimandrite, on January 12, 1856¹⁸.

Between 1856-1860 he acted as professor and rector of the Seminary of Husi this school knowing during his leadership its most fruitful activity¹⁹. It is also

Ștefănescu al Romanului. Viata si activitatea (1822-1892) (Bishop Melchizedek Ștefănescu of Roman. Life and Activity, 1822-1892), Bucharest, 1992, p. 23.

¹⁴ N. Georgescu-Tistu, “Procurările de carte ale episcopului Melchisedec si biblioteca sa (The Concern for Books of Bishop Melchizedek and His Library)”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română (Romanian Orthodox Church)*, no. 11-12/1963, p. 1147.

¹⁵ Diploma in original which is *State Archives in Iasi*, col. Documents, pack no. 334/16, was published for the first time by Sc. Porcescu, “62 de ani de la moartea Episcopului Melchisedec (62 Years after the Death of Bishop Melchizedek)”, in *Mitropolia Moldovei si Sucevei (Metropolitan of Moldova and Suceava)*, no. 5-6/1954, p. 71-72, and republished by the same author, “Episcopul Melchisedec. 80 de ani de la moartea sa (Bishop Melchizedec. 80 Years after His Death)”, in *Mitropolia Moldovei si Sucevei (Metropolitan of Moldova and Suceava)*, no. 5-6/1972, p. 383.

¹⁶ N. Georgescu-Tistu, *op. cit.*, p. 1148.

¹⁷ N.M. Popescu, “Episcopul Melchisedec. La 50 de ani de la moartea lui (Bishop Melchizedec. 50 Years after His Death)”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română (Romanian Orthodox Church)*, no. 1-2/1942, p. 173.

¹⁸ C.C. Diclescu, *Episcopul Melchisedec. Studiu asupra vietii si activității lui. Cu un portret si excerpte din corespondență (Bishop Melchizedec. Study on His Life and Work. With a Portrait and Excerpts from His Correspondence)*, Bucharest, 1908, p. 9-10

¹⁹ Veniamin (Pocitan), “Din corespondenta lui Melchisedec (From the Correspondence of Melchizedek)”, in *Buletinul Episcopiei Husilor (Huși Bishopric Bulletin)*, IX, 1933, no. 5, p. 36, col. I.

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worth mentioning that, though he declined the portfolio of Minister of Cults and Public Education offered by Prince Al. I. Cuza, on April 30, 1860²⁰, archimandrite Melchizedek, as a member of the Superior Council of Instructions, appointed on June 18, 1860²¹, could notify the government on the measures to be taken to improve the state education system, including the theological one, even drawing up a curriculum for the future Faculty of Theology in Iasi.

His scholarly and supporting the theological education activity was not interrupted during 1860-1864, when he secured the lieutenancy of the vacant seat of the Diocese of Husi, on December 30, 1862 being raised to the rank of Bishop with the title Tripoleos²². This position offered him the opportunity to explore the archive of more than 300 years of the bishopric and to compile a comprehensive historical work about the Bishopric of Husi entitled: *The Chronicle of Huși Bishopric with such a Name taken from the Documents of the Bishopric and Other Monuments of the Earth*, published in Bucharest, in 1869 and based on which he was elected member of the Romanian Academy²³.

With a rich teaching, pastoral and missionary experience, Melchizedek Ștefănescu was appointed lieutenant (December 1864) and then titular bishop (May 11, 1865) of the newly created Lower Danube Bishopric²⁴. As he did in other similar situations, Bishop Melchizedek urged for the establishment and the proper organization of a Seminary in Izmail for the the training of the clergy of the new diocese, equipping it with all the necessary and constituting a well trained teaching staff, some of the teachers, as Gabriel Musicescu's case,²⁵ being recruited from the students sent to study abroad²⁶.

In the last part of his life he has been appointed to lead the Bishopric of Roman, being elected bishop on February 22, 1879, and ministering until the end of his life

²⁰ Gh. Dincă, "Episcopul Melchisedec Ștefănescu, apostol al Unirii Principatelor și mare erudit al vremurilor (Bishop Melchizedek Ștefănescu, Apostle of the Unification of the Principalities and Great Scholar of the Times)", in *Glasul Bisericii (The Voice of Church)*, no. 1-2/1981, p. 169; Sc. Porcescu, *Roman Bishopric*, Roman, 1984, p. 300.

²¹ Cf. Veniamin (Pocitan), "Din corespondența... (From the Correspondence...)", p. 12.

²² M. Păcurariu, "Listele cronologice ale ierarhilor Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (Chronological lists of the Romanian Orthodox Church Hierarchs)", in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română (Romanian Orthodox Church)*, no. 3-4/1973, p. 340.

²³ C.C. Diculescu, *Episcopul Melchisedec (Bishop Melchizedek)*, p. 11. Eftimie, Bishop of Roman and Husi, *Episcopul Melchisedec Ștefănescu. Viața și împlinirile sale (Bishop Melchizedek Ștefănescu. Life and His Achievements)*, Roman, 1982, p. 63.

²⁴ Royal decree of appointment, at the *State Archives in Iasi*, col. Documents, pack no. 334/19.

²⁵ He was sent to study music at Petersburg by Bishop Melchizedek, cf. M. Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (Romanian Orthodox Church History)*, vol. III, 3rd edition, Iasi, 2008, p. 146.

²⁶ A se vedea, E. Drăgoi, *Ierarhi și preoți de seamă la Dunărea de Jos, 1864-1989 (Hierarchs and the Important Priests, from the Lower Danube, 1864-1989)*, Galati, 1990, p. 29.

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(May 16/29, 1892)²⁷. It was the eparchy he knew, its history being exposed in his work *Chronicle of Roman and Roman Bishopric, Composed According to Romanian National and Foreign Documents, Published and New*, published in two parts, in Bucharest, 1874-1875. He got involved here also in all sectors, but with a particular attention to the Seminary, for which he formed an elite teaching staff, whose building was renovated and enlarged, whose staff and students were supported morally and financially. The seminar was to train industrious and honest priests, because the Bishop declared at the moment of his enthronement that he needed “honest, devout, hardworking and God-fearing Church ministers... I can not stand drunks, adulterers, the rogues and scoundrels. Who thinks he can help me in serving the Lord in such condition can stay with me; who does not, should immediately leave”²⁸.

All of his pastoral mission and household portrays Melchizedek Stefanescu as an important bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Church, but what presents him as an erudite scholar is his work as a professor and mentor of the Seminaries in Socola-Iasi, Husi, Izmail-Galati, Roman and that of author of works of great value and textbooks. Whether he worked or translated from Russian, the number of textbooks for the theological education is impressive and their value recognized even nowadays. Thus, under his authority many papers were published²⁹, mentioning here only the didactical ones: *Liturgical Manual* (1853; 1862), after Ivan Scvortev; *Church Tipic* (1854); *Dogmatic Theology of the Catholic Orthodox Eastern Church* (1855); *Brief Introduction in the Course of Theological Sciences* (1856); *Orthodox Catechism* (1857), translation after Philaret of Moscow; *Introduction to the Holy Books of the Old and New Testament* (1860); *Pastoral Theology* (1862) and others, and remained in manuscript: *Special Introduction in the Books of the New Testament, Biblical Archeology, Patrology, Canon Law*, etc.³⁰

For his pastoral and literary merits, he was elected member of the Romanian Academy, Honorary Member of the Kiev and Petersburg Theological Academies, of the Russian Archaeological Academy and of the Cultural Greek Cabinet³¹.

²⁷ Sc. Porcescu, “Episcopul Melchisedec. 80 de ani... (Bishop Melchizedec. 80 Years...)”, p. 384.

²⁸ F. I. Gotcu, “Amintiri despre marele Episcop Melchisedec (Memories about the great Bishop Melchizedek)”, in *Chronica Romanului (Chronicle of Roman)*, III, no. 3/1926, p. 78.

²⁹ A list of them in C.C. Diculescu, *Episcopul Melchisedec (Bishop Melchizedek)*, p. 149-145. See also Sc. Porcescu, “Episcopul Melchisedec. 80 de ani... (Bishop Melchizedec. 80 Years...)”, p. 394-398. Al Ionitã, *Episcopul Melchisedec Ștefãnescu (Bishop Melchisedec Ștefãnescu)*, p. 66-83 and 124-134. M. Pãcurariu, *Dictionarul Teologilor Români (Dictionary of Romanian Theologians)*, 3rd edition, Sibiu, 2014, p. 646-647. C. Mosor, *Episcopul Melchisedec Ștefãnescu... (Bishop Melchisedec Ștefãnescu...)*, p. 342-346

³⁰ M. Pãcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (Romanian Orthodox Church History)*, p. 145, and Al. Ionitã, *Episcopul Melchisedec Ștefãnescu (Bishop Melchisedec Ștefãnescu)*, p. 69-73.

³¹ P. Mihail, “Din corespondenta episcopului Melchisedec (From the Correspondence of Bishop Melchizedek)”, in *Biserica Ortodoxã Romãnã (Romanian Orthodox Church)*, no. 5-6/1959,

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On May 16/29, 1892, the worthy scholar Bishop Melchizedek Ștefănescu, an outstanding student and a magister in Theology and Letters of Kiev Theological Academy, passed into eternity, at only 69 years old; He distinguished himself as a scholar and bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Church who, in his turn, sent talented students at Kiev, such as Silvestru Bălănescu, the future Bishop of Huși. In his will he left the funds of “Melchizedek Foundation” founded from his fortune capitalized at 150,000 Lei, to give an annual scholarship of 1000 Lei to a student at the Academy of Kiev. From this scholarship benefited the priests Ludovic Cosma, Victor Gervescu, Ioan Tincoca, the professors Vespasian Erbiceanu, Constantin Nazarie, Ștefan Berechet, Nicolae Filip, the future Patriarch Nicodim Munteanu and others who have distinguished themselves as great personalities of Romanian culture and spirituality³².

He was buried in the garden of the Bishopric of Roman, subsequently being raised over his tomb a beautiful chapel in the traditional Romanian style³³.

Bishop Silvestru Bălănescu (1838-1900). He was another student at the Kiev Spiritual Academy, who crowned with honor and erudition the episcopal seat from Huși. Born on July 6, 1838 in the village Pângărați, Neamt County, he was noted for his zeal for the teachings by the monk Caesarius from the monastery Bisericiani, who also directed him to the monastic life in 1854, receiving the name Silvestru. On the recommendation of the abbot, he entered the Seminary in Socola, from which he graduated in 1862. He was noticed by the Rector Filaret Scriban and ordained deacon in 1859, serving both at Socola and Three Hierarchs in Iași, and attending the courses of the Faculty of Theology during the years 1863-1866. Then he was ordained priest at Socola where he taught Church History and Universal History. Wanting to improve his religious knowledge, he went to the Theological Academy in Kiev where, after five years of study (1868-1873) obtained the title of candidate (bachelor) in Theology³⁴.

p. 493-612; *Idem*, “Legăturile culturale ale episcopului Melchisedec cu Rusia. Corespondența din anii 1849-1892 (Cultural Ties with Russia of Bishop Melchizedek. Correspondence from the Years 1849-1892)”, in *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei (Metropolitan of Moldova and Suceava*, no. 3-4/1961, p. 261-296; † Eftimie, “La o sută de ani de la alegerea și înscăunarea la Roman a Episcopului Melchisedec. 1879-1979 (A Hundred Years after the Election and Enthronement in Roman of Bishop Melchizedek. 1879-1979)”, in *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei (Metropolitan of Moldova and Suceava*, no. 9-12/1979, p. 740.

³² G. Cocora/ Sc. Porcescu, “Un veac de la înființarea Academiei; clerici ortodocși din Moldova în acest înalt for de cultură (A Century after the Establishment of the Academy; Moldavian Orthodox Clergy in This High Forum of Culture)”, in *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei (Metropolitan of Moldova and Suceava*, no. 9-12/1968, p. 690-692.

³³ M. Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (Romanian Orthodox Church History)*, III, p. 149.

³⁴ Sc. Porcescu, *Episcopia Husilor. Pagini de istorie (Bishopric of Huși. Pages of History)*, Roman, 1990, p. 100.

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Returned home, he was appointed professor at the Seminary in Roman and a year later professor and, for a short period of time, director of the “Central” Seminary in Bucharest. Raised to archimandrite (March 1877), he was then appointed bishop (September 16, 1879) entitled “Ploiesteanul” (i.e. from Ploiesti). He was trusted the Department of History of Dogmas, at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, being also its dean (1882-1886). On December 10, 1886 he was elected bishop of Husi where he served until 1896. He died on November 25, 1900 and was buried in Belu Cemetery from Bucharest³⁵.

Besides the teaching and pastoral activities as bishop of Husi, with multiple achievements, Bishop Silvestru Bălănescu wrote several works, studies and articles collected in one volume³⁶, but the most valuable achievements are the two works translated from Russian: *Church Law Course*, by I.S. Berdnicov, professor of theology at Cazan, Bucharest, 1892, and *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, in 5 volumes, of Bishop Silvestru of Canev, from which the first 3 volumes were translated in collaboration with two other Kievan graduates, C. Nazarie and N. Filip, the paper being published entirely in Bucharest, 1896-1906³⁷. He also funded the publication in 1896 of the *Apologetics* of N.P. Rojdestvenschi, translated by C. Nazarie.

As we can see, another student with scholarship in Kiev honored this institution and distinguished himself in the cultural-educational and missionary pastoral life of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Patriarch Nicodim Munteanu (1864-1948). The most representative Romanian hierarch who studied with a scholarship at the Theological Academy in Kiev was the Patriarch Nicodim Munteanu. He distinguished himself, among others, also as a prolific translator from Russian, making known to the Romanian theologians the works of some outstanding authors of Russian theology, internationally recognized.

Nicolae (Nicodemus) Munteanu was born on December 6, 1864 in Pipirig, Neamt County. He graduated in the academic year 1889/1890 the Seminary “Veniamin Costache” from Iasi, enjoying the direct and personal support of the Moldavian Metropolitan Iosif Naniescu. With the support of Metropolitan Iosif, he went to the Spiritual Academy in Kiev because as he himself confessed, the Metropolitan considered knowing Russian very helpful, because “for the Orthodoxy, Russian literature is a true richness, source of creation and purely Orthodox edu-

³⁵ Cf. the reportage signed by G., “P.S. Silvestru, episcop de Husi (H.G. Silvestru, Bishop of Huși)”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Romană (Romanian Orthodox Church)*, no. 9/1900, p. 817.

³⁶ Father Coman Vasilescu he edited them in the volume: *Silvestru Bălănescu, episcopul Eparhiei Husilor între anii 1886-1896 (Bishop of the Eparchy of Huși between 1886-1896)*, Bucharest, 1896.

³⁷ Cf. M. Păcurariu, *Dictionarul Teologilor Români (Dictionary of Romanian Theologians)*, p. 53.

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cation³⁸. Along with Constantin Nazarie, sent to studies by Bishop Melchizedek Ștefănescu of Roman, he attended the courses of the Kievan famous professors, graduating from the Academy in 1895.

Since 1894, he entered the monasticism at Neamt Monastery, being named Nicodemus and ordained deacon. Returned home, he was appointed preacher at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Iasi (1895) and ordained priest in 1896. Invested with the rank of Archimandrite (1898), he was named curate of the Metropolitan Church of Moldova, position held until 1902. Being summoned to Galati, he was charged with leading the Seminary “St. Andrew” and the vicarship of the Episcopate of Lower Danube (1902-1909), and then was elected vicar bishop of the Moldovan Metropolitan with the title “Băcăuanul” (i.e. from Bacău). Between 1912-1923 he was the Bishop of Husi, then he retired to the Monastery Neamt, being its abbot between 1924-1935. At Neamt Monastery he founded a monastic Seminary, endowed with a new building, and re-equipped the printing where were printed over a hundred books. The most intense activity at Neamt was that of translator from Russian and author of several works. From 1935 he was called to the Metropolitan of Iasi and between 1939-1948 he was on the highest rung of the Romanian hierarchy, that of Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church. He maintained good relationship with the Russian Orthodoxy, leading the Romanian delegation to visit Moscow between October 25 and November 5, 1946 and receiving the first visit to Romania of the the Russian delegation headed by Patriarch Alexy between May 29 and June 11, 1947. He passed away on February 27, 1948 and was buried in the Patriarchal Cathedral from Bucharest³⁹.

The greatest achievement of Patriarch Nicodim was his scholarly activity, his name being linked to dozens of titles either translations or personal writings. In the context of 400 years jubilee of the foundation of the Spiritual Academy in Kiev, remarkable in shaping the personality of this former scholarship student are the translations from Russian through which the Romanian theology greatly enriched⁴⁰.

He translated and published works from the following authors:

Innocent Archbishop of Odessa: *6 Sermons on Nature* (Bucharest, 1904; Chisinau, 1924; Neamt, 1931); *51 Sermons on Lent* (Bucharest, 1909; Neamt, 1932); *Sermons on Royal Feasts* (Neamt, 1933); *Sermons on Virgin Celebrations*

³⁸ Veniam (Pocitan), *Studenti teologi moldoveni la Academia spirituală din Kiev (Moldavian Theologians, Students at the Spiritual Academy in Kiev)*, p. 566.

³⁹ M. Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (Romanian Orthodox Church History)*, III, p. 379.

⁴⁰ On the prints of Nicodemus from Neamt Monastery, see I. Ivan/ Sc. Porcescu, *Neamt Monastery*, 1981, p. 216.

Revd. Prof. Nicolae Chifăr

(Neamt, 1933); *Sermons about the Fall of Adam, Sin, Death and Resurrection* (Neamt, 1939).

Sergius Archbishop of Vladimir: *Apologetical Sermons* (Bucharest, 1905; Neamt, 1932).

Father Constantin Stratilatov: *26 Sermons on Christian Faith or the Interpretation of the Creed* (Bucharest, 1912); *23 Sermons on Christian Hope or Clarifications on Prayer "Our Father" and the 9 Beatitudes* (Chisinău, 1938); *75 Catechetical Sermons for the People. Interpretation of the Creed, Our Father, the 10 Commandments and the Beatitudes* (Neamt, 1932).

Father Grigorie Petrov: *The Footsteps of Christ* (Bucharest, 1908-1909; Chisinău, 1926; Neamt, 1943); *Life in the Seminary* (Bucharest, 1909; Neamt, 1943); *A Model Shepherd* (Bucharest, 1918; Sibiu, 1925; Neamt, 1938).

Father Serghie Cetfericov: *Paisius, Abbot of the Monastery Neamt* (Neamt, 1933 and 1940-1943).

A.P. Lopuhin: *Biblical History. The Old Testament*, 4 volumes (Bucharest, 1944-1945); *Biblical History. The New Testament*, 2 volumes (Bucharest, 1947).

He also translated from Russian from the English theologian F.W. Farrar: *The First Days of Christianity*, 3 volumes (Neamt, 1938); *Life of Jesus*, 2 volumes (Neamt, 1944-1945); *The Life and Works of St. Paul*, 3 volumes (Neamt, 1941-1943); *The Life and Works of the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church*, 3 volumes (Chisinău and Neamt, 1932-1935).

He translated 5 editions of *The New Testament*, 2 editions of *The Psalter* and he made a great contribution on the translation of the two synodal editions of *The Bible* (1936 and 1944). He was co-editor of *The Little Bible* (1913) and of *The Illustrated Bible* (1936)⁴¹.

Among the Romanian hierarchs who studied at Kiev we include *Metropolitan Visarion Puiu* (1879-1964), graduated of the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest (1900-1904) and specialization studies in Kiev (1907-1908). His theological training allowed him to become the director of the Seminary in Chisinau (1918) and Exarch of the monasteries in Bessarabia (1918). As hierarch he held the Seat of Arges (1921-1923), that of Hotin with headquarters in Balti (1923-1935) and the seat of the Metropolitan of Bukovina with the office at Chernivtsi (1935-1940).

The theological training in Bucharest and Kiev, knowledge of Russian language and of the Orthodox tradition allowed him to carry out a broad scholarly and pastoral activity among the Romanians from Bessarabia and Bukovina and investigate important documents, in Russian, for the Ecclesiastical History of the

⁴¹ M. Păcurariu, *Dictionarul Teologilor Români (Dictionary of Romanian Theologians)*, p. 434; *Idem, Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (Romanian Orthodox Church History)*, III, p. 379-380.

Important Hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church Who Studied in Kiev

Romanians, some of which being published (*Bessarabian Documents*, 2 volumes, Chisinău, 1928-1928, in partnership with St. Berechet, another Romanian student with scholarship in Kiev) and others being useful in preparing a monograph about *Monasteries in Bessarabia*, Chisinău, 1919.⁴²

From the aforementioned it follows that the relations of friendship and cooperation between the Romanian Orthodoxy and the Eastern Slavonic one have permanently registered highs, and the continuous presence of Romanian scholars as students at the Spiritual Academy in Kiev contributed to raising the prestige of the Romanian Church and Theology through hierarchs and professors of high value. On this anniversary we wish you, with abundance of appreciation, an abundant academic activity in the future from which the students from Sibiu to benefit, within an institutional partnership, an extensive cooperation being desirable, especially now, when we need a strengthening and defense of Orthodoxy on a high level academic Theology.

Translated in English by Ana-Monica Cojocarescu,

⁴² M. Păcurariu, *Dictionarul Teologilor Români (Dictionary of Romanian Theologians)*, p. 542-543.