

WLC 2016: World LUMEN Congress. Logos Universality Mentality Education Novelty 2016 |  
LUMEN 15th Anniversary Edition

## The Ecclesial Periodic „Revista Teologică” (1883-1887)

Vasile-Lucian Goldan<sup>a\*</sup>

\* Corresponding author: Vasile-Lucian Goldan, willy\_1019@yahoo.com

<sup>a</sup>Faculty of History, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Iasi, Romania, willy\_1019@yahoo.com

### Abstract

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2016.09.51>

The Archbishop Iosif Naniescu's personality (1875-1902) marked the cultural-missionary activity developed in Iasi at the end of the nineteenth century. So, this activity was developed and incorporated a wide area, in which the Moldavian bishop was directly involved. In this regard, it should be noted that under the guidance and expense of the bishop, in Iasi was edited, between 25 March 1883 and 18 January 1887, as an ecclesial periodic "the Theological Journal". This typographical activity financially supported by the hierarch, was coordinated by two teachers of the Seminary "Veniamin Costache" from Iasi, Constantin Erbiceanu respectively Demetrescu Dragomir. This paper is intended to be a systematic and objective exposure of the publication "Theological Journal", of its importance and role in cultural- missionary gear of the end of XVIII<sup>th</sup> century in the Archdiocese of Iași. The Archbishop Iosif gave this magazine both educational-scientific and apologetic feature. Although the activity of the bishop was criticized by various groups of agitators, some of them priests, the bishop does not use in its pages sharp assaults, but presents in detail the situation of those who have grievances, by pointing with tangible evidence that the role of these agitators was just to destabilize and divide the church. The activity of this ecclesial periodic ends along with the lack of its funding by the Archbishop Iosif Naniescu.

© 2016 Published by Future Academy [www.FutureAcademy.org.uk](http://www.FutureAcademy.org.uk)

**Keywords:** "Revista Teologică"; Archdiocese of Iasi; Archbishop Iosif Naniescu; ecclesial periodic; apologetic paper.



## 1. Introduction

The end of the nineteenth century is marked in the capital of Moldavia by the missionary activity of the Archbishop Iosif Naniescu (1875-1902), activity that was developed and incorporated a wide area, in which the Moldavian bishop was directly involved.

In this regard, it should be noted that under the guidance and expense of the bishop, in Iasi was edited, between 25 March 1883 and 18 January 1887, as an ecclesial periodic the „Theological Journal”. This typographical activity financially supported by the hierarch, was coordinated by two teachers of the Seminary „Veniamin Costache” from Iasi, Constantin Erbiceanu<sup>1</sup> respectively Demetrescu Dragomir<sup>2</sup>, both being laypeople (non-ordained).

This paper is intended to be a systematic and objective exposure of the publication "Theological Journal", of its importance and role in cultural- missionary gear of the end of XVIII<sup>th</sup> century in the Archdiocese of Iași and also is intended to answer on the following questions: *What was the reason of this periodic apparition?*, *What was the impact produced in the period concerned?* and *Why is this publication important nowadays in making a historical research?*

Given the fact that the treated theme is preponderantly historical, we must not forget that this publication has an eminently theological feature. For this reason the bibliography includes theological and historical material.

## 2. Section I. The Year of Publication and the Need for the Periodical

Iosif Naniescu's interest for studying the sources, the manuscripts and their publication in journals is still encountered during the time he was an abbot at the monastery „Găiseni".

At that time the Archimandrite Iosif Naniescu published in the „Journal of the Carpathians" a study - *About the tomb of Stroe Buzescu* - Article written in 1861 which highlights the future Metropolitan passion for researching of the historical sources. Thus according to him it shows that in eight years at abovementioned monastery he visited and researched countless times about the hermitage Stănești.

Also Naniescu is the one who's making a detailed description of this small monastic settlement - built in the mid sixteenth century, specifically in 1537 - and highlights the fact that it was dedicated to the Holy Land from Orient and the Greek monks who collected the income left it to decay.

The „Theological Journal"<sup>3</sup> was intended to be since its debut - „The need of preaching and of the establishment of Theological Review" article signed by Constantin Erbiceanu in the first number on Friday, April 25, 1883 - as an apologetic response of the Orthodox Church in general and of the Archdiocese of Iași in particular, a „reply" to the pamphlet newspaper „The Awakening" – „alleged organ of the clergy layman" (\*\*\*, 1885a) - printed in Iasi by a group of priests defrocked (stopped by a

---

<sup>1</sup> Confident and collaborator of the Archbishop Iosif, born in Iasi in 1838, son of the priest John Ionescu, attended both the Faculty of Theology and Letters in Iasi and Athens. In 1899 he became a member of the Romanian Academy.

<sup>2</sup> Professor of Patrology and Biblical Studies of the Theological Seminary in Iasi, born in Bucharest in 1852, he studied theology in Athens and philosophy in Berlin and Munich. In 1891 he received his PhD in Philosophy and Letters at the University of Leipzig.

<sup>3</sup> „Revista Teologică" - ecclesiastical weekly journal published under the patronage of I.P.P.S. Father Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava, D.D. Iosif Naniescu, Constantin Erbiceanu and Demetrescu Dragomir Professor at the Veniamin Seminary in Iasi, March 24, 1885 - March 23, 1886, Tipo-lithography H. Goldner, Hall Street, Iași.

hierarch, through the decision of the priest consistory<sup>4</sup> from certain church services- especially from the celebration of the Holy Sacraments - for various disciplinary offenses) under the direction of George Mârzescu, professor at the Faculty of Law at the University of Iasi (the father of the next mayor of Iasi Gheorghe Ghe. Mârzescu).

In the pages of the journal the Archbishop himself published several papers and has contributed on re-editing another older ones (*Viața Sfântului Nifon* of Gavriil Preotul) (Păcurariu, 2008: 143), especially of those works which he owned in manuscript - many of them were inherited from the Bishop Chesarie of Buzau. Also in the Sunday newspaper numbers were published the most beautiful and well-reasoned sermons held in the Metropolitan Cathedral, by various priests from Iasi and beyond.

A number of this journal cost 15 bani, one-year subscription for those living in the country was 9 lei and for those abroad, one-year subscription cost 12 lei.

The number of the pages wasn't fixed, it was variable and depending on the events treated, but mostly it can be seen an attempt of the editorial team to limit to a total of only eight pages. Each issue of the journal has on the last page the address of „Mr. Dragomir Demetrecu at the Holy Metropolitan of Iasi”.

Sunday newspaper has a wide and extremely varied content; subjects covered in its pages include topics for discussion or reflection with historical, linguistic, social and even political feature.

Thus it contains religious meditations, sermons on Sundays in the weeks related, but what is very important is that it presents countless translations. These translations were made after ancient manuscripts and after other books, many of them in Greek - "manuscripts from the library of Bucharest State Seminar" (\*\*\*, 1885b) as well as from German and French books and magazines.

The journal contains also articles with countless historical (\*\*\*, 1885c) content, many of them showing different episodes in the history of the Romanian country, the history of orthodox nations - notably Greece and the Russian Empire - and the history of the Orthodox Churches. We find in the newspaper countless references to the Daco-Roman origins of the Romanian people and the continuity of the Orthodox faith in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic territory.

Another important thing to note is that in the numbers 13, 14 and 26, from 1885 are presented in a detailed way the obtaining of Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church, the preliminary discussions, the problems encountered by the Romanians and last but not least it pays tribute to the Royal Family for their support offered to the Romanian Orthodox Church.

In the pages of this magazine we find nowadays: the program / the schedule of this seminar and of the exams - matter and examiner - categories destined to explain the dogmas - for example we have no. 50 from the newspaper since March 2, 1885, p.7 / 399 - heading dedicated on explaining the "Orthodox Catechism"<sup>5</sup>, outstanding events that took place in the city of Iasi, both religiously and culturally-

---

<sup>4</sup> The ecclesiastical or clerical Court - usually consisting of three members, two priests and a layman / secular and under the tutelage of the Metropolitan or of the local bishop. Members of this consistory were usually people experienced (older priests) and often had also studied law. The role of this "court" inside the Church was to prevent and resolve possible misbehaviour, both of lay priests, and those of the monks. During its functioning "the Church court" had often deeply apologetic character. Thus by this institution, the Church protects the priests with deviations, which are most often moved to distant parishes where no one knew anything about their past.

<sup>5</sup> Religious catechism - or the "Orthodox teachings of faith" is a handbook that explains in a systematic and objective manner the whole teaching of the Orthodox faith.

political and not least philosophical-theological meditations. Many of these meditations were published in various editions of the newspaper, but they were tied separately in a volume published in 1885 in Iasi (Scalțuni, 1885: 1), by the two editors of the magazine.

### **3. Section II. The "Theological Journal" – an Apologetical Publication**

The Archbishop Iosif gave this magazine both educational-scientific and apologetic feature. Although the activity of the bishop was criticized by various groups of agitators, some of them priests, the bishop does not use in its pages sharp assaults, but presents in detail the situation of those who have grievances, by pointing with tangible evidence that the role of these agitators was just to destabilize and divide the church. In this case, a good example is the article which makes known the present situation from field of the roman catholic priest. One of these examples is met in the number 38, of the "Theological Journal" dated on 8 December 1885.

In the above mentioned number is presented to us the situation of the priest Anton Maria Canevi from the village of Prăjesci, Upper Bistrita, Bacau County. The example is taken by chance but wishes to highlight the so-called precarious financial situation of a priest.

Thus, the priest in question has in care, in addition to his parish - mentioned above - still eight villages and four churches. He „takes care also of the catholic residents from the villages Buheciu, Satu Nou, Bogdănești, Bacau county's. His entire parish counts 937 heads of households, and 3,365 souls. Father Anton has under his jurisdiction, eight church-singers and seven Bell-Ringer - their total salaries amount raises up to the 3963 lei per year - of which the priest receives 2426 per year and the church-singer and the bell-ringers share the rest of the amount, respectively 1537.

The land of the Church has around 69 „fălci”, of which 36 for the priest, and the rest for the church-singers and bell-ringers, which they shared equally.

The servants of the priest (scutelnicii) throughout the parish are 11, they are paid by the inhabitants and serve for the observation of the working field and for the removal of the priests salary after the commitment. Fees imposed for religious services such as baptisms, weddings, funerals, created a high income for the priest" (\*\*\*, 1885d). We find another form of response against the attacks of the Church in the pastoral of the Archbishop Iosif which he sends to all the priests in his diocese in 1882, during the Great Feast of the Nativity. These words, published also in the "Theological Journal", brings strong criticism against his opponents and against the Orthodox Church, gathered behind the journal "The Awakening". Thus the Metropolitan says: "They went up to post toward the derision of laws, even the apology of the assassin through the bullet, preaching the murder of the prelates - because in their hand is filed secular canonical authority of the church. Therefore in the number 6 of their work, from 15 of the past June in 1882, by publishing a prepared speech to be delivered at the funeral of a Bishop who died in 1875, declared by them a despot and a robber of the clergy layman and by threatening us with the bullet, reminds us of a goddamn archimandrite Climent, here in Iași, above the former Metropolitan of Moldavia Calinic Miculescu, and also the tragic death through the bullet of the above mentioned Bishop Ieronim Sevastis, the vicar of Ungro Wallachia Metropolitan from Bucharest. (...) those pamphlet-people are some renegade-perjury monks who leaved their monasticism, deacons, who have

denied their ordination, who because of the immorality ran from Bucharest to Iași". (Vasilache, 1940: 118)

The articles written were checked by the two editors and so it has come to topics for laborious treated discussions, to well-reasoned subjects which in their turn present situations and innovative prospects and last but not least are accompanied by a seriously critical apparatus - various works into international languages such as German, French and English.

#### 4. Conclusions

"The Theological Review" is a tool of educating the believers, of defencing against their more often attacks against the Church, of promoting those who wish to affirm through work and seriousness (were published also articles of seminarians students) and last not least it is a tool for notifying the public which expresses clearly the position of the Moldova and Suceava Metropolitan by referring to all situations encountered during that period.

The fact that the Metropolitan Iosif was the only sponsor for this church newspaper was an obvious disadvantage. Modest price that was paid for its purchase does not ensure self-financing of the publication. Therefore it has come that towards the end of the eighth decade of the nineteenth century, this orthodox publication closed down.

The ecclesial periodical "The Theological Journal" marks a period of development of cultural and missionary activities carried out by the Orthodox Church in Romania.

From the pages of this church newspaper, we can detach aspects of the unity of the Orthodox church doctrine, episodes from the life and development of religious education in the Moldavia and last but not least we see in a concrete mode how the Orthodox Church from the capital of Moldova has answered to the attacks of that period, how it has brought in the public attention new directions of research and how it has addressed to his believers in a written form.

The circulation of this periodical was not a special one; therefore no reliable historical source does mention this. It is certain that the journal was distributed to all churches and monasteries from the diocese, this thing making possible a partial self-financing.

#### References

- \*\*\* (1885a). Revista Teologică, IIIrd year, 49, 23 February, 388.
- Păcurariu, M. (2008). Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. vol. III, IIIrd edition. Iași: Trinitas.
- \*\*\* (1885b). Manuscrite grecești din școala domnească numită Academia din București. Revista Teologică, IIIrd year, 42, Iași, 5 January, p. 329.
- \*\*\* (1885c). Istoria Domnilor Ungrovlahiei – IIIrd year. Revista Teologică, 41, 29 December, p. 336.
- Scalțuni, I. (1885). Religiunea și știința, meditațiuni filosofico-teologice. Tipo-lithografy H. Goldner, Jassy.
- \*\*\* (1885d). Revista Teologică, 38, 8 December, 301-302.
- Vasilache, V. (1940). Iosif Naniescu, strălucit mitropolit al Moldovei. Tg. Neamț: Tiparul Sfintei Mănăstirii Neamțu.