

expand the knowledge of a less researched topic in the history of Romania, and also to shed light on thorny issues that have divided the Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania, thus pushing for a harmonization of relations between the two communities.



LUCIAN ROPA

† MACARIE DRĂGOI

**10 ani cu mitropolitul meu**

**Bartolomeu Anania 1998–2008:**

**Amintiri de la capătul dorului**

(Ten years with my Metropolitan

Bartolomeu Anania 1998–2008:

Memories from the edge of longing)

Foreword by RADU PREDĂ

Iași: Polirom, 2021

**A** REPUTED VOICE not only in the Romanian Orthodox Church or in the theological field, His Grace Macarie Drăgoi, bishop of the Romanians from Northern Europe, is also a historian, ethnologist and a philologist. With the book dedicated to the Metropolitan Bartolomeu Anania he proves to be also a memorialist who writes with passion and talent and brings into attention the heritage of an important man of the recent history and spirituality. Dedicated to the centenary of his birth, the book brings into attention the decade of discipleship that the author spent under the guidance of the writer and bishop. Segmented into 49 chapters and accompanied by a rich appendix containing images that come to illustrate the presented episodes, the book tells a beautiful story and is structured as a bildungsroman. Written in the first person and speaking,

often tearfully, about the things learned from the aforementioned personality, the work starts with an invitation. His Grace Macarie asks his readers not only to accompany him in this voyage, but to live together the important moments that marked his becoming:

*Dear reader, I invite you now to step into this story of apprenticeship to the Metropolitan Bartholomew. Let us live together the unexpected joy of the beginnings, the emotion of the first tests and trials, the fulfilment of expectations and aspirations, the grueling failures, the redemptions glimpsed through hope. It is a testimony of the soul that I put with emotion in your heart, a testimony of the memory and of the experiences lived as a secretary to the office of Metropolitan Bartholomew, and later, as ecclesiarch of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Cluj. These are my best years, years of preparation for the cross of the later hierarchical service.*

*Lately, I have felt increasingly compelled, as a duty of conscience, to give this testimony about Metropolitan Bartholomew. The longing for Father Anania makes me want to no longer hide in the crevices of my heart the warm memories of the moments spent with him, but to bring them to light for the public benefit.*  
(p. 16)

While some of the aspects presented there can be surely considered pages of a contemporary *Paterikon*, due to the rich moral content that can be found there, others are testimonies of historical facts that changed the recent history of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania. Aspects which until the publication of this book were considered legends, like the meet-

ing of the Archbishop of Cluj with the Ecumenical Patriarch, who was also his namesake (and the introductory greeting: “Bartholomew the first,” with the answer: “Bartholomew the one and only”), historical facts related to the role of the Orthodox Church in Romania in the first decades after 1989, the way he understood his role in the Church, his Spartiate daily schedule and other aspects are depicted with attention in the memoirs of the disciple. Bishop Macarie also provides a deep characterization which proves that he not only closely knew the metropolitan, but also understood his way of being:

*He had a peasant, simple, archaic and at the same time patriarchal, serious way of living his inner life. He began his day early, at dawn, with the prayers he said in his small chapel of worship arranged by him near the rest room and kept to this day, with reverence, by His Grace Andrei, the current Metropolitan of Cluj. He used in his daily rule, on the one hand, the **Prayer Book** which he had edited when he was working in Bucharest at the Biblical Institute of the Patriarchate and which*

*he had republished as archpriest in Cluj, and on the other, the **Psaltirion** with the psalms translated by him, printed in Cluj in 1998, with the approval of the Holy Synod, both illustrated with valuable pen engravings by Gheorghe Russu. Constantly open on the tetrapod, they fed the daily ordination of prayer in its small chapel. (p. 30)*

Bringing into attention the image of one of the most complex bishops of the Romanian Orthodox Church from the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> on with the occasion of the anniversary of his centenary, the book written by His Grace Macarie Drăgoi comes not only to tell a story about a man who was, since his youth, a leader and a personality that changed the world, but also to offer a contribution to the cultivation of the memory of a man who understood his role and his mission in a society in transition.



IULIU-MARIUS MORARIU