
MIRCEA-GHEORGHE ABRUDAN

Ortodoxia românească în istorie și contemporaneitate: Articole, eseuri și note de lectură

(Romanian Orthodoxy in contemporaneity: Articles, essays and reading notes)

Foreword by Bishop MACARIE DRĂGOI

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MIRCEA-GHEORGHE Abrudan is already a well-known name, both in the historical and in the theological fields. His complex synthesis dedicated to the relationships between Orthodoxy and Lutheranism in Transylvania between 1848 and 1918 (2015), together with a few editions of documents and the studies, articles and book reviews already published place him among the young researchers with interdisciplinary skills. His new book comes to confirm these aspects.

An anthology of texts previously published in important Romanian journals is, first and foremost, a proof of his rich and consistent activity as a writer and historian who knows how to identify and analyze a document, and also possesses a rich and encyclopaedic culture. Bringing together more than 40 studies, articles, chronicles, medallions and articles, the book is a real voyage across the history and culture of the Romanians in Transylvania. Underlining the complexity and the richness of the informational material contained in this book, Bishop Macarie Drăgoi of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Northern Europe, who forwarded it, contends that: “Choosing a topic of current interest, the researcher from Cluj sees Orthodoxy as a cornerstone in the ancient and contemporary history of our people, rediscovering

the continuities, transformations and overlaps between the histories of the great, but also of the smaller people within and beyond the Carpathians, who led a life dedicated to a greater and more comprehensive good than that of one’s own well-being” (p. 9).

Segmented into six large parts, the book deals in the first one of them (pp. 9–82) with the images and legacies of important personalities (princes or martyrs from the Romanian lands). The reader can discover here interesting information about princes like Mircea the Elder (pp. 19–25), Michael the Brave (pp. 26–36), Constantin Brâncoveanu (pp. 40–70), the Holy Metropolitan Bishop Antim Ivireanu (pp. 71–77), but also about some important faces of the Romanian Orthodox resistance against the imperial actions of denationalization and de-confessionalization of Romanians, the holy martyrs from the Năsăud area (pp. 78–81). Synthetizing the historiographical sources and re-evaluating in a critical way the existing information about the investigated topics and personalities, he offers not only texts meant to bring again to attention their life and activity, but also unpublished information, creating bridges between different areas of research and contributing to the renewal of the discourse about them.

The same thing can be surely said about the second part of the book. Here, he deals with the way in which important foreign personalities like the Patriarch Cyril Lucaris saw the Romanians (pp. 85–93), discussing how Paisius Velichkovsky wrote an important page in the history of Romanian spirituality (pp. 94–96), or pleads for the investigation of the activity of important personalities of the Orthodox Church from Transylvania like the bishops

Vasile Moga (pp. 102–107) or Nicolae Ivan (pp. 108–112). Famous clergyman like Sebastian Stanca (pp. 119–134) and Ioan Lupaș (pp. 166–184) or important laypeople who were deeply attached to the church, such as Ioan Broșu (pp. 135–149), are also featured here, together with important reviews dedicated to recent books or the presentation of different aspects of recent history of the Church and personalities like the Patriarch Justinian Marina (pp. 185–198). Important lay contributions to church historiography, such as those of Professor Nicolae Bocșan (pp. 215–219) or Nicolae Edroiu (pp. 220–227), are also presented there.

As expected, an important section of the investigation is dedicated to the Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna (pp. 243–312), whose activity for the cultural and confessional emancipation of the Orthodox Romanians in the Habsburg and later Austro-Hungarian Empire is analyzed on the basis of the unpublished documents that the author found both in church archives (like the ones of the Metropolitan Church of Transylvania located in Sibiu) or in the ones in Vienna.

Due to the fact that the last few years were dedicated to the commemoration of the centenary of the First World War and of the Great Union, Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan also offers generous space to this topic in the fourth part of his book (pp. 315–424). Together with the role of dif-

ferent Romanian publications in the completion of the union of Transylvania with Romania, he also presents the sufferance of the priests from this period or offers interesting prosopographical studies dedicated to some of the men who represented the Romanians at Alba Iulia assembly. An interesting section is later dedicated to theology and spirituality, and to the manner in which they can be seen through the lens of a historian (pp. 427–514). He offers here studies, analyses, but also presentations of the most recent books related to the topic and released in the Romanian space, recommending to a curious reader valuable texts that could provide information about the Orthodox Church, its theology, spirituality, and contemporary outcomes. The book ends with a section containing essays (pp. 517–561), where Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan describes some travels and speaks about the historical relevance and impact of several places.

Well-written and containing diverse and complex articles, studies and reviews, Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan's book is a useful work meant not only for historians and theologians, but also for any reader who wants to learn more about Romanian history from the documents presented, and to understand how the Orthodox Church contributed to the formation and becoming of the Romanian nation.



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