

Filaret Scriban

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Abstract: Filaret Scriban was an outstanding personality of the 19th century Moldova. Born in Burdujeni, Suceava, in 1811, he devoted his entire life to the Church and to his country. After a rough childhood, he became a student at the Vasilian School and at Academia Mihăileană in Iași. When he was still a student, he started his teaching career, which would be a long and successful one. He accomplished his education in Russia, where he also became a monk, raised to the rank of archimandrite two years later. As a rector and teacher at the Socola Seminary, he reorganized theological education in Moldova, by increasing the number of classes, by introducing new school subjects and by writing textbooks for church schools and seminaries. He wrote many books, which were either published or remained in manuscripts and he made translations from Russian and French. He was also a mentor who encouraged young capable men to accomplish their education abroad. He was a professor at the Faculty of Theology in Iași, as well. Not only did Filaret Scriban serve the Church, but he also supported the Union of the Romanian Provinces and he was elected deputy in the Ad-hoc Council, bringing his contribution to the church reform. A few years later, he was elected Iași senator. Filaret Scriban joined his brother, Neofit, in the fight for canonicity. It is important to mention his role of church founder, as Filaret Scriban was one of the few bishops who founded a church in his native village while being a seminary rector. His church in Burdujeni is the place where he was buried at his death, in 1873. Filaret Scriban was an active scholar and patriot, who had a say in strengthening the relationship between the Moldavian and the Russian Orthodox Church. He served his country and the Church with devotion and faith.

Keywords: union; translator; church reform; phanariot regime; Edessa Archbishop

At the ending of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, the Romanian people were crossing a special political situation, under the Phanariot regime. The Romanians lived as if they had been at the mercy of other people (Erbiceanu, 1989, p. 321), they could stand out neither as a nation nor as a force, since everybody was trying to take parts of the forerunners' territory. The fate of the Romanian Provinces was in foreign hands. The political predominance was a counterbalance between Petersburg and the Byzantine Empire and the Phanariots kept the balance between these forces. The ones who loved this people did not know what to do in order to help the Romanians. They were afraid of bowing before the North, but

they did not think that the Byzantine Empire was the solution, either, because of the opportunist Turkish politics.

National education hardly existed, it was difficult for the small national schools to save their name, the low class of people, dominated by the difficult times, living a miserable life and extremely poor, were working from dawn to dusk without being able to enjoy their work and thus becoming slaves. Trading and industry were out of the question, they belonged to the foreigners. From a military point of view, the Romanian Provinces were always between the Russian and the Turkish invasions, states which pretended that their campaigns were in our best interest and we had to pay for this, by ensuring food for the occupying armies, by country occupation, transport services for the invaders, by local government suspension and many others. In this social and political context, the Romanian Provinces lost two territories, Bucovina and Basarabia.

The people who loved this country and whom we have mentioned above had to put their forces together and try to give back the Romanian people their dignity and deserved freedom in the historical context of the ending of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. Apart from the huge role of the most outstanding politicians of the time, the Ancestral Church, following the commanding voice of the time, understood not to stay out of that context. In the two provinces, Moldova and Wallachia, the Church people got involved in raising the political and cultural dignity of our people.

It was extremely important that, at those times, there were bishops who supported particularly gifted men. In the first half of the 19th century in Moldova, the bishop rank belonged to Veniamin Costachi, who worked so much for both the church and the national culture that entire libraries would not be enough to embody the works about his personality (Udisteanu, 2005, p. 310). He tried to encourage everyone who wanted to work in the field of the people and of faith. There were plenty of men whom Veniamin supported, but the most representative ones were the monk brothers of the Scriban family-Neofit and Filaret. Filaret Scriban¹ has his family

¹ The Scriban family was originally from Transylvania, but they moved to Bucovina, where they stayed first in Cîmpulung and then in Burdujenei. The initial name of the family was Artimescu, the name of the priest Scriban`s father, the treasurer Ioan Artimescu. The name Scriban was given to the bishop Filaret when he was a student at the Academy in Iași (at that time his name was Vasile Popescu) by the professor Vasile Fabian Bob, according to George P. Samureanu (a nephew of the Scribans, whose mother was Theoctist Scriban`s sister), who got this piece of information from different sources. Later, the name Scriban was taken by Neofit and by Christofor Bogatu, the future bishop Theoctist. (Samureanu, 1890.)

roots in an old Romanian branch from Transylvania, who eventually moved to Bucovina. (Erbiceanu, 1986, p. 164) He was born in 1811¹ in Burdujeni, Suceava, with the baptism name of Vasile. His family was living in Burdujeni, where they came after a time spent in Cîmpulung Moldovenesc. (Păcurariu, 1959, p. 102)

His father was the treasurer Ioan Artimescu Scriban, a priest at the Church of Teodorenii Monastery and he died on June 6th, 1848. His mother, the wife's priest Pelaghia, whose family name before marriage had been Bogatu, died when her sons were children. Both parents are buried in the yard of the Church Burdujeni-village, founded by Filaret Scriban.²

Besides the two sons, Neofit and Filaret, there is information that the family had another son, Gavriil Scriban.³ He had a very rough childhood, as he confessed himself in a letter addressed to his nephew Romulus in 1870.

Here is a fragment from this letter: "Let me tell you that after my father had sent me, at the age of twelve, to serve in an inn in Botoșani for two years and at a grocer's for another year, I fell very sick and my father took me home and I served as a cook and laundry maid, since the monastery priest in Burdujeni (Meletie Burdujanul, the former bishop of Roman) did not allow widower priests to have a maid for any kind of jobs, such as washing the children.

After these three years of serving, I became a servant for the Greek monks from Treisfetitele, who came from Burdujeni. Here, as a servant, I started studying and I used to learn, but not at day time when I had to accomplish my servant duties. I

¹ Some people say he was born in 1803 (A. Pumnul, I Scriban)

² On the funerary stone, there is an inscription: Here rests treasurer Ion Scriban, who died of cholera in 1848.

³ Gavriil Scriban had six children: Temistocle, August, Romulus, Ioan, Iulia and Nicolae, raised by the brothers Neofit and Filaret scriban, as their mother had also died. August was sent to study in Petersburg, where he got his doctorate in law and he then became professor at the Socola Seminar. Romulus, the one whose relationship with the Scriban brothers was the closest, was sent to study in Torino by Mihail Kogălniceanu. There, he got his doctorate in law and administrative and political sciences and then he became a judge and secondary professor. He was the father of the archimandrite Iuliu Scriban. (Manolache, 1949, p. 69). Temistocle died at an early age, in 1844. Ioan was a military man. Iulia was married to professor Gheorghe Erbiceanu from the Veniamin Seminar. Another relative of the Scribans was the bishop Theoctist Scriban (with the civilian name Christofor Bogatu), their first cousin by mother, as the Scriban brothers, the mother was the sister of the priest Gavriil Bogatu, Theoctist's Scriban's father. (Erbiceanu, 1889-1990, p. 699-702; Samureanu, 1890, p. 106-110) The Scriban brothers' niece, Pulcheria, the daughter of their sister, Sofia, was married to the treasurer Ioan Bobulescu the future bishop Iosif Sevastias (later Botoșăneanu) and then bishop of Rîmnic Noulii Severin (Erbiceanu, 1895-1896, p. 219-332) Another niece of theirs was married to the deacon Ioan Dîrțu, but she died six months after their marriage and her husband became a monk with the name of Ieremia and later he became the bishop Gălățeanu (Gheorghiuță, 1931, p. 69-73).

studied at night, and not at the candle light, as nobody gave me one, but at the light of the moon, climbed on some pieces of wood behind the house and so, when there was a public examination in the presence of the unforgettable Kiselev, the school principal released me from my servant job and gave me the job of pedagogue with intern rights; this happened because I was not a noble, so I could not get accepted straight as an intern.” (Păcurariu, p. 102)

This happened in 1830, when he was admitted at the Vasilian School from Trei Ierarhi, which had been founded two years before, in 1828. The school was divided into three sections: elementary course, normal school and secondary school, which were completed by some “extraordinary” subjects: private Romanian law, Greek, French and Russian. In 1885, Academia Mihăileană was founded, initially with one secondary school class, which came later on to seven, where graduates from the Vasilian Secondary School and from private schools were admitted. In 1837, the school schedule in these two schools was as it follows: the first and second beginners’ classes at the Vasilian School and secondary school first class and second class, the first and the second classical learning classes, the philosophy class and the law class at Academia Mihăileană (Xenopol, 1885, p. 30).

The young Vasile Popescu-Scriban -as this was his name at the time- followed the courses of these two schools as a “stipend” from 1830 until 1837. The graduation certificate from November 28th 1838 shows that during all these seven years he studied: Catechism, Romanian Grammar, Latin Grammar, Rhetoric, Poetry and Mythology, Universal Geography, Universal History, Mathematics (Arithmetic, Algebra, Trigonometry), Philosophy (Logics, Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy), Russian, French and Latin. He got excellent results, “with eminence” in all these subjects and in behaviour, as well.

Apart from these courses, he had also followed, for a year and a half, Eftimie Murgu’ s philosophy course and the jury-consultant Christian Flechtenmacher’ s law course (“natural laws and civil laws in Moldova”). Even though he was only a student, he passed a contest and got a job of replacing French teacher at the Normal School from Trei Ierarhi. He had this job until 1836, when he was invited to teach beginner students Romanian Grammar, Arithmetic and Catechism.

In 1837 he became a replacing teacher for Rhetoric, Poetry and Mythology at Academia Mihăileană and this was the moment when he was appointed pedagogue, as well. Finally, in 1838, he became the cup-bearer G. Săulescu’s helper for his History class and he held this position until 1839. All these prove that young Vasile

Popescu –Scriban was one of the most distinguished students of this school, otherwise he could not have been charged as replacing teacher for all these courses.

In 1837, after graduation, he was appointed purveyor by Prince Mihail Sturza. This period of his life as a student and teacher was marked with some speeches and some literary works, either published or in manuscripts. One of the best speeches is the one he uttered when his professor Vasile Fabian Bob died, on April 7th 1836 (Xenopol, pp. 125-131).

In 1836 he had his first work published, which was called *First knowledge for the young who are studying French*. Its short preface was signed “Vasile Popescu, the Academy’s student, Iași, April 3rd, 1836.” The book contains translations, with the texts both in Romanian (Cyrillic alphabet) and in French. The fragments are taken from different subjects: astronomy, physics, zoology, botany, chemistry, geography, and at the ending, (p. 186 and next) there is a short French grammar (basic notions). Two years later, he published geography of the three Romanian countries, entitled *Little Geography of Dacia, Moldova and Wallachia, analyzed by V. Popescu*

This book represents one of the first geography books published in our country, the very first one being written by Amfilocbie Hotiniul, who was inspired by Bufier’s book, in 1795. Nevertheless, there were some of his works which are still manuscripts. Among these, there is a Rhetoric with all its aspects, suggested for the classical learning classes at Academia Mihăileană in 1837 by the professor Vasile Scriban and a French Grammar, explained by Popescu Scriban Pitar (in 24 lessons, plus a “short one on syntax”)

Besides these manuals, he also worked on and translated some literary fragments. We can mention here *Brutus’s tragedy*, translated from French into Romanian by V. Popescu Scriban. It was the period when he translated other texts, too: *Cornelius Nepos* from Latin, *The Dialogues of the dead* from French and *Socrates’s life*. Following his wish to improve his knowledge and, at the same time, to serve the Church, in 1838, he addressed an application “For the High Order of the Bishop House of public education in the province of Moldova”, in which he expressed his desire to be sent to a foreign university in order to accomplish his theological learning.

The metropolitan bishop Veniamin Costachi, as a president of the Episcopal Institution and the other members, among whom Gheorghe Asachi, decided to send him to the Theological Academy in Kiev. With the help of the Russian consul in

Iași, the Russian government and the Holy Synod gave their approval. The bishop Veniamin, in a letter written on July 20th 1839, recommended him to the metropolitan bishop of Kiev, Filaret Amfiteatrov.

He went to Russia only in 1839. He studied at the Spiritual Academy in Kiev until 1841, as he had permission to pass four years in two. Here, his teachers were some of the most outstanding Russian theologians, such as Ivan Scvorțev, professor of Moral philosophy, Iacob Amfiteatrov, the father of the Russian church oratory and many others. He established friendship relationships with some Russian hierarchs and professors, either from Kiev or from other centres which he had the chance to see after his graduation. Among his mates we can name Macarie Bulgacov, the future metropolitan bishop of Moscow and Alexei Novoselov, the future bishop of Ecaterinoslav.

Later on, he exchanged letters with the archbishop Inochentie Borisov of Odessa, the famous preacher, former rector of the Kiev Academy when he was a student there and his successor, Dimitrie Muretov, also archbishop of Odessa. But the strongest friendship relationships were with the diplomat and thinker Alexandru Sturza whose origins were in Moldova. While living in Russia for three years, young Vasile Popescu Scriban gathered a lot of documentary and biographical materials from the Russian archives and libraries with the purpose of writing a Church history of the Romanians.

During his staying in Kiev, he wrote more poems which were kept as manuscripts. His letters addressed to different people in the country, like Veniamin Costachi, Gheorghe Asachi, his brother Neofit, his father and some friends are of significant interest.

After he graduated, he wanted to become a master in theology, so he shared with the metropolitan bishop Filaret the desire of getting the monastic haircut. This one asked for the metropolitan bishop Veniamin Costachi's permission of giving him the monastic haircut in Kiev. Moldova's metropolitan bishop agreed with this.

He got the monastic haircut in the Large Monastery in Kiev, Saint Antonie's Cave, by the metropolitan bishop Filaret himself, who gave him his name, on August 5th 1841. The following day, on the Lord's Transfiguration Day, he was appointed hierodeacon and, on August 15th, on the day of the Ascension of Mary, he became

a hieromonk, both ordinations being done by the metropolitan bishop Filaret, in the Large Monastery of Kiev¹.

In April 1842, the Spiritual Academy from Kiev declared him “magister sacrosanctae Theologiae Humaniorumque litteratum”, which was the first case when a Romanian was promoted master in Theology by a spiritual academy from Russia. When he finished his studies, he travelled to Petersburg, and then he came back into the country. On September 20th, the Bishop House of public education appointed him professor and rector of the Veniamin Seminary at Socola Monastery, to replace the archimandrite Vladimir Suhopan. Only after a few months, on February 15th 1843, was the hieromonk Filaret Scriban promoted archimandrite, with the right of wearing the cross and mitre during religious services. This investiture was made by the bishop Filaret Beldiman Apamias, after the Prince Mihail Sturza had insisted for it to take place.

The same year, on June 21st, “the Metropolitan and Earthly Monastery Committee” appointed him superior of Socola Monastery, dignity which he held until 1862, which was the first case when the same person was both rector of the Seminary and Socola superior. He was rector of the Seminary for 18 years, until November 10th 1860, when this position was occupied by his brother Neofit. During all these 18 years, the archimandrite and later bishop Filaret Scriban had to fight against many intrigues and hardships, but he was able to raise the Seminary to a flourishing situation (Erbeceanu, 1985, pp. 62-1120) Immediately after his being invested, in 1843, he seized the opportunity of Alexandru Sturza’s presence in Moldova and asked him to accept to be part of the Episcopal Institution of the Veniamin Seminary.

Despite of the fact that he lived in Russia, Alexandru Sturza accepted this proposal and appointed Alexandru Balș in his position and when this one resigned, his place was taken by Todiraș Sturza. (Adamescu, p. 64) Filaret Scriban introduced new subjects in the seminary and organized it in two parts: superior and inferior.

He also managed to found twelve regional catechism schools so that they could prepare candidates for the Seminary. But the flourishing of the Seminary did not last long, as the metropolitan bishop Meletie, Veniamin Costachi’s successor, managed to remove Alexandru Sturza from the Bishop House and to reduce the

¹ The ceremony of the monastic haircut was described by Filaret Scriban himself in two letters, one addressed to Veniamin Costachi, in August 1841. The metropolitan bishop Filaret also let the metropolitan bishop Veniamin know about Filaret Scriban’s monastic order and his being ordained, on August 18th 1841. (Mircea Păcurariu, p. 106)

courses to four years and limit them to elementary studies, change which the prince agreed with, on January 23rd 1848.

Many teachers were released from their jobs, among whom Filaret Scriban, who lost both his position of rector and seminary professor and Socola superior. But he went on staying at the seminary in order to oppose its closing. Given the circumstances, the metropolitan bishop Meletie was forced to reconsider his measures and, on February 7th 1848 appointed him headmaster of the seminary, but with no courses to teach (Erbiceanu, pp. 90-94).

The metropolitan bishop died of cholera the same year and Prince Mihail Sturza was removed from the throne. The next year, his place was taken by Prince Grigorie Ghica and in 1851 the Huși Bishop Sofronie Miculescu became metropolitan bishop, who supported Filaret Scriban a lot. He started to reorganize the seminary by raising the number of classes to eight, divided in two parts and by constantly bringing new teachers. The most complete seminary reform while Filaret Scriban was its rector was done in 1851. It was the year when the People's Committee and Prince Grigore Ghica reinforced "the law of organizing religious studies in Moldova", drawn by Filaret Scriban.

This law made the metropolitan bishop Meletie's curriculum pass, with few exceptions, to regional catechism schools. Two more four-year seminaries were founded in Roman and Huși. The Socola Seminary had two four-year parts. The graduates from the "Superior Seminary" could get more important education jobs as teachers or clergy. At the same time, they put an end to ordaining the ones who had not graduated from the four-year seminary. The general administration of the Seminars belonged to a bishop house, represented by the metropolitan bishop for Socola, or the diocesan bishops for Roman and Huși and the ministry of church estate and public education.

The committee of internal administration was formed of the Seminary rector, inspector, catechist, treasurer and secretary. According to this law, catechism school taught the following subjects: Catechism, Sacred History, Church Rule Learning, Arithmetic, Church Singing, Reading and Writing by Grammar Rules.

The subjects taught at the Inferior Seminary were: Romanian Grammar, Sacred History in detail, Church History, Arithmetic, Geography, Universal and National History in general, Rhetoric, Dogmatic, Pastoral Studies, Greek, Russian (optional subject), Vocal music, Church singing, Reading and Interpreting the New Testament (this programme lasted until 18640).

The subjects of the Superior course were: Church History in detail, Logic and Psychology, the History of Philosophy, Church Oratory Rules with Ritual Exercises, Biblical Archeology, Pragmatic Church History, Hermeneutics, Ecclesiastical Studies, Moral Theology, Basic Theology, Canonic Law, Polemical Theology, Languages: Latin, French and Russian (optional subjects).

Nevertheless, Filaret Scriban was not satisfied with this new organization of the church schools in Moldova. Starting from 1848, he sent some young graduates from the Socola Superior Seminary to study abroad so that they “could get prepared to become seminary teachers.” The first ones were the hierodeacon Melchisedec Ștefănescu and Christofor Scriban (the future archimandrite Theoctist), who went to the Spiritual Academy in Kiev, where they stayed until 1851. The former got the title of master in Theology and Letters and the latter-the title of candidate in theology. The same year, both of them became teachers at the Socola Seminary.

In 1832 he sent to Petersburg Ioan Mandinescu and August Scriban, who came back in 1857 having the title of “law candidates” and who became teachers, as well. In 1856, another group of young men were sent to study abroad: the hierodeacon Climent Nicolau, the monk Filaret Dimitriu and Gheorghe Erbiceanu in Athens, the hierodeacon Damaschin Matiescu and the monk Ghenadie Enăceanu in Halachi and Vasile Agapie at the University in Paris. All these became accomplished personalities with significant roles in our church life: professors, bishops, archimandrites, except for the ones who died at an early age. They could undoubtedly say that they formed a Filaret Scriban’s “school”, to which we can add some other members of the clergy, graduates from the superior course at Socola, who became seminary teachers, regional school catechists, archbishops, etc.

Another significant part of Filaret Scriban’s activity consists of manual writer for the use of seminaries. With regard to this, he can be considered a real pioneer, as before him nobody had thought to print for the use of seminaries anything but some catechism books and elementary manuals. He also encouraged some of his students, among whom Melchisedec Ștefănescu, to enrich the didactic theological literature with new manuals.

We must equally know the subjects Filaret Scriban taught as a teacher. A school programme from October 1st 1843 shows that he taught Dogmatic, Canonic Law, Hermeneutics and National History (Erbiceanu C., p. 75). Between 1853 and 1854 he taught Fundamental Theology, Rhetoric and Church Oratory Rules. Starting

from 1860, when he became professor at the University of Theology, he continued to teach at Socola Dogmatic and Morals. Some of his first published works which were also used as manuals at the Seminary were two translations from the work of his protector, Alexandru Sturza.

Thus, in 1843, he published the work in two volumes entitled *Letters about the duties of the sacred priest dignity...* The translation was made from Russian and printed in the Cyrillic alphabet. It could be used as a manual of pastoral studies at the Seminary, as it contained a series of advice written as letters by a priest to a spiritual son who had also become a priest. Here is a short presentation of this text: Part I: About preparing to become a priest (9 letters), about the holy church rules (9 letters), About confession (12 letters), About sharing the Lord's teaching (11 letters). Part II: About learning law and faith (9 letters), About the priest's behaviour towards the people (12 letters), about vocation and the evangelist's activity (12 letters). The preface mentioned the fact that this book had been printed in 2500 copies, "with the purpose of sharing one copy to every parish priest." (Păcurariu, 109) The second translation from Alexandru Sturza's work was entitled *Religious, moral and historical teachings...* Iași, 1844. It was translated from French (most likely after the editions printed in Iași in 1842 and 1843) and printed in Cyrillic letters.

The following year, he translated, after a Russian copy, *The apostolic and catholic Eastern Church Orthodox Creed, written by the metropolitan bishop Petru Movilă...* Neamț Monastery, 1844. This was the first edition of the Orthodox Creed printed in Moldova. It was translated to be used as a manual at the Socola Seminary. It has a preface which dates back from April 28th 1844 about the adding of the Orthodox Eastern patriarchs to the Orthodox Creed and Petru Movilă's Life, written by Filaret Scriban and its ending contains the Revelation of faith of the discovery of the bishop St. Grigorie, the bishop of Neochesaria, taken from Grigorie Miculescu's edition of the Orthodox Creed from Bucharest, 1827. A new edition was printed at Neamț Monastery, too, in 1864. It was not different at all from the 1844 edition. The third edition was published by the bishop Iosif Sevastias Bobulescu at Iași, in 1874, in letters.

In 1846 he published a Short catechism book... adapted for church schools in Romanian, Iași, 1846. A new edition appeared in Iași, in 1856, in a transition alphabet, and published by the treasurer Ioan Bobulescu and the lord steward Vasile Calin. It consists of a short introduction and catechism in the regular form:

faith (pp. 13-66), hope (pp. 67-87) and love (pp. 88-106) and, at the ending, a short history of the seven ecumenical synods (pp. 109-122).

In 1847 he published *the sacred history or the history of the Church of the Old Establishment...* explained and printed for study in seminaries and the other church schools.... Iași, the Printing House of the St. Metropolitan Church, 1847, in Cyrillic letters.

In 1855 he published the second edition and in 1872 the bishop Iosif Bobulescu published the third edition in Latin letters, with the title: *The holy history of the Old Testament*, Iași, 1872, 133 pages. This paper is not different from the first edition at all and is divided into 6 chapters (periods) which contain a short presentation of the old testamentary time. We do not know who translated it, but it was surely a translation from Russian.

In 1855 he printed *Christian Morals or moral theology in a shortened form...* Iași, the Publishing House Buciumul Roman, 1855, in transition alphabet. The paper has a short introduction followed by 9 chapters in the first part and 8 in the second one. The first part has a rather dogmatic-moral character, while the second one has a purely moral character.

In 1856 he printed *Holy Hermeneutics or the science of understanding the Holy Scripture...* Iași the Publishing House Buciumul Roman, 1858, in transition alphabet. The introduction is followed by the paper. The first part refers to the meaning of the Holy Scripture: a) literary; b). parabolic and typical. The second part deals with the means which are within and beyond the explanation of the Holy Scripture, and the third part with “the way in which we can explain what we have understood from the Holy Scripture” (by means of translation and comment).

In 1858 he printed *The Church History in a shortened form. Analyzed in Romanian...* Published to be used in seminaries, Iași, the Publishing House A. Berman, 1858, in transition alphabet.

In 1869, Iosif Bobulescu published the second edition and, in 1974, the third one, both in Iași, for the use of “secondary Romanian schools”. The paper is divided into four periods: 1. From Jesus Christ’s Birth to Constantin the Great. 2. From Constantin the Great to the Big Schism. 3. From the Schism to the Foundation of the Patriarchate in Moscow. 4. From the foundation of the Russian patriarchate – which is dealt with in detail-up to the ending of the 18th century. There is also a

short chapter about “Christianity in Dacia”, where he approached the beginnings of Christianity in the Romanian territories.

Each part presenting these periods is followed by notes containing rich bibliographical references, as well as “chronological tables” with the purpose of identifying the most significant historical deeds.

Filaret Scriban’ s last educational paper, printed shortly before his death is *The Church History of the Romanians in a shortened form*, Iași, 1871, published by Iosif Bobulescu. We have mentioned above that since during his student period in Kiev he had gathered documentary material in order to publish a church history of the Romanians.

Feeling his ending near and being unable to valorize all the rich material he had gathered, he published a summary of this paper, as he told us himself in the preface of this history. The paper has four parts: I. Christianity in Dacia; II. The History of the Bulgarian-Romanian Church; III. The History of the Romanian Church in the Provinces Moldova, Wallachia and Transylvania; IV. Historical Consideration over the five centuries of the Romanian Church, from 1300 to 1866, divided into two parts: 1. About the church of the Romanians in Transylvania; 2. The history of the Romanians on the other side of the Carpathians.

He dealt with contemporary events (The Ad hoc Council, the Church under Al. I Cuza and the fight for canonicity). The final part (pp. 157-1980 contains “the chronology of Daco-Roman archpriests in conquered Dacia” (Moldova, Wallachia, Transylvania). But it has many dating errors, as it indicated some people who had never existed. For instance, it mentioned a metropolitan bishop Simeon in Wallachia in 1290, whom Radu Negru had brought from Făgăraș and the metropolitan bishop Mitrofan, still from Wallachia, who would have taken part in the Florence Synod. On the other hand, it mentioned nothing about Iachint of Vicina.

He expressed an interesting opinion about the beginnings of Christianity in Dacia, stating that the first pre-Romanian Christians appeared as a consequence of the preaching of the Saint Apostles Pavel and Andrei in the south of the Danube and of the Roman settlers in the north. His biographical material – excepting for the unusual one he had gathered-consisted of the country’s chronicles, Șincai’s chronicle, the Historical magazine for Dacia, Romania’s historical archives, the works of Petru Maior, Dionisie Fotino, Al. Desviodax, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Andrei Șaguna, I. D. Petrescu, Le Quien’s *Oriens christianus* and others.

Apart from these printed educational papers, some others were kept as manuscripts. It is the case of “*Fundamental Theology*”, written by the Venerated Archimandrite Priest Filaret, the Seminary rector.” (Xenopol, p. 282) In the preface of the Orthodox Creed, Filaret himself assured his readers that other works were ready to be printed-besides some works which appeared later-*Dogmatic, Church Oratory Rules and Principles* and *Canonic Laws*.

The Library of the Romanian Academy keeps many of his papers, among which a manuscript entitled *Short Consideration of Christian Archeology*.

We think it is important to mention some other aspects of his activity, as well. A significant aspect refers to his preaching activity. It is a pity that we now know few of his speeches, mostly the funerary ones, kept in the Library of the Romanian Academy. While he was a rector of the Socola Seminary, he had a church built in his native village, Burdujeni, which he provided with all the necessary things and which inherited his fortune at his death. This gesture is more than eloquent if we think that the history of our Church records few bishops who were church founders.¹

For his restless work in the service of the Church and the school and at the request of the prince Grigorie Ghica, in 1852, the archimandrite Filaret Scriban was appointed as an official bishop with the name of Stavropoleos by the metropolitan bishop Sofronie Miclescu. With regard for his intense activity, the Society of History and Antiques from Odessa named him an honour member on December 15th 1858.

The bishop Filaret Scriban and his brother Neofit supported the fight for the union of the Romanian Provinces. Since he was one of the members of the unionist party, the government of the caimacam Vogoride brought much trouble to him. The Treaty from Paris (March 18th-30th 1856) established that Moldova would get some territories and the bishop Filaret Scriban and the priest Theoctis Scriban were in charge with receiving the churches and running church business in those regions, which later on would form the new diocese of the Low Danube. He did not spend much time there and he came back to the seminary, even if the Christians from that region requested by means of memoirs to have him ordained as bishop. Shortly after, the caimacam and the Cult ministry decided him to be removed from the rector position and to be replaced by Vladimir Suhopan (Erbiceanu C., p.95).

¹ On the church frontispiece, there is an inscription in Cyrillic letters: “*This church was made by the archimandrite Filaret Scriban, 1851*”

His replacement was justified by the result of the inquiry made at the Seminary in 1853, when some so-called disorders would be found in administration and educational activity (one of the members of the inquiry team was Suhopan). The metropolitan bishop Sofronie protested firmly against this replacement and required Suhopan to withdraw at Doljești Monastery, where he was Father Superior (Furtună, 1928, pp. 1083 -1087). In his turn, Filaret Scriban remained at the Seminary, even if there had been threats that he would be taken out by force.

Given the circumstances, the government and the caimacam did not dare to remove him from the position at the Seminary. In 1857, the metropolitan bishop Sofronie addressed the representatives of the Foreigner Leaders in Bucharest a memorandum which consisted of an introduction and 34 articles which presented some measures to be taken in order to reorganize the Romanian Church. The author of this memorandum was the bishop Filaret Scriban. Some of his principles were accepted by the Ad-hoc Council, others became laws later.

Basically, the memoirs required rights for the clergy, the setting up of a Synod (formed of diocesan bishops, bishops, seminary rectors, Father Superiors and archbishops) with administrative, legislative and judicial rights and indicated the way of electing hierarchies, regulations referring to theological education and others.

When the election lists for the Ad-hoc Council were published, the bishop Filaret Scriban noticed that the unionists had been removed and declared, together with three other Father Superiors, that he abstained from voting, on July 5th-15th 1857. After the first elections had been cancelled, there were new ones on August 29th 1857. Filaret Scriban was elected deputy in the Ad-hoc Council as representative of the Father Superiors from the monasteries which were not submitted along with the bishop Calinic Miculescu Hariupoleos, both having the maximum of votes, nine.

He was not as active as his brother in the Ad-hoc Council, but he still had a quite important role. He was elected president of the Clergy Committee and he voted, with all the other deputies all the reforms necessary to reorganize the two provinces. He also supported different amendments and proposals.¹

After the union of the two Provinces, the bishop Filaret Scriban continued to be the rector of the Socola Seminary until 1860 in autumn. It was when the faculty of

¹ In the reunion on December 20th 1857, he read the clergy report with the twelve points we have mentioned. The Council Debates. Details for his contribution to the Union in (Erbiceanu, *Viața P.S. Filaret, (The life of Filaret)* pp. 36-63.

Theology was founded at the University of Iași and he was appointed professor of Biblical Archeology, Hebrew and Introduction to the Old Testament. Shortly after he became pro-rector of the University (Vizitiu, 2007, p. 18). He continued to be Father Superior at Socola Monastery, as well as Dogmatic and Morals teacher at the Seminary. He taught courses at the faculty until 1863, where his colleague was the bishop Vladimir Suhopan. On 31st August 1863 he handed in his resignation and asked to get his retirement papers.

He had serves theological education for 20 years, 11 months and 10 days. In 1863 he was appointed trustee of the Monastery Trei Ierarhi in Iași, at the time when Greek monks were removed, but he did not keep this job for a long time. He had been appointed member of the Committee of researching the documents of submitted monasteries. The following year, he resigned from the trusteeship of Sf. Ioan Botezătorul Monastery.

In 1864 he retired completely from all the Church jobs. He settled at the vineyard which he had bought in 1844 in the village Bucium, next to Socola Monastery, where he lived up to the end of his life. Starting from 1865 he joined his brother in his “fight for canonicity”. He protested with Iosif Bobulescu against the work of the Synod in 1865, and he then addressed to the patriarch of Constantinople and the foreign consuls in Bucharest.

The price he paid for his deeds was big, as in the winter of the year 1865, when he was travelling to Bucharest with Iosif Bobulescu, they were arrested at Focșani and brought to Iași. He was then guarded at his vineyard for a long time. The Patriarchate wrote to him and to Iosif Bobulescu on February 27th 1866, asking them not to officiate the liturgy with “non-canonic” bishops.

He was not as active as his brother Neofit. Nevertheless, he published a few articles on the matter of canonicity in the publications of the time. He also let us a series of smaller works, in manuscripts, on the same issues: 1. Clarification of the new law project about the election of metropolitan bishops and bishops in Romania (1866). 2. The Romanians’ Prince and Grigorie V, the ecumenical patriarch; 3. Solving the problems of disorder and immorality inside the Romanian Church; 4. Nouvelles notes explicatives aux protêts des trois évêques roumains (written by both

brothers); 5. Critical considerations on the anti-canoncity of the Romanian Synod and its rules. (in Russian).¹

In 1867, even if he was living as a retired bishop, Filaret Scriban was elected senator in the second college in Iași. He carried out his electoral mandate until 1869 and he delivered several speeches in the Senate debates (Păcurariu M., p. 112).

In 1871, the metropolitan bishop Calinic Miclescu delegated him to take part in the big celebration at Putna, on August 15th-27th 1871, along with the bishop Iosif Bobulescu, the archimandrite Ieronim Buțureanu and the archdeacon Nectarie Apostoliu. (Bălan, 1932, p. 139)

He retired at his vineyard in Socola, in March 1873 he settled at his nephew Iosif Bobulescu's, who was Father Superior at Talpalari in Iași. Feeling that his ending was near, he drew up his will on March 19th 1873. He let his Socola vineyard to Iosif Bobulescu, whose task was to bury him and pay all his debts. The will also mentioned that, at his death, Iosif Bobulescu had to leave it to the church that Filaret Scriban had founded in Burdujeni. He let his library to the Socola Seminary.

He died on March 23rd 1873 and his prayers were held at the church Talpalari in Iași on March 25th. His human remains were transported to Burdujeni and buried in his church, on March 27th, in the presence of his brother Neofit and of Iosif Bobulescu.²

This is a short presentation of the life and activity of Filaret Scriban, official bishop of Stavropolia. He defeated a lot of troubles and his own effort helped him to become the biggest scholar hierarch of his time.

Master of the Spiritual Academy of the big hearth of Russian Orthodoxy, where the metropolitan bishop Petru Movilă's enlightened face once shone, the bishop Filaret Scriban can be considered, along with the metropolitan bishop Veniamin Costachi, the founder of the theological school in Moldova. And it is right to state this, since he ruled the Socola Seminary for eighteen years and managed to set up the first superior seminary course in our country, to prepare a select group of

¹ *Dovezi noi asupra secularizării averilor mănăstirești/New evidence about the secularization of monastery estates* in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română/The Romanian Orthodox Church*, year XLI, no. 14, 1923, pp. 1041-1043, no. 15, pp. 1115-1120.

² Neofit was buried beside him in 1884. On the funeral stone he had put a long thirty line inscription which reminded everyone of his parents, Ioan and Pelaghia, his brothers, Filaret and Gavriil and his sister, Sofia. Two of the great deeds of the Scriban brothers are mentioned in it: Union and the fight for canonicity.

professors and to provide it with textbooks, passing afterwards to our first Faculty of theology.

Filaret Scriban also had an important contribution to strengthen the relationship between the Moldavian Church and the Orthodox Russian Church, either by means of the translations he made or by means of the mail he exchanged with Russian hierarchs and his apprentices from Socola who were sent to study in Russia. If we add to this his unionist concern and the fight for canonicity, we will have the full picture of his prodigious activity.

In spite of his activity in the service of the Church and country, his contemporaries did not value him the way they should have. Meanness and human envy made him retire, towards the ending of his life, from all his jobs without being raised to the rank of an Episcopal chair, even if he would have fully deserved it.

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