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THE SITUATION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN NORTHERN BUKOVINA DURING ALIENATION FROM ITS MOTHERLAND, BY THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE

Costel-Mirel Nechita (a)*

(a) Sanctus Choirmaster of the Metropolitan Cathedral in Iasi, Phd Dr. and Univ. Lecturer at the Church
Music Department of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Alba Iulia, Romania.

Email: costelmirelnechita@yahoo.com

Abstract

In 1775, the Austro-Hungarian Empire occupied Northern Bukovina, a wonderful land, sprinkled with towering mountains, covered with secular forests, rich grasslands and crystal-clear waters, and good householders and worthy people. The fate of this part of Romania was shared by other confreres, occupied by the same abusive empire: Transylvania in 1699, Banat and Oltenia in 1718. Thus, the occupied Romanians found themselves in a kind of forced diaspora, becoming neighbors of borders with their own brothers. The occupation was very oppressive, long-lasting and with disastrous consequences in all fields religious, social, and cultural, the occupier trying, and most of the time, succeeding in destroying the traditional local values and imposing its own. The phenomenon run slowly by the activity of enlightened hierarchs of the Church, as well as of some associations and institutions, which fought and defended themselves through culture, prevailing the musical culture, especially the choral one, which kept the Bukovinians closely united near the ancestral Church. Even if the Austro-Hungarian occupation brought certain benefits, it remains a black spot in bimillennial of the Romanian people.

Keywords: diaspora; occupation; resistance; tradition; local culture;

1. INTRODUCTION

Until 1775, Bukovina had a common history with Moldova, province which was broken by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was advancing, as like Russia, towards south-eastern Europe, targeting territories occupied or dominated by Turkey. Austrian diplomacy, decides to break from the ancient Romanian land the northern part of Moldova, as demonstrated by the letter addressed, on September 20, 1774, by Chancellor Kaunitz of Thugut, the Austrian minister in Constantinople: "As I have informed you, the imperial decision is to take under possession the well-known county of Moldova" (***) The



Abduction of Bucovina as stated by authentic documents, Bucharest, 1875, p. 9), to create a direct link between Galitia and Transylvania.

On 1 October 1774, Tsarist troops evacuated the lands of Cernauti, Suceava and Campulung, then the Habsburg armies enter Moldova and occupy the northern part of it. On 7 May 1775, the Austro-Ottoman Convention was signed, in four points, by which was stating that north of Moldova, with its capital in Suceava and the grave of Stephen the Great, were part of the Habsburg Empire. (Nicolae Ciachir, *From the History of Bukovina (1775-1944)*, Publishing House "Oscar Print", Bucharest, 1999, p. 41, from: Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi, *Documents*, VII, Bucharest, 1886, p. 277). The occupied territory equaled to 10,441 km² and a population of 75,000 inhabitants, mostly romanians (P.S. Aurelian, *Bucovina - economic description accompanied by a map*, Bucharest, 1867, p. 15), including 225 villages and 3 cities: Cernauti, Siret and Suceava. With pain, the poet Mihai Eminescu, expressed at Putna the following words: "Extraordinary trespass, treacherous conspiracy, a business between a debauched woman and the Pashas from Byzantium, the sale of Bukovina will be an eternal stain... forever a pain for us. But we will not let this wound to close. With our own hands we will paint the icon of that time and the old strings, as much as we have left, we will refresh them in remembrance, so that our souls would not forget ..." (Mihai Eminescu, *The Significance of the Putna Celebration*, Bucharest, 1905. Excerpt from the speech given by Mihai Eminescu on the Putna celebrations from 1871, 400 years after his consecration).

In addition to Bukovina, the Habsburg Empire occupied other Romanian territories: Transylvania in 1699, Banat and Oltenia in 1718.

2. THE STATE OF THE CHURCH IN BUKOVINA DURING THE FOREIGN OCCUPATION

Until its stealing by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Bukovina, as part of Moldova, had a well-configured and unitary church organization. From the occupation until 1918, when she returned to her homeland, she was pastored by several hierarchs, each with own merits and lacks, as we all have.

At the time of the occupation, Bishop Dosoftei Herescu (1750-1789) was pastoring the northern part of Bukovina, with the Bishopric of Radauti, "which included a number of villages beyond the Cordun, in Moldova". (Ion Nistor, *History of the Church from Bukovina*, "Septentrion" Publishing House, Radauți, 2003, p. 1, from: Nicolae Iorga, *History of the Romanian Church*, Valenii de Munte, 1908, vol. I, p. 89). During his time, based on the imperial decision dated of 12 December 1781, signed by King Joseph II, the episcopal residence was moved from Radauti to Cernauti, where there was no episcopal residence or cathedral church. Between 1783-1786 the bishopric was subordinated to the Serbian Orthodox Metropolis of Carlowitz. (Ion Nistor, 2003, p. 3-4).

In 1786 enter into force the new Regulation for the organization of the Orthodox Church in Bukovina, by which the diocese was divided, the number of parishes decreasing from 247 to 186. This Regulation also reduced the number of monasteries and hermitages, decreasing from 20 to 4: Putna, Sucevita, Dragomirna and Saint John the New from Suceava (as a hermitage of Dragomirna Monastery). (Ioan Caproșu, *Old Metropolitan Cathedral of Suceava*, Publishing House of Moldova and Suceava, Iasi, 1980, p. 46). This fact also led to a gradual decrease in the Romanian population and the rise of the Ukrainian population, facilitating many emigrations of German, Ruthenian, Slovak, Polish population. The estates of the monasteries were secularized and transformed into a "church fund" which was going to serve for the culture raising, but as the administration of the fund was held by the emperor, through his representatives, it was not used for Romanian purposes. (Petre P. Panaitescu, *History of Romanians*, Publishing House Didactic and Pedagogic, Bucharest, 1990, pp. 314-315).

Bishop Daniil Vlahovici (1789-1822), a Serb of origin, ordained at Karlowitz, was a stranger to the country and the people of his parishioners, called to the hierarchy as emperor, without being asked by any of the Romanian leaders. Before becoming a bishop, he was called to Bukovina, as director of the new clerical School of St. Ilie near Suceava, although his savvy was like that of a "village priest". (Ion Nistor, 2003, p. 29, from: S. Saghin, *From the acts and documents regarding the Church history from Bukovina*, in "Candela", XVI, 1897, p. 17).

As a bishop, he advised clerics to detach themselves from the people, establishing the principle of "bureaucracy" among clerics. At the same time, the ruthenian element was strengthened, and they gradually imposed their language in some churches, ritual books and even deacons and priests, a fault that falls largely on the negligence and lack of courage of Romanian priests.

Bishop Isaia Balosescu (1823-1834), came from an old Romanian family from Bukovina. During his pastorate, on 4 October 1827 in Cernauti were opened the courses of a theological Institute, following the model of the Putna Academy, where Bishop Isaiah graduated his studies. However, if at the Putna Academy the courses are taught in Romanian, at the new Theological Institute no theological discipline is taught in Romanian language. (Ion Nistor, 2003, p. 40). The teachers were recruited from among the priests who had studied at the Catholic institutes in Vienna and Lemberg. (Mircea Pacurariu, History of the Romanian Orthodox Church, vol. III, Publishing House of the Biblical and Mission Institute of Romanian Orthodox Church, 1994, p. 182).

Under the pastorate of Bishop Eugenie Hacman (1835-1873) "missing the necessary qualities of a hierarch, the Ruthenian element became stronger, the state's involvement in the life of the diocese turn out to be even more sensed, and Romanian schools were placed under state authority". (Bogdan Mihai-Nichitean, Metropolitan Silvestru Morariu-Andrievisi of Bucovina, Suceava, 1973, p. 15).

Between 1844 and 1864, the Cathedral from Cernauti was built, which was consecrated on 5 of July 1864, the next day the foundation of the metropolitan palace was laid, which will be finalized in 1882. Following the Revolution of 1848, the Romanians from Bukovina acquired administrative autonomy, a provincial diet, a state of its own, a flag and a Coat of Arms on which was represented the aurochs's head of Moldova:

Becoming a dukedom, from 1849, Bukovina was directly subordinated to the government of Vienna, remaining in this situation until 15/28 November 1918, when it was united with Romania. By the royal resolution dated 23 January 1873, the diocese of Bukovina is raised to the rank of Archdiocese and Metropolis of Bukovina and Dalmatia, thus stopping the possibility of unification of all Romanians in the empire.

Teoctist Blajevisi (1877-1879) was elected metropolitan in 1877. He was previously rector of the Clerical Seminary in Chernauti, then abbot of Dragomirna Monastery, consistorial assessor, general vicar, and chair archimandrite. He was one of the Bukovinian scholars who, before 1848, was engaged with the writing. He is the author of several works of spiritual guidance and schoolbooks. During his reign, in 1885, the royal tombs at Putna were officially opened (Ion Nistor, 2003, p. 109-110).

Few months after the death of Metropolitan Teoctist, archimandrite Silvestru Morariu-Andrievisi (1880-1895) was named in the metropolitan seat, "father of the didactic literature in Bukovina" with the merit of "awarding to the Romanian primary school in Bukovina with the first reading books" (Bogdan Mihai-Nichitean, 1973, p. 32, from: George Tofan, Education in Bukovina, vol. II, Suceava, 1995, p. 393). He was ordained bishop on 6/18 April 1889 and installed on 27 April/ 9 May 1880 in Cernauti Cathedral. Since this year until 1890, were established in villages 36 Romanian schools. By a circular order dated of 29 July /10 August 1881, Metropolitan Silvestru Morariu-Andrievisi inspires parents to send their children to school. Moreover, to his suggestion is set up the music society "Harmony". In 1882, together with the professors of the Faculty of Theology from Cernauti, he inaugurated the magazine "Candle". The monumental metropolitan palace, started in 1864 by Bishop Eugenie Hacman, was completed in 1882 by Metropolitan Silvestru Morariu Andrievisi. In 1883 he laid the foundations of a printing house even in his residence, printing here a large part of his works. Being truly a good Romanian, the Austrians placed a ruthenian vicar next to the metropolitan, looking for to gradually "rutheneize" the Orthodox diocese in Bukovina. After Metropolitan Silvestru Morariu-Andrievisi death, the metropolitan seat was entrusted to the old archimandrite and vicar general Arcadie Ciupercovici (1896-1901) who spoke Romanian, German and Ruthenian. He was abbot of Putna since 1862, during his time, in 1871, was celebrated the 400th anniversary of the consecration of the holy monastery. Under his pastorate, the Ruthenian element was strengthened again, and the interference of the governor of Bukovina in the affairs of the Church became more and more evident. (Ion Nistor, 2003, p. 135-141).

The last metropolitan of Bukovina, being under Austrian rule, was Vladimir Repta (1902-1924). He studied at top universities from Germany, after which he was a professor of the New Testament at the Theological Faculty in Cernauti, just from its establishment. He has been an assessor of urban schools in Cernauti for 20 years, helping them to improve. He was appointed bishop of Radauti by the decree dated of 30 November 1898, receiving the ordination on 17 January 1895 in Cernauti cathedral church. It was the first bishop ordination in this cathedral. On 17 October 1902, he was appointed archbishop and metropolitan of Bukovina and Dalmatia. Vladimir Repta fought for raising the cultural level of the priests in the diocese (Mircea Pacurariu, 1994, p. 191), and for the advancement of their archdiocese.

3. CONCLUSION

Romanians in Bukovina survived the policy of denationalization, promoted by the Habsburg Empire, and through the activities of societies and cultural gatherings, subscribed to the efforts generated by emancipation through culture, an action led first by priests and teachers, and then by pupils and students from Bucovina. The situation was analyzed and treated in detail in a previous study. As unification in one state was not possible in those days, the people of Bukovina gathered under the flag of Romanian cultural unity, preparing together the act of 1918. And under foreign domination, music, with its universal language, represented a link between Romanians separated by borders. The repertoire of this period abounds in secular compositions, with the aim of promoting and defending the Romanian language, patriotic compositions, which encouraged the people in this fight and religious compositions, which kept bright the flame of hope, coming from faith. The attempt of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to annihilate the Romanian culture and tradition was thus hit by the resistance of the cultural societies and meetings, created to fight against this dangerous phenomenon, to uproot the culture and tradition of the Romanians from Bukovina. Many of these were created near the Church and at the initiative of enlightened hierarchs, who understood that the safest weapon to fight and defend against those who try to destroy your local culture is also culture.

Each cultural society established on the territory of Bukovina had in its composition a choir, which through its repertoire made known its dissatisfaction, but also the hopes of freedom and liberation from the oppressive yoke. The inexhaustible source of inspiration was the Romanian folklore, on which the great composers leaned, creating a real school of Romanian choral creation. The beginning was made by Ciprian Porumbescu and Alexandru Flechtenmacher, with “Baba Hârca”, continuing with Gavriil Musicescu, Dimitrie G. Kiriac, Iacov Mureșanu or Gheorghe Dima..

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