

Pimen Georgescu „the Metropolitan of the War” and of the „Unification of Romania”

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Abstract:

Pimen Georgescu, the Metropolitan of Moldavia (1909-1934) had a very important contribution both to the "Great War" (1916-1918), as also to the fulfilling of the important act of "Unification of Romania" (1918).

He had put at disposal of central authorities, who had been moved from Bucharest to Iasi, his residence, the surrounding buildings and the hermitages of many monasteries from through all the Metropolitan of Moldavia. He also took care of the soldieries left to the first line by sending them military priests, confessors, monks and nuns to serve as sanitarians. He initiated gatherings of food, clothes and many other necessary things, but he took care of the families members who were left back home. The documents found in the Archives of the Diocesan Centre show that when the metropolitan asked, the monasteries and the parishes assumed this service.

Speaking about Romania's unification, we have to mention that the metropolitan Pimen Georgescu had a speech in front of the Nation's Senate, and also he informed himself about the actions of the brothers from across Prut River. He was involved in the receiving of those two Romanian delegations from Basarabia and Bucovina. He also wrote letters to some great personalities from Bucovina and Transilvania and encouraged them in their fight for unity and for its protection through the establishing of social care institutions.

Key words:

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The Church, as Nicolae Iorga [„Nothing can be more useful...., than the sight of an organised, almost millennial life, during which the Metropolitans, Bishops, Fathers Superior and so often the humble monks or secular priests gave the people, almost alone, all the teaching, endowed the nation with a literary language, with a holy literature, with an art related to its taste and needs, supported the State without being swallowed

by it, guided the nation on the roads on earth without taking their eyes away from the sky, and lifted higher of all all the people of the Romanian household, offering to our history scholars, calligraphers, sculptors in wood, silversmiths, state people, soldiers, martyrs and saints”] (Iorga 1928, I: 4-5) stated, fulfilled through its followers a fundamental role in the history, the evolution and the lasting in time of the Romanian people [The Romanian Orthodox Church has always loved and served the Romanian people, has blessed its aspirations for freedom and unity and supported the significant events of national history, such as the Unification of the Principalities of 1859, obtaining the State Independence of Romania (1877-1878) and the Great Union of 1918] (*The solemn commemorative act proclaimed in the framework of the Holy Liturgy dedicated to the Cathedral of the Salvation of the Nation signed by all members of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church*, November 30th, 2018, cf. www.basilica.ro). It manifested this role permanently, in accordance with the moments/ stages through which our people went. It has been with the sons of our people in times of joy, and all the more so in hard times. Relevant, in this regard, is also the example of the great Metropolitan of Moldavia, Pimen Georgescu. Not by accident was he named in history „the Metropolitan of the war” or „the Metropolitan of the Great War”, but also „the Metropolitan of Romania’s unification”. Apart from this, he himself said, while running a retrospective of 25 years of guiding, that the most important period of that time had been precisely that of „The Great War” [The Metropolitan himself, in the meeting of the Holy Synod on the 14th of February 1934, during which he was celebrated at the completion of 25 years of shepherding in the metropolitan seat of Iasi, stated, among others, that „I believe the most important time of my pastoral life to be that of the Great War”, when I was given the opportunity to bless the army on the battlefield, to take care of the wounded in hospitals, of the refugees and the fate of those who sacrificed themselves for the nation's ideal (cf. Georgescu 1934: 112, republished by Isai and Moldovan 2018: 31; Pentelescu and Preda: 2003: 111) [The above words are also recorded on the stone of his grave].

In the present contribution, while keeping in mind the theme of *The Honouring Year of the Unity of Faith and of the Nation* and *The*

commemorative year of the founders of the 1918 Great Union in the Romanian Patriarchy, as well as the fact that Professor Academician Emilian Popescu, a renowned historian of our Church, has turned nine decades, we propose to approach, obviously in a succinct manner, the two outstanding attributes of the Metropolitan of Moldavia, Pimen Georgescu: „Metropolitan of the war” and „the Metropolitan of Romania’s unification”, as a tribute brought to the great men of our Nation and our Church, the creators of the great acts, but also to the devoted sons of the Church.

Pimen Georgescu „the Metropolitan of the war” or „the Metropolitan of the Great War”

During the time of the „Great War”, later called „The First World War”, The Church of Christ in Moldavia was led by the Metropolitan of worthy remembrance Pimen Georgescu. The Metropolitan Pimen had not only a long (1909-1934) shepherding time, but also a difficult, and especially a rich one.

We must mention the very important and also eloquent fact, that the great Metropolitan placed, with generosity, at the disposal of the central authorities, moved from Bucharest to Iași, the Metropolitan residence itself, the related buildings or hermitages of many monasteries in Moldavia which he was guiding.

Regarding this activity, several pieces of information has been retained, some recorded by the great Metropolitan in „The Memoirs of The Great War” („Memoirs” have been published by Metropolitan Pimen, in the year 1923, at the Printing House of Neamț Monastery, recently republished by Isai and Moldovan 2018: 31-58), others by certain contemporaries (Ciopron 1934: 302). Thus, we learn that:

[...] in the apartments of this residence, King Ferdinand used to receive the answers to the messages sent by the Legislative Bodies. The first councils of ministers, after the retreat of the army in Moldavia, and the preliminary deliberations of the deputies and senators, regarding the expropriation law and the universal vote, were held here. This is also the place which received the messengers of Bukovina and Bessarabia, who brought the motions voted by the Romanian people from these provinces for the unconditional joining with the mother land. The Church House, The School House, The Army’s Deanery - they were all installed in the courtyard of the Metropolitan Church, and the choir room was turned into a mess hall for the refugees. The ministers of that time, Vintilă

Brătianu, I.G. Duca, V.Gh. Morțun and others lived in the apartments of the Metropolitan Palace. In this palace the meetings of the Holy Synod were held under the presidency of His Holiness Pimen. The plenipotentiary ministers and the military attachés of the states allied with us were also received and hosted here[...] (Ciopron 1934: 302).

We specify that Partenie Ciopron, the one who would become Bishop of the Army (1937-1948) and the Bishop of Roman and Huși (1962-1978), to remember just two of the many responsibilities he held, knew especially the situation in Iași, and that in Moldavia, in general, since he was brother in the monasteries in Moldavia (at the Gorovei and Slatina monasteries), fought in the First World War (in the 29th Infantry Dorohoi Regiment), and attended seminary studies in Iași (1922-1929) (cf. Păcurariu 2002: 101).

From the „Memoirs” of the Metropolitan we also find out that someone who

lived here in the latter days until the end of the war was our great teacher Nicolae Iorga, who, by word and writing, both during the time of the neutrality as well as during the time of fighting, strengthened the people to bear the hardships of the war, through his gazette *Neamul Românesc (The Romanian People)*, and steeled for bravery the souls of the soldiers on the battlefield (Isai and Moldovan 2018: 35).

Like other hierarchs have done throughout history, in addition to his work as an archshepherd, he also cared for all the aspects of the believers’ lives which he was entrusted with: he cared for the soldiers on the battlefield, meaning that, on the one hand, he prepared and blessed military priests, confessor priests, nursing monks and nuns, including the organisation of the collections of food, clothing etc., and, on the other hand, he took care of families left home, of the war widows and orphans, etc.

Basically, we must mention that, as early as 1913, Metropolitan Pimen intervened with the Ministry of War to designate doctors who could „teach” monks and nuns notions of „small surgery, bandages and other medical knowledge” (Cotan 2015: 89; Ciopron 1934: 303). In the same year, on the 17th of January, he was sending a directive (to all monasteries within the eparchy, „to be read several times, out of his desire to mobilise the monasticism in Moldavia in support of the Romanian army during the Second Balkan War” (Cotan 2015: 90). Many monks and

nuns answered to his request. For their training, he also solicited the Ministry of War and the princess Maria Moruzi, the president of the Red Cross-Iași, the assignment of more doctors (Cotan 2015: 90).

Later, more specifically „just before the Great War”, as Metropolitan Pimen would later record in his „Memoirs”, the Holy Synod, „ approved the proposal I made, where the conditions for the appointment of army priests led by a protopope are mentioned, in its meeting on the 16th of May 1916. This proposal served as a law for choosing the army priests during the war until the 20th of July 1921, when the law for the organisation of the military clergy was passed” (Isai and Moldovan 2018: 46).

As a result of the organisation of the military clergy, 24 military priests, 97 confessor priests, 108 nursing monks and 164 nursing nuns, a total of 393 clerics, monks and nuns from the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Suceava, went to the battlefield (Isai and Moldovan 2018: 17).

Another important contribution of Metropolitan Pimen Georgescu during the „Great War” is the organisation of the nursing activities for the soldiers wounded on the battlefield and housed in military hospitals or in those arranged in certain monasteries within the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Suceava.

I would like to point out, from my position as a member of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology „Dumitru Stăniloae”, within the „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iași, that the Brâncovenesc Hospital (moved here from Bucharest) functioned temporarily in the same building, where the Faculty has its present activity, which also housed the Veniamin Seminary during the years of the war.

We would also like to mention that in the reminded building there is a beautiful chapel dedicated to the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel, built by the Prince of Moldavia, Mihail Sturdza (1836-1849), restored during the archshepherding of his Holiness Patriarch Daniel, during the time period when he had the rank of Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bukovina. In the respective chapel, Metropolitan Pimen Georgescu held a service for the wounded soldiers in the autumn of the year 1916. On that occasion, the archbishop of Moldavia uttered the following words among others:

Neither in the Metropolitan churches, nor in the great monasteries, nor in the town or village churches have I ever been given the chance to find a greater movement in my soul than the one of today's Holy Liturgy. And I have the conviction that very few priests have had the opportunity to serve a Holy Liturgy attended only by wounded soldiers and by those recently arrived from the battlefield, as you are[...] (Pentelescu and Radu 2003: 109 at Cotan 2015: 91).

To those mentioned above, we also add that in the Iași Eparchial Centre's Archive several files may be found, which contain the reports of the deaneries and monasteries within the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Suceava, regarding this significant and special historical time period, 1916-1918 and the beging of 1919, their content reflecting the rich, diverse, consistent and, unfortunately, scarcely known work of the Church (Isai and Moldovan 2018: 23-27).

In general, the reports of the five protopopes [It is about the reports of the deaneries: *Botoșani* (drawn up on the 16th of April 1918 by rector Alexandru Simionescu), *Dorohoi* (drawn up on the 21st of February 1918 by archpriest Dumitru Grigorescu), *Iași* (drawn up on the 31st of March 1918 by archpriest Valeriu Iordăchescu), *Neamț* (drawn up on the 5th of May 1918 by archpriest Gheorghe Popovici), *Suceava* (drawn up on the 28th of July 1918, signed by archpriest Mihai Zaharescu)] (Isai and Moldovan 2018: 59-178) contain the types of activities in which the priests were involved during the war, in what he calls „behind the battlefield”, namely: the preparation of the soldiers and the people for war, the advice given to the soldiers and those who remained at home when the troops left for the battlefields, the blessing of the soldiers, the religious services for the soldiers on the battlefield, the activity of the priests in different committees and associations („The Fighters' Family”, Agricultural Committees, Community Supply Commissions, Public Banks, Village Communities), the fulfillment of the pastoral duty towards the army stationed in villages, and in infirmaries, receiving and taking care of the refugees, taking care of the war orphans, the collections initiated and completed by priests for the Red Cross, hospitals, orphans and prisoners of war, the free substitution of mobilised teachers, the statistics of the clergy and the churches at the end of 1917, organising and ensuring supplies for the county hospitals, which were meant for the wounded and for contagious diseases, the accommodation of soldiers in villages, taking care of the contagious diseases during the war, the

involvement of priests in agricultural work, obtaining and distributing food to people in need, in some cases, as it happened with the Dorohoi Deanery, the birth and death statistics (between the 15th of August and the 1st of January 1918) or the statistics of priests deceased due to contagious diseases (Iași and Neamț Deaneries), „the gathering of offerings to sustain the war effort”, the state of the churches and cemeteries at the beginning of the year 1918, etc.

To be able to reach an image of the Church's involvement during the war years, we broadly present, in order to exemplify, the report of the Botoșani Deanery. The respective report, drafted by the protopope Alexandru Simionescu and dated 16th of April 1918, contains the following 10 points/parts: 1. Preparing the soldiers and the people in light of the great events which had been foreseen and were expected; 2. The advice given to the soldiers and the people at the time of the troops departure for the battlefield, the blessing of the troops; 3. The priestly activity during the war (with several aspects: performing religious services to strengthen the troops; The spiritual bond kept between the parish priests and the soldiers on the battlefield; The work conducted in general by the priests, organised in different committees and associations established to ease the lives of those who remained at home and obtaining food for those who left for the battlefield - the activity of the priests in the association called „The Fighters' Family”, in the Community Agricultural Committees, in the Community Supply Commissions, in Public Banks, in the Village Communities for working the land; the care and comfort of the people and the army during the war time, and especially during the unfortunate retreats in the autumn and winter of 1916 and the winter of 1917 – the fulfillment of the pastoral duties towards the people, towards the army stationed in villages, towards the hospitals for the wounded and towards the infirmaries and hospitals for contagious diseases which were brought by the war, the collaboration with the sanitary authorities in this regard [Because of the Epidemic typhus, the priests buried 15-25 deceased people per day, the situation being so serious that „the mortuary carts were no longer able to pick up the dead. The priest sat for hours until a cart with oxen was requisitioned with which the bodies could be transported to the cemetery. There was no one to carry the cross before the convoy, at least for a while”] (Simionescu 1918 at Isai and Moldovan

2018: 61-62 and 93), receiving and taking care of refugees, taking care of various camps for sick people, caring for the orphans of war-, the various collections done by priests for the Red Cross Society, for hospitals, orphans of war, prisoners of war, for helping the various Christians who fell into heavy misfortunes [According to the same report, the priests organised collections for the different Associations and Institutions of charity. Thus, for the Regional Committee responsible with the care of hospitals for the wounded in Botoșani, the following were sent: 1027 shirts, 877 white trousers, 682 napkins, 59 handkerchiefs, 65 pairs of socks, 148 pairs of ribbons for tying the feet (in the original *obiele*), 9 pairs of gloves, 585m cloth, 2 thick blankets, 7 bags, 4 strips of bandage cloth, 15 sheets, 1 cotton packet and 3 mats (p. 103). In addition to the mentioned articles, the following products were also collected: 365 kg. corn, 114 kg. corn flour, 6890 kg. potatoes, 291 kg. beans, 134 chickens, 3 ducks, 1 goose, 4 kg. dried plums, 1 sheaf of leek, 1,5 kg. onions, 40 book volumes, 211 plates, 195 spoons, 36 pots, 43 cups of porcelain, 9 bowls, 4 porcelain bowls and 1 fork (pp. 103-104). For the Red Cross Association, Botoșani Branch, there were collected: 3.068,22 lei, 1 roubles and 57 kopeks, 148 shirts, 113 pair of trousers, 1631 napkins, 141 pillows, 1.222 *cots* of cloth (*cot* – old measuring unit; 1 *cot* was the equivalent of 66,4 cm, in Moldavia), 70 bedspreads of hemp and ribbons, 80 bedspreads of wool, 15 beedsheets, 19 pairs of socks, 4 table cloths, 1 carpet, 1 quilt, 5 pillow cases, 5 pair of gloves, 1 mattress, 4 handkerchiefs, 3 pairs of *obiele*, 10 strips of bandage cloth, 5 bags, 18 plates, 11 cups of porcelain, 12 spoons and 2 bowls (p. 104). To the Association for „The Protection of the War Orphans in Iasi”, until today, the sum of 1.634, 35 lei was sent from the same deneary (p. 104). Beside the collections organized by the deanery, the priests sent directly money as well as goods to the institutions involved in this project. So, they sent to the Red Cross Association the sum of 1.979,30 lei, 110 shirts, 80 white trousers, 184 napkins, 24 pillows, 31m cloth, 46 birds; to the „Fighters Family” – 2.142 lei; to the „Orphans of War” – 2.978 lei; to the „Prisoners of War”, 646 lei; to the „Invalids from the war” – 1.625 lei (pp. 104-105)] etc, the free substitution of mobilised teachers; 4. The moral and material state of the people at the end of the year 1917; 5. The state of the county from a church-administrative point of view and the state of the

churches at the end of the year 1917; 6. The situation of the clerical staff from a cultural-administrative point of view, statistical data on the population movement at the end of the year 1917; 7. General pastoral conferences and priestly cultural circles; 8. Inspections, investigations, rewards and punishments; 9. Cultural, philanthropical and economical associations of the clergy in Botoşani County; 10. Conclusions (Simionescu 1918: 61-62).

The reports of the other 10 monasteries within the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Suceava were drafted in a similar manner [*Agafon* (written on the 10th of April 1918 by Abbess Eupraxia Herescu), *Agapia* (written on the 10th of April 1918 by Abbess Eupraxia Demi), *Cetăţuia* (written on the 13th of April 1918 by Abbot Daniil Ciubotaru), *Durău* (signed on the 18th of April 1918 by Abbot Teofan Ionescu), *Gorovei* (written on the 11th of April 1918 by Abbot Ioanichie Irimciuc), *Neamţ* (written by Abbot Meletie Nicuţă on the 12th of April 1918), *Secu* (written by Abbot Ilarion Bălăiţă on the 10th of April 1918), *Slatina* (written on the 14th of April 1918 by Abbot Vasian Bucovineanul), *Văratec* (written by Abbess Zenovia Rachiş on the 10th of April 1918) and *Vorona* (signed on the 14th of April 1918 by Abbot Nifon Ioniţă)] (Isai and Moldovan 2018: 179-220). They contain, in general, the following elements: the activity of the monastery workshops where shirts, trousers, socks, gloves were made for the hospitals, the quartering of the soldiers, the housing of the refugees, the nuns' departure for the Red Cross hospitals, the organisation of the orphanages and the hospitals, training the monks as nurses and stretcher-bearers, the organisation, in monasteries, of driving schools for the drivers of hospital cars, the requisitions made for the army (food, hay, animals) and the hospitals, the lists of the monks mobilized at the Red Cross throughout the course of the war [According to Partenie Ciopron, „this blessed initiative of His Holiness, to send monks as nurses on the battlefield, had the desired results. Indeed, both in the 1913 campaign and in that of 1916-1918, teams of monks and nuns, sent to different hospitals for the injured, brought great services to the country”] (cf. Ciopron 1934: 303), etc.

Since we mentioned the contribution of the monasteries within the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Suceava, we would like to point out that they brought an immense contribution for the benefit of the Central Health

Committee. In order to better create an image, we provide the following data. For instance, the monasteries made available to the wounded soldiers a significant number of beds: Văratec (600 beds), Neamț (400 beds), Secu (250 beds), Cetățuia (30 beds), etc. Moreover, the Metropolitan states that the Metropolitanate of Moldavia will go to great lengths to make also other monasteries available to the army (Cotan 2015: 244).

But the contribution of the monasteries did not limit itself to bed donations for the wounded soldiers and taking care of them, but it was more complex. They housed and cared for orphans, they made various items of clothing for the soldiers, they offered food etc. For example, at Agafton Monastery, socks and several other underclothes were made for the army (whereas 115 refugees were as well housed). Văratec Monastery, in addition to donating the number of beds mentioned above, housed 168 orphaned girls and made underclothes and bandages, offering cattle and an area of land for the needs of the army. The same monastery cared for 574 wounded, within it, in October 1916. The nuns from Agapia Monastery made pillows, bed sheets, towels, socks, gloves and quilts for the soldiers. The monastery established an orphanage as well. Secu monastery donated to the army cattle, hayfields, fodder, food, next to the rooms already offered to the wounded, etc. (Cotan 2015: 244).

To the above mentioned facts, we also add the idea that Metropolitan Pimen was one of the leaders of those who had the initiative to build the Mărășești mausoleum [The mausoleum was called during that time „The Church of the Nation”, an „imposing cathedral with the ossuary of the soldiers sacrificed at Mărășești in the summer of the year 1917, at its foundation, most likely during those times a replica of the church from Războieni – the place of the great battle from Stephen the Great’s time, built literally and figuratively on the bones of Moldavia’s soldiers fallen in battle for the defense of their ancestral land and of Christianity] (*cf.* Pentelescu and Radu 2003: 134).

Pimen Georgescu, „Metropolitan of the Unification of Romania”

As we stated in the beginning of this present contribution, Metropolitan Pimen Georgescu got actively involved also in the great project of the People and the Church - „the unification of Romania”, which is why he has been named in history „*Metropolitan of the Unification of Romania*”.

His contribution or involvement in the attainment of the Great Union consists in the fact that he spoke in the Country Senate, he got informed about the actions of his brothers across the Prut river or in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he participated at the events brought about by the receiving of the delegates from the two Romanian provinces, Bessarabia and Bukovina, who submitted the The Deed of Unification to the Romanian authorities in Iași. Furthermore, he carried a correspondence with important figures in Bukovina and Transylvania, hierarchs, theology professors, priests etc., supporting both their struggle for union, as well as the establishment of institutions, particularly of a social nature, with help from the authorities in the Kingdom, for the consolidation of the Union [We remind that Metropolitan Pimen of Moldavia sent a telegram to Metropolitan Vladimir of Repta of Bukovina, gladly bringing to his attention, that the Romanians from the Kingdom, more specifically „the Committee of the Association for the Protection of War Orphans in Iași during last night’s meeting, on Thursday, voted the sum of one hundred thousand lei for the war orphans in Bukovina. The sum was at the disposal of the Committee of the Branch in Cernăuți, at their request. I believe that you have received the statuses of the Association” Signed: Pimen, Metropolitan of Moldavia (Letter no. 3535/30, Nov. 1918, signed by His Holiness Pimen and addressed „to His Holiness Metropolitan Vladimir of Repta, Cernăuți, *Cited file*, p. 29, in the Iași Eparchial Centre’s Archive, abbreviated ACEI)].

Among the many events surrounding the theme of the „Great Union” that Metropolitan Pimen attended, not only as a bystander, but also as being actively involved in their development, we will name a few. To this point, in his „Memoirs”, Metropolitan Pimen records:

also in this Metropolitan residence, many delegations of Bessarabian priests with the Russian Archbishop Anastasie were received, with whom we discussed in several meetings, in the presence of the then Minister of Cults, Mister Simion Mehedinți, issues concerning the Bessarabian Church after the union of this

province with the motherland. We would like to remind that the union of this province was done willingly on the 27th of March 1917 at Chişinău, Mister Alexandru Marghiloman, the Prime Minister at that time, being present as well, and it concluded at Iaşi, where the Bessarabian emissaries arrived and appeared before His Majesty the King, offering Bessarabia to the motherland for all eternity. On this occasion, a thanking *Te-Deum* service was held in the Metropolitan Cathedral in sign of gratitude to God and great folk celebrations took place. The Bessarabian emissary, along with other leaders of the nation, celebrated the Union in the Metropolitan residence, with a brotherly feast where much enthusiasm and excitement reigned (Georgescu 1934 at Isai and Moldovan 2018: 37).

In the same important work, the metropolitan who witnessed the event also described the meeting he had with a delegation from the Church of Kiev, lead by the Metropolitan of Kiev, Anthony, accompanied by Russian archbishops and bishops, refugees in Iasi for fear of the Bolsheviks (Georgescu 1934 at Isai and Moldovan 2018: 37). [We point out that the Russian hierarchs fled to Iasi, because of the people „who has completely changed its religious mentality, becoming a declared enemy of the clergy..., and the great churches were devastated and turned into party halls”. To the question asked by Metropolitan Pimen how this radical change of attitude could be explained, Metropolitan Anthony gave a sincere and meaningful answer: „It seems that we, the clergy of the Russian Church, did not have the power to make the holy teachings of our gentle Savior Jesus Christ, to the depths of our believers' soul. We were content only with the outward forms of the faithful man, while the soul was left bare. In the face of a strong shake, like the one caused by the war, the soul's void was overwhelmed with all sorts of poisons, that turned our people into one with savage impulses even against the idea of God and the love for one's neighbor, preached by the Christian religion”] (Georgescu 1934 at Isai and Moldovan 2018: 38). [We also add that the Russian hierarchs that took refuge in Iasi were well received by the Metropolitan of Moldavia, Pimen Georgescu], but also with the Metropolitan of Bukovina, Vladimir of Repta. Metropolitan Vladimir arrived in Iaşi

with emissaries from Bukovina, to offer *Bukovina* to the motherland, at that time, the Prime Minister being General Coandă. This delegation of emissaries went to Bucharest, together with us and General Coandă, to receive His Majesty The King together with the Royal Family, who, after relocating at Iaşi, were now

returning to Bucharest, with the triumphal army (Georgescu 1934 at Isai and Moldovan 2018: 38-39).

Neither is Transylvania overlooked by „the Metropolitan of the Unification of Romania”:

We will never forget the greatness of the day that had filled our hearts with the hope of victory, when the Transylvanian Legion arrived in Iași, made up of Romanian soldiers from Transylvania, former soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian Army, and taken prisoners by the russians, who, entering our army, swore an oath of faith to His Majesty the King, the religious service being performed by us before the troops on the plain *Windmill (Moara de Vânt)*, near Iași (Georgescu 1934 at Isai and Moldovan 2018: 39).

Worthy of remembering is the special pastoral about the Union which the great hierarch of Moldavia addressed to the spiritual sons and daughters from all around the eparchy, the *Te Deum* service officiated in the Metropolitan Cathedral in Iași, the prayer especially made for that event and also uttered then, or the sermon that he addressed to those present in the Metropolitan Cathedral on the same unique occasion (We specify that the items mentioned, as well as others like them, are presented and detailed in the paper submitted during the International Symposium „Unity and Identity. Romanian Orthodoxy between Eastern Communion and Dialogue with the West”, between November 4-18, 2018, at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj).

It should be mentioned that the pastoral that he addressed to the „clergy and the faithful people of Moldavia”, dated 18 of November 1918 (*File 54/1918*, pp. 15-18, in ACEI), was sent to the King of Romania through the Marshal of the Royal Court (Address no. 3630/11.12.1918, having as recipient the Marshal of the Royal House, Bucharest, in *Cited file*, p. 32, in ACEI), to the Prime Minister of Romania [The contents of the telegram is: „Making a pastoral book, directed towards the clergy and the people, regarding the unification of all Romanians in a Greater Romania, as well as towards the duties that are imposed to us, regarding the social improvements that will be made, it is my honor to bring to your knowledge some of this pastoral book. Mister Minister, we humbly ask that you receive our special considerations and blessings”] (*cf.* Address no. 3605/ 7 December 1918, in *Cited file*, p. 31, in ACEI), as well as to the Minister of Internal Affairs (Address no. 3606, in *Dosarul citat*, p. 36,

in ACEI. We ask the Minister of Internal Affairs to approve the publication of the pastoral in *Monitorul Oficial* of Romania (The Official Gazette of Romania) „so it can be brought to people’s knowledge”) and the „Minister of the Cults” (Address no. 3607, in *Cited file*, p. 31, in ACEI).

We also mention that Metropolitan Pimen corresponded with the great personalities of his time who were involved in the historic act leading to Romania’s unification, among whom we remind: King Ferdinand, the Marshal of the Royal Court, several ministers starting with the Prime Minister, as we have already noticed, the Metropolitan of Bukovina, Vladimir Repta, Bishop Miron Elie Cristea of Caransebeş, Iuliu Maniu, the President of the Alba Iulia - Transylvanian National Committee, the leadership of Transylvania’s Orthodox Metropolitanate and the one of the Greek-Catholic Metropolitanate in Blaj, Iancu Flondor, the President of the National Committee in Cernăuți, the Governor of the National Bank, and many others.

We wish to focus on two or even three of the many telegrams. For instance, he wrote to Metropolitan Vladimir of Repta of Bukovina:

With us is the Lord, let the nations understand this, those which have dominated us for centuries, because holy justice has been done to us, and our beloved Bukovina, with the old Metropolitanate of Suceava and the glorified grave at Putna, has forever joined Steven the Great’s Moldavia, by the will of God and the voice of the clerics and the people. Let us rejoice in the great day of the unification of all Romanian Countries in a single state, with a national church, always praying to God for the wellbeing and the happiness of our people.

Long live Bukovina with our brethren and their worthy Archbishop Vladimir of Repta, whom we await with great joy to arrive in Iași tomorrow, on Friday (Address no. 3426/ 15 November 1918 (Concept) to His Holiness Vladimir of Repta, Metropolitan of Bukovina, Cernăuți, in *Cited file*, p. 15, in ACEI).

To Mr. Iancu Flondor, Metropolitan Pimen wrote:

Blessed be the Lord of our parents, for He has done justice to us, through the fact that Bukovina, with the Metropolitanate of Suceava and the glorified grave at Putna, forever joined its mother, Moldavia, the country of Steven the Great.

Let us consider ourselves happy for living in these times, when brethren get united into a Great Romania, won with sacrifices and built on justice. Long live Bukovina and its worthy sons (Address no. 3427/15 November 1918 (Concept) to

Mr. Iancu Flondor, President of the National Committee in Cernăuți, in *Cited file*, p. 12, in ACEI).

The same Metropolitan of Moldavia, Pimen, has had an exchange of telegrams with the leadership of the Faculty of Theology in Cernăuți, whose graduate he was [Here he attended the courses of the Faculty of Theology (1880-1884) and pursued his doctoral , obtaining the PhD title in 1885] (*cf. Păcurariu 2002: 193*):

In the elevating moments of the much desired and expected unification of beautiful Bukovina with the motherland, the teaching staff of the Faculty of Theology brings to your sanctity, its former student and Ph.D, the gift of (eternal) appreciation, begging for the help of God almighty for fulfilling the great call of the Romanian Orthodox Church (The telegram (no. 25 92/ 23, Noiembrie 1918) from the Faculty of Theology in Cernăuți to Metropolitan Pimen in *Cited file*, p. 13, in ACEI).

To the above mentioned telegram, Metropolitan Pimen gave the following answer: “to his excellency, prof. dr. Saghin, Dean of the Theology Faculty in Cernăuți”:

The telegram of the teaching staff of that Faculty moved me deeply, reminding me of the time when I, together with many of you and those in Ardeal, gathered at Cernăuți in our beloved Bukovina, were preparing spiritually for these times, which we, the young ones, only used to dream of, and today, by the help of God, are given the chance to live. While thanking you all, I wish to the Faculty of Theology in Cernăuți to continue to be also in the future a high establishment for the education of Romania’s priests, as it has been so far. Pimen, Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava, November 23rd, 1918 (*Cited file*, p. 14, in ACEI).

Conclusions

Metropolitan Pimen Georgescu has been one of the greatest Moldavian metropolitans of all those belonging to the the six centuries of activity acknowledged by documents. He has been great not only through the time length of his service, but also and especially through his achievements during extremely trying times.

More than that, he was mostly the Metropolitan of the ”Great War”, and also of the ”union of the Romanian people”.

The monograph which has been dedicated to him by Aurel Pentelescu și Gavriil Preda is more than relevant in this direction. It reflects his longstanding and rich work. However, having in mind the year

dedicated to the Centenary of United Romania, we considered it to be our duty, the duty of those in Moldavia, to dedicate to him the present material, using, in addition to the published information, also some of the new elements found in the Archive of the Iasi Eparchy Center.

Of his entire activity (speeches, pastoral letters, correspondence, etc), what is especially noticeable is his active implication and his significant contribution in the long and difficult process of Romania's unification. In other words, Metropolitan Pimen Georgescu put his life on the Church's and the Country's altar.

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