

TEO, ISSN 2247-4382

102 (1), pp. 182-197, 2025

## **Reverend ANDREI BUZDUG (1891-1939) – An Eminent, though Less Known Homiletics Professor from Ardeal. Pastoral and Didactic Transylvanian Context of His Service**

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### **Abstract**

Knowing the life and works of the great personalities who served the Transylvanian theological education in the historical episcopal centres of Sibiu, Cluj, Oradea and Arad is extremely benefic for the generations of priests and future priests, as well as for theological students. In fact, we speak about a reciprocity of knowledge, as both Transylvanian hierarchs and the professors that they promoted within theological Academies and Institutes knew each other, read each other's books and used them during their courses. In the present study we shall mention several names of well-known hierarchs from the first half of the XXth century: Ioan Meşianu and Nicolae Bălan (Sibiu), Roman Ciorogariu and Nicolae Popovici (Oradea), Ioan Papp, Grigorie Comşa and Andrei Magieru (Arad), Nicolae Ivan and Nicolae Colan (Cluj). These distinguished hierarchs, scholars as well as dedicated priests, promoted professors for all the theological disciplines recommended by the theological education curricula of those times. In Cluj, one of the professors proposed by Bishop Nicolae Ivan – founder of the newly established diocese (1921), was Andrei Buzdug, the first dean of the Theological Institute, founded in 1924. PhD in Theology, author of four books of sermons, as well as of numerous studies and articles, conferences etc., Rev. Andrei Buzdug proved to be extremely prolific, despite the fact that he

lived only 48 years. Therefore, we consider that he deserves to be more widely known, at least in Transylvania, not only in the Eparchy of Cluj.

**Keywords:**

Andrei Buzdug, Transylvanian pastoral and didactic context, illustrious preachers, manuals, books of sermons, the present

## Preliminaries

With a view to making better known one of the most valuable Transylvanian specialists in Homiletics from the first half of the XXth century, we shall first outline several aspects regarding theological education in the main episcopal centres, highlighting the names of the hierarchs who, along with their priestly duties, proved to be also founders of theological schools, providing them with what was necessary from an administrative point of view, as well as with appropriate teaching staff. We shall briefly mention the places, the names of the hierarchs and of several outstanding professors – committed to the department of homiletics and catechetics. The purpose of this preamble is to have an overview – be it short – of the general Transylvanian milieu where Rev. Prof. Buzdug from Cluj carried out his activity. He certainly did not develop his university career isolated, but in relation with the other Transylvanian professors in Sibiu, Oradea and Arad.

We shall start by saying that he graduated from the prestigious university in Cernăuți with a PhD in Theology. His general theological profile and especially his didactic approach cannot be analyzed, though, without observing the academic milieu in Cernăuți, of great prestige in the last quarter of the XIXth and the first decades of the XXth century<sup>1</sup>. A useful synthesis of the situation within the Faculty of Theology from Cernăuți University is offered by Lecturer PhD Constantin Ungureanu, in “*Studia Universitatis Moldaviae*” magazine<sup>2</sup>, presenting the Romanian Theology professors according to their departments. Some of them were directly involved in the instruction of the young student Andrei Buzdug.

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<sup>1</sup> Generous data on the history of the university and those who taught there over time are provided on the site [https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universitatea\\_din\\_Cernăuți](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universitatea_din_Cernăuți), whereas for the current situation: <https://www.chnu.edu.ua/> (in Ukrainian and English languages). Sites accessed on 8.03.2025.

<sup>2</sup> Nr. 4 (104), 2017, pp. 88-98.

From the moment of its establishment (1875) until 1920, when the new Romanian University was founded, the teaching staff - full or substitute teachers - changed within the department of Homiletics and Catechetics, but what marked the students' training were the two printed textbooks, highly relevant even today, except for the bibliography and the language. They are *Omiletica Bisericii dreptcredincioase răsăritene (Homiletics of the Holy Eastern Church)*<sup>3</sup> and *Catehetica (Catechetics)*<sup>4</sup>, two authentic treatises, still representative in the Romanian homiletic and catechetical field.

### **I. The situation of the episcopal sees in Transylvania at the beginning of the XXth century. Theological schools and Homiletics professors**

Until the Great Union in 1918, hierarchs and priests in Transylvania endured together with the other Christians the oppressive yoke of foreign domination. Episcopal sees and theological schools were actually at the mercy of temporal rulers, often abusive or indifferent to the Romanians' needs and aspirations. Following the reunification of the country, the Orthodox Church and the educational institutions started to feel a warm and regenerating spring, after so many dark, cold and poor winters. Therefore, alongside with the renewal of the Theological School in Sibiu, similar institutions opened their gates in Oradea, Arad and Cluj. We shall mention only several names of hierarchs and professors from these centres in the present article, in order to better understand the historical and theological milieu where Rev.Prof. Andrei Buzdug from Cluj carried out his activity.

**1. SIBIU.** To provide the necessary data, we used the well-known works of Acad. Rev. Prof. Mircea Păcurariu, one of them being particularly dedicated to the Transylvanian region<sup>5</sup>, but of great help was also the

<sup>3</sup> Author: Vasile MITROFANOVICI, Cernăuți, 1975, XIII + 771 p. Details on conception and chapters, in: *Omiletica (Homiletics)*, coord. by V. GORDON, Ed. Basilica, 2015, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Author: Juvenal STEFANELLI, Cernăuți, 1880; IInd enriched edition, 1904, 342 p. See Rev. V. GORDON, *Introducere în Catehetică (Introduction to Catechetics)*, Ed. Sophia, 2004, pp. 9-10.

<sup>5</sup> Mircea PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Românești din Transilvania, Banat, Crișana și Maramureș (History of the Romanian Church in Transylvania, Banat, Crișana and*

doctoral dissertation of Rev. Prof. Miron Erdei<sup>6</sup> from Oradea. We shall select from both authors those data that will help us meet the presented objective.

We shall first evoke Metropolitan **Ioan Mețianu** (1889-1916). Due to his efforts, a building was bought in 1914 and it became the headquarters of the Theological and Pedagogical Institute. He also took charge of having outstanding professors: Vasile Stan, Nicolae Bălan, Ioan Lupaș, Silviu Dragomir, Pavel Roșca, Romulus Căndea. At the same time, “*Revista Teologică*” (*The Theological Magazine*), started to be published in 1907<sup>7</sup>. Despite all these efforts, hundreds of Romanian schools were closed in Transylvania and Banat, through interferences and decisions opposed to the aspirations of the Romanians, so that the Archdiocese came to have only 670 schools in 1912<sup>8</sup>.

We have seen among the professors the name of **Nicolae Bălan**, elected metropolitan in 1920, dignity in which he served until 1955. His life and activity are generally well known. That is why we mention here only the fact that he was *professor* at the Theological and Pedagogical Institute in Sibiu until his election as metropolitan and founder of *Revista Teologică* (*The Theological Magazine*)<sup>9</sup>. During his spiritual guidance, he managed to bring the Theological Institute in Sibiu to the rank of Academy (1921). He also coordinated the activity of numerous secondary schools, following the model of Andrei Șaguna: he founded a Normal School for Girls and a School of Church Singers, bearing the name of “Dimitrie Cunțan”. He was the metropolitan who sent and encouraged young students to specialize by

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*Maramureș*), Cluj-Napoca, 1992, 394 pp.

<sup>6</sup> Miron ERDEI, *Propovăduirea în Biserica Ortodoxă Română din Transilvania în prima jumătate a secolului al XX-lea* (*Preaching in the Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania in the first half of the XXth century*), Editura Cogito, Oradea, 2001; II<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2010, 384 pp.

<sup>7</sup> Mircea PĂCURARIU, *Două sute de ani de Învățămint teologic la Sibiu 1786- 1987* (*Two hundred years of Theological Education in Sibiu 1786-1987*), Sibiu, 1987, pp. 102-138.

<sup>8</sup> Mircea PĂCURARIU, *Politica Statului Ungar față de Biserica Românească din Transilvania în perioada Dualismului 1867-1919* (*The policy of the Hungarian state towards the Romanian Church in Transylvania over the period of Dualism 1867-1919*), Institutul Biblic de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Sibiu, 1986, pp. 154-164.

<sup>9</sup> Short, but relevant data at Mircea PĂCURARIU, *Dicționarul Teologilor Români* (*Dictionary of Romanian Theologians*), Editura Enciclopedică, București 2002, pp. 37-38.

studying abroad, thus contributing to the evolution of the teaching staff in Sibiu, but also in the other Academies throughout the country.

**The Department of Homiletics and Catechetics.** During the spiritual guidance of Metropolitan Miron Romanul, the Rhetoric courses (*Homiletics*) were taught by PhD Nicolae Maier (1839-1898) and Ioan Ghibu (1846-1915). Some courses according to textbooks, others “following the manuscript”, as was the case of Homiletics, taught after an old manuscript of Zaharia Boiu<sup>10</sup>. The department of Homiletics was afterwards honoured by Gheorghe Secaş<sup>11</sup> and Spiridon Câdea<sup>12</sup>, and during the school year 1938-1939 by professor Liviu Stan<sup>13</sup>. Due to the numerous actions taken by metropolitan Nicolae Bălan, The “*Andreienă*” Theological Academy was recognized starting with the year 1943 as a *Superior Institution of University Degree*, whereas the department of Homiletics and Catechetics was honoured by Rev. Dumitru Călugăr<sup>14</sup>.

**2. ORADEA.** It is here that stood out the illustrious **Roman Ciorogariu**, renowned pedagogue, journalist and theologian, with studies in the theological field in Arad (1874-1877), at the University of Bonn, where he studied Theology and Philosophy and at the University of Leipzig, where he specialized in Pedagogy and Psychology<sup>15</sup>.

He starts his activity as a clerk in Arad, to be later seen as a professor at the Theological and Pedagogical Institute in Arad, where he will also occupy the position of director, then he becomes a monk named Roman, in 1900 and 17 years later diocesan vicar in Oradea. Three years later he will be the first bishop of Oradea (3/16 October 1920), ordained and installed in 1921, guiding in his episcopal see until his death (on January 21, 1936). Permanently preoccupied with the rights of the Romanian people, he was an honorary member of the Romanian Academy, as well as of the Senate.

<sup>10</sup> Miron ERDEI, *Propovăduirea...*, p. 29.

<sup>11</sup> Author of the book of sermons *Toată viața noastră lui Hristos Dumnezeu să o dăm!* (*Let us give our whole life to Christ, our Lord!*), Sibiu, 1931, 204 pp.

<sup>12</sup> See also the vol. with sermons (in collab. with Rev. Zosim Oancea), *Bune vestiri*, Sibiu, 1944, 510 pp.

<sup>13</sup> Miron ERDEI, *Propovăduirea...*, p. 35.

<sup>14</sup> Miron ERDEI, *Propovăduirea...*, p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> Mircea PĂCURARIU, *Dicționarul Teologilor ...*, p. 101.

Another remarkable name in Oradea is that of bishop **Nicolae Popovici** (elected in 1936), with University studies at *Andreiană* Academy in Sibiu (1923-1927), then with differences at the Faculty of Theology in Cernăuți, that he will graduate with a PhD in 1934<sup>16</sup>. He continues his theological studies in Athens, then he studies Philosophy in Munchen, Tubingen, Leipzig and Breslau, becoming a Professor of Dogmatics and Apologetics within *Andreiană* Academy, until his election as a bishop of Oradea. We mention some of his remarkable books: “Epicleza euharistică” (*The Eucharistic Epiclesis*), Sibiu 1933 and “Lespezi de aur (*cuvântări*)” (“Golden Slabs [*sermons*]), Beiuș, 1942.

**Homiletics and Catechetics courses.** First of all, we must point to the fact that, after numerous steps taken by bishop Roman Ciorogariu to the Ministry of Cults, the approval was obtained to open a Theological Seminary in Oradea, starting with the autumn of the year 1923, with the request that the Theological Institute should turn from 3 to 4 years of studies. That was the establishment of the *first Theological Academy with 4 years of studies, after the reunification of Romania*<sup>17</sup>. Homiletics and Catechetics courses were delivered by Rev. Prof. PhD Mihail Bulacu, between the years 1926-1929, then, over 1929-1937, by Rev. Prof. PhD Petre Procopovici. After the transfer of Petre Procopovici to Cernăuți (1938), the discipline Homiletics was taught by Prof. PhD Dimitrie Bodea<sup>18</sup>.

*Among the textbooks used at that time, we mention Pedagogie creștină ortodoxă (Orthodox Christian Pedagogy) of Rev. Mihail Bulacu (București, 1935), with paragraphs of great use for Catechetics and Introducere în Omiletică (Introduction to Homiletics) of Prof. Petre Procopovici, Iași 1947.*

**3. ARAD.** We benefit from an excellent volume signed by Rev. Prof. Cristinel Ioja and Lect. Marcel Tang<sup>19</sup> on theological education in Arad, seen as a whole, whereas on the department of Homiletics and Catechetics we have first-hand references in the doctoral dissertation of Rev. Lect.

<sup>16</sup> Mircea PĂCURARIU, *Dicționarul Teologilor ...*, pp. 394-395.

<sup>17</sup> Miron ERDEI, *Propovăduirea...*, p. 39.

<sup>18</sup> Miron ERDEI, *Propovăduirea...*, p. 46.

<sup>19</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Cristinel IOJA, Lect. Univ. Dr. Marcel TANG, *Învățământul teologic ortodox din Arad. Itinerar. Forme. Perspective (Orthodox Theological Education in Arad. Itinerary. Forms, Perspectives)*, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Aradului, Arad, 2016, 298 pp.

Filip Albu<sup>20</sup>. We shall extract the strictly necessary data from both sources, mainly for the first half of the XXth century, for the decades that are common with the activity of Rev. Prof. Andrei Buzdug in Cluj.

We first mention the bishops that served in Arad and who remained in the collective memory with outstanding roles: **Ioan Papp**, bishop between 1902-1925, was co-president of the Grand National Assembly in Alba Iulia on December 1, 1918, as being the oldest of the Transylvanian Orthodox bishops<sup>21</sup>. **Grigorie Comșa** was installed bishop on July 12, 1925 and served until 1935, when he passed to the Lord. He was honorary member of the Romanian Academy and he coordinated various activities in his Eparchy, by which he sought to defend the Orthodox faith against the sectarian proselytism. He was known as a great orator, publishing more than 75 anti-sectarian works. He is also considered one of the most prolific Transylvanian writers of sermon books. We mention some of them hereafter: “Predici pentru toate duminicile de peste an și alte ocaziuni” (*Sermons for all the Sundays of the year and other occasions*), Arad, 1918; “Pentru neam și lege. Patruzeci de cuvântări împotriva adventiștilor și baptiștilor” (*For the nation and the law. Forty lectures against Adventists and Baptists*), Caransebeș, 1923; “Veniți la Hristos, Predici la toate Duminicile anului bisericesc” (*Come to Christ - Sermons for all Sundays of the Church year*), Arad, 1926. Before becoming a bishop, he published under his layman name, Gheorghe, “Istoria predicei la români” (*The History of the Sermon at the Romanians*) – the only writing of this type within the Romanian Orthodox Church to date<sup>22</sup>. **Andrei Magieru** studied at the University of Cernăuți (1909-1913), graduating with a PhD in 1916<sup>23</sup>. He was elected bishop of Arad in 1935, spiritually guiding until he passed to the Lord

<sup>20</sup> Pr. Lect. Univ. Dr. Filip ALBU, *Opera omiletică a Episcopului Grigorie Comșa al Aradului* (*The Homiletic Work of Bishop Grigorie Comșa of Arad*), doctoral dissertation in Theology, coordinated by Rev. Prof. Vasile Gordon, Ed. Universității “Aurel Vlaicu” din Arad, Arad, 2010, 408 p

<sup>21</sup> Gelu NEAMȚU, Mircea VAIDA-VOEVOD, *1 decembrie 1918, Mărturii ale participanților. Ioachim Crăciun: Documente la un sfert de veac de la Marea Unire* (*December 1, 1918, Testimonies of participants. Ioachim Crăciun: Documents at a quarter of a century from the Great Union*), vol. II, Editura Academiei Române, București, pp. 203-204.

<sup>22</sup> Dr. Gheorghe COMȘA, *Istoria predicei la romani* (*History of the Sermon at the Romanians*), Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, 1921, 302 pp.

<sup>23</sup> Mircea PĂCURARIU, *Dicționarul Teologilor...*, pp. 261-262.



(1960). He was one of the hierarchs who saved the life of a lot of Jews. He published a *New Testament* course, various sermons, articles and reviews.

*The Department of Homiletics and Catechetics* was served by an impressing number of professors. Due to the above-mentioned work, signed by Rev. Prof. Cristinel Ioja and Marcel Tang, we have the complete list with their names and the years of teaching: *Roman (Romul) Ciorogariu* (b.1852 - d.1936; professor: 1881-1889 and 1891-1917; director: 1901-1917); *Romul Nestor* (b.1864 - d. 1925; professor: 1890-1895; 1905-1906 and 1920-1925); *PhD Gheorghe Dragomir* (b.1870 - d.1918; professor: 1897-1900); *PhD Iustin (Iuliu) Suciu* (b.1873 - d.1953; professor: 1900-1938); *PhD Gheorghe Ciuhandu* (b.1875 - d.1947; professor: 1902-1903); *Caius Turicu* (b.1895 - d.1968; professor: 1922-1926)

*Vintilă Popescu* (b.1895 - d.1971; professor: 1926-1948); *Petru Varga* (b.1810 - d.1858; professor: 1835-1839; director: 1838-1839); *PhD Simion Șiclovan* (b.1898 - d.1988; professor: 1925-1948; vice-rector: 1941; rector:1946-1947); **PhD Ilarion-Virgil Felea** (b.1909 - d.1961; professor: 1938-1948; rector: 1947-1948). The last mentioned one was recently canonized, commemorated on September 18.

From the textbooks of Homiletics that were used we mention: “Omiletica” (*Homiletics*) written by David Voniga (Orăștie, 1906) and the one signed by George Aramă (București, 1913).

## II. THE EPARCHY of CLUJ under the spiritual guidance of the worthy bishops Nicolae Ivan and Nicolae Colan

For a better understanding of the social, pastoral and didactic milieu where Rev. Andrei Buzdug developed his University career, we consider of use to provide a short historical overview of the bishops and of the theological school in the Eparchy of Cluj. We shall start with bishop **Nicolae Ivan** (1855-1936), devoted from all points of view to the sacerdotal service. Sent by God to guide with dignity Christ’s flock, he was born in Aciliu village of Sibiu county, as part of a large family of middle peasants<sup>24</sup>. He

<sup>24</sup> Alexandru MORARU, *Scurt istoric al eparhiei Vadului, Feleacului și Clujului 1921-2006*, Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, p. 43.



attended primary school in Aciliu village (1861-1865) - Sibiu county, then the State Highschool in Sibiu (1865-1874), that he graduated with very good results. He studied at the “Andreian” Theological Seminary in Sibiu between 1874-1877, that he also graduated with honors<sup>25</sup>. He marries Maria Jech, a Roman-Catholic young girl converted to Orthodoxy in 1880, the year when Metropolitan Miron Romanul (1828-1898) ordains him deacon for the “general needs” of the Archdiocese of Sibiu, then he is ordained priest, in 1884, by the same Metropolitan and appointed Religion teacher at the penitentiary in Aiud, where he carried out a special “humanitarian and Romanian” activity for 6 years, being congratulated by all those who knew him at that time<sup>26</sup>. In the year 1892 he becomes parish priest at the central parish in Alba Iulia, being also entrusted with the mission of archpriest. Meanwhile, he suffers a great loss – the death of his wife, due to a sudden illness. In 1894 he was appointed archpriest administrator in Orăștie, where he was preoccupied with promoting culture among the Romanian people. On July 20, 1919, he was elected president of the archdiocesan Consistory in Cluj, with a view to establishing a bishopric. This is how the Episcopate of Vad, Feleac and Cluj (with headquarters in Cluj) is reestablished on June 22, 1921, the official founding text being published in “Monitorul Oficial” on July 18, 1921<sup>27</sup>.

After his ordination as bishop, in the metropolitan Cathedral of Sibiu (on November 24/ December 4, 1921), he was installed in Cluj in December 6/ 19, 1921, at the age of 66<sup>28</sup>.

Bishop Nicolae Ivan had remarkable achievements in the 11 years as head of the Episcopate in Cluj, as he actually “laid the foundations” of this institution: building the diocesan Cathedral, **opening the Theological Institute** (1924), founding a printing house, a lot of edifices, obtaining the current archiepiscopal residence, a large number of churches and many other accomplishments, visible until the present times<sup>29</sup>.

**Nicolae Colan** was born on the 28th of November 1893, in Covasna county, Arpătac village (at present, Araci), in a large family of faithful peasants. He finishes his theological studies at the “*Andreiană*” Academy

<sup>25</sup> Alexandru MORARU, *Scurt istoric...*, p. 44.

<sup>26</sup> Alexandru MORARU, *Scurt istoric...*, p. 44.

<sup>27</sup> Alexandru MORARU, *Scurt istoric ...*, p. 45.

<sup>28</sup> Alexandru MORARU, *Scurt istoric ...*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>29</sup> Alexandru MORARU, *Scurt istoric ...*, p. 46.

in Sibiu and later he defends his Bachelor's thesis at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, with the title: "The Style of Dimitrie Cantemir in his Romanian Writings"<sup>30</sup>. After completing specialized studies in Berlin, he starts teaching the New Testament at the *Andreiană* Academy in Sibiu, obtaining the full title of Professor in the year 1924. From 1928 he will be rector of the same Institute until he becomes a bishop, in 1936<sup>31</sup>. Rev. Prof. Alexandru Moraru tells us that bishop Nicolae Colan was the only Orthodox hierarch who, following the Vienna Dictate in August 1940, "remained in the temporarily occupied territory", spiritually guiding the Christians from the Eparchies of Maramureș, Oradea and Sibiu. For the spiritual needs of the Transylvanian Romanians, he translated the New Testament in a "genuine Romanian language". It was published in Cluj in two editions (1942 and 1945) and, besides these, he also published numerous studies and articles<sup>32</sup>. Among other important accomplishments, from the viewpoint of the administration of the Eparchy of Cluj, we mention the beautiful painting of the Cathedral in Cluj, as well as **raising the Theological Institute to University level** (1948-1952), the School of Church singers in Nușeni, the School of Church singers and the Theological Seminary in Cluj, Confessional Schools, the maintenance and the good functioning of the printing house, of the bookshop, of the museum, library and diocesan archives. In the year 1957 he is raised to the rank of Metropolitan of Transylvania, until 1967, when he passed to the eternal life on the 15th of April, after a "distinguished episcopate", quoting Rev. Prof. Alexandru Moraru, being buried in the church of Rășinari (Sibiu county) and then moved to Sâmbăta de Sus Monastery.

### III. ANDREI BUZDUG (1891-1939) – eminent Transylvanian Homiletics Professor, less known

He was born in a family of priests of Josenii Bârgăului, in Bistrița Năsăud county, on the 9th of December 1891. He stood out as a young

<sup>30</sup> Alexandru MORARU, *Scurt istoric ...*, p. 61.

<sup>31</sup> Alexandru MORARU, *Scurt istoric ...*, p. 61.

<sup>32</sup> Alexandru MORARU, *Scurt istoric ...*, p. 61.

book lover from an early age, so that, after completing the courses of the secondary school together with the frontier guards' children, he will study at highschools in Năsăud and Blaj. From 1910 to 1914 he will study at the prestigious Faculty of Theology in Cernăuți, that he will graduate in 1916 with a PhD<sup>33</sup>. There is a small omission that was transmitted even by certain official sources, regarding the beginning of his priesthood in his native village, starting with the year 1918, fact that we shall make clear using data from his "Personal file", where we have the information that young Andrei gets married only in 1925, whereas the request for ordination was addressed subsequently, during the same year. Young Andrei's career starts in Bistrița, as a Religion teacher, continuing from 1920 to teach in Cluj, at "George Barițiu" Highschool, until 1924. He stood out as a great defender of the identity of nation and language from the period when he was a student in Cernăuți, following that on the days previous to the act of the Great Union in 1918 we find him as a representative of the local community. Therefore, on November 14/27, 1918 he participates in the assembly of the Romanians from the electoral circle of Năsăud, led by Alexandru Haliță (president) and Victor Motogna (notary)<sup>34</sup>. Shortly after, he is elected representative of the local community in Josenii Bârgăului at the ceremonies for the Grand National Assembly in Alba Iulia<sup>35</sup>. After the foundation of the Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca, in 1924, young Andrei Buzdug becomes professor of Homiletics and Catechetics, where he will carry out his activity until the end of his life. He also had the function of "rector" for a period of a year (1925-1926), the equivalent of the present-day dean. In 1924 he is involved in a program of catechesis dedicated to the apprentices from the schools of crafts, to young students and to the working class at the initiative of the Diocesan Consistory in Cluj, program carried out during Lent, delivering his lecture on the 30th of March 1924, on the IIIrd Sunday (*of the Holy Cross*), from Easter Lent<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Mircea PĂCURARIU, *Dicționarul Teologilor...*, p. 75.

<sup>34</sup> *1918 La Români - Documentele Unirii, Unirea Transilvaniei cu România 1 Decembrie 1918 (1918 At the Romanians - Documents of the Union, Union of Transylvania with Romania, December 1, 1918)* Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1918, p.79.

<sup>35</sup> *1918 La Români...*, p. 82.

<sup>36</sup> *Telegraful Român*, year LXXII, Sibiu, 6/19 March 1924, nr. 20, p. 3.

He married Elvira Pop from Leșu, having two daughters together. He was one of the professors that Bishop Nicolae Ivan involved in various other activities, such as writing Religion schoolbooks. He passed away too early, at the age of almost 48 (1939), in full force. He was hard to replace as a teacher, as students loved him as a father. Moreover, the period in which he taught was quite difficult, being the tough years that followed the first world war.

**Homiletic, catechetical and pedagogical work.** Following the call of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Rev. Andrei Buzdug managed to provide the clergy with a very consistent homiletic and catechetical work in a short period of time. He confesses his pastoral credo in many of his sermons, as in the following example (the final part of the sermon on the Annunciation Day in 1925):

“The belief in our own power, together with serious and perpetual work, crowned by the faith in God. Only by believing in the efficiency of this serious and generous work, according to people’s strength, either in the intellectual field, or in the manual labor, and above both to have faith in God, only in this way we will be able to shun the disaster of our national organism, won with so much effort and pain”<sup>37</sup>.

Throughout all his lifetime, Rev. Andrei Buzdug carried out an intense homiletic and catechetical activity, publishing over 166 sermons, in four volumes. From the point of view of his didactic activity, he was devoted to his department for 21 years – out of which 14 years were marked also by his serving as a priest. In the years when he worked as a professor within the Romanian Orthodox Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca, he delivered numerous conferences, his words being extremely appreciated by the youth, but also by the general public, that he often moved to tears<sup>38</sup>. From the conferences, we note: “The role and the importance of crafts”, pointing

<sup>37</sup> Andrei BUZDUG, “Predică la Bunavestire”, in: *Renășterea*, year III, nr. 12, Cluj, (March 22, 1925), p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> “Propaganda religioasă morală. Societatea ortodoxă a femeilor din Cluj. Institutul teologic” (“Moral religious propaganda. Women’s Orthodox Society in Cluj. The Theological Institute”), in: *Renășterea*, year III, nr. 12, Cluj, March 22, 1925, pp. 1-2.

to the value and uses of embracing crafts, succeeding in raising interest in this matter<sup>39</sup>; “The real way” (published in a brochure), conference held on the 27th of March 1927, in room 4 of the University in Cluj, in the cycle of conferences organized by the Society of Romanian Orthodox Women<sup>40</sup>. We also mention: “On our country and nation”, “Against alcohol”, “On the false prophets from our days”, “The harm done by judging others”. With the blessing of the Very Reverend Nicolae Ivan, Rev. Andrei Buzdug also coordinated a series of “Biblical workshops”, for the students of the Theological Institute that had to preach in various schools<sup>41</sup>. We note hereafter several articles from magazines: “Îisus Hristos și păstorii de suflete” (*Jesus Christ and the shepherds of souls*), “Păstorii sufletești” (*Spiritual guides*), “Rolul prediciei” (*The role of the sermon*), “Predica de azi și noi” (*Today’s sermon and us*), “Din durerile preoțimii” (*From the pains of the priesthood*) etc.<sup>42</sup>. Rev. Andrei Buzdug very often answered promptly to the problems that arose in the eparchy, searching for viable solutions. This is, for example, how the article “Pastoral issues” was written, presenting the dangers that the Church was facing at that time<sup>43</sup>. In the Church press we can also find the review of a book published in Cernăuți by Rev. Ioan Zugrav, namely “The Cult of the Dead”<sup>44</sup>, extremely useful in the spiritual guiding, as well as for liturgical studies.

**Volumes of sermons.** In 1933, he publishes the first volume, having the title: “Victuals for faithful souls. Sermons for all Sundays of the Church

<sup>39</sup> <http://dspace.bcucuj.ro/handle/123456789/26448> (Biblioteca digitală Cluj - *Digital library Cluj*). Accessed: 10.03.2025.

<sup>40</sup> Andrei BUZDUG, “Adevăratul drum” (“The real way”), in: *Renașterea*, year V, Nr. 46, November 13, 1927, pp. 3-6; <http://dspace.bcucuj.ro/handle/123456789/26513> (Biblioteca digitală Cluj - *Digital library Cluj*). Accessed: 10.03.2025.

<sup>41</sup> *Clujul ortodox: foaia parohială a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române din Cluj*, year I, Nr. 6, March 15, 1931, Cluj, p. 4; <http://dspace.bcucuj.ro/handle/123456789/86712> (Biblioteca digitală Cluj - *Digital library Cluj*). Accessed: 10.03.2025.

<sup>42</sup> Ioan VASCĂ, “Activitatea Științifică și literară a profesorilor” (“The Scientific and Literary activity of teachers”), in: *Academia Teologică*, Cluj, 1930, p. 39.

<sup>43</sup> Andrei BUZDUG, “Probleme pastorale” (“Pastoral issues”), in: *Renașterea*, Year XVI, Nr. 3, January 16, 1938, Cluj, pp. 1-3.

<sup>44</sup> Andrei BUZDUG, “Cultul morților. Studiu liturgic pastoral” (“The Cult of the Dead. Pastoral and liturgical study”), in: *Renașterea*, Year XVI, Nr. 3, January 16, 1938, Cluj, p. 3.

year”, including a number of 244 pages in the first edition, republished in 1938, with 248 pages. In the foreword, he notes the following:

“The duty to preach is stronger today, after the war, when more and more trends wander and swarm into the land of our beloved country, finding the religious thirst of our people and pulling out easily from among us our brothers of blood and faith”<sup>45</sup>.

Seeing the use of the first volume of sermons, he is motivated to write a second one, having the title “Victuals for faithful souls. Sermons for all religious feasts and holidays of the Church year”, Cluj, 1934, containing a number of 29 sermons. From the introductory word, Rev. Andrei Buzdug exhorts the reader to carefully approach the sermons, justifying the reason why he chose to publish the second volume dedicated to religious holidays and important feasts:

“The love with which was received my book: *Sermons for all Sundays of the Church year* made me publish the presented work, as well, including sermons for all important Christian feasts. I consider it a contribution for the Honoured Priesthood in preaching the word of God, as we do not have such books, especially at the countryside. Taking into account these aspects, when I present to the Altar Servers these victuals for the eternal life, I kindly ask to be received with the same love as for the previous work, gently showing me any mistake”<sup>46</sup>.

The third volume of sermons includes 50 funeral speeches, adapted for all categories of social classes of the time, addressing women and men,

<sup>45</sup> Andrei BUZDUG, “Cuvânt înainte” (“Foreword”), in: *Merinde pentru sufletele credincioase - Predici la toate duminicile anului bisericesc (Victuals for Faithful Souls – Sermons for all Sundays of the Church year)*, Tipografia Eparhiei ortodoxe române Cluj, 1938, p.5.

<sup>46</sup> Andrei BUZDUG, *Merinde pentru sufletele credincioase. Predici la toate praznicile și sărbătorile anului bisericesc (Victuals for Faithful Souls. Sermons for All Religious Feasts and Holidays of the Church year)*, Tipografia Astra, Cluj, 1934, p. 4.

children, sick people, widows, pupils etc. The volume title is “Doamne, mântuiește-ne, că pierim. Cuvântări funebre” (*Lord, save us, as we are dying. Funeral speeches*), Cluj, 1937, 208 pages. This volume of sermons is based on Rev. Andrei Buzdug’s idea to reach the hearts of those present at the funeral service, given the fact that among the deceased person’s relatives some people are not Orthodox Christians. He considered that by these preachings “we shall cry with those that are crying, but we shall also awaken faith, strengthen hope and light the love of God in the hearts of the believers”<sup>47</sup>.

The fourth volume of sermons is dedicated to a unique moment in young people’s life, marriage: “Spirit and life. Speeches at weddings”, Cluj, 1938, 107 pages, with a number of 31 sermons, adapted to all social classes. The Reverend author confesses: “Weddings bring together a lot people and some of them do not usually go to church. That is why it is a good opportunity for the present ones to hear some things about marriage, about its holiness and its importance in life”<sup>48</sup>.

## Conclusions

The present article aims at being an act of deep gratitude towards all Transylvanian hierarchs and Theology professors, in whose context of service the worthy Rev. Prof. Andrei Buzdug grew and evolved from the pastoral and didactic perspective. The present study showed several important pastoral, academic and patriotic characteristics:

- The benefic influence of the University in Cernăuți, more precisely of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, on the young Romanians who completed their studies here, some of them graduating with a PHD, such as Andrei Buzdug, but also those who will become bishops, Nicolae Popovici (Oradea) and Andrei Magieru (Arad);

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<sup>47</sup> Andrei BUZDUG, “Cuvânt înainte” (“Foreword”), in: *Doamne, mântuiește-ne, că pierim. Cuvântări funebre* (*Lord, save us, as we are dying. Funeral speeches*), Tiparul Tipografiei Eparhiei Ortodoxe române, Cluj, 1937, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Andrei BUZDUG, “Cuvânt înainte” (“Foreword”), in: *Duh și viață. Cuvântări la Cununii* (*Spirit and life. Speeches at weddings*), Tiparul Tipografiei Eparhiei Ortodoxe Române, Cluj, 1938, p. 3.



- The huge step made by Transylvanian Theological Schools after the Great Union on the 1st of December 1918, especially after the renewal of the one in Sibiu and the foundation of the others, in Oradea, Arad and Cluj;
- The significant role of the professors of homiletics and catechetics for the formation of Transylvanian Orthodox preachers, as well as for the writing and publishing an important number of Courses and Books of sermons;
- The place of honor held by Rev. Andrei Buzdug among the professors and his generous effort and sacrifice made in less than 48 years of life, by publishing the four volumes of sermons, alongside with numerous studies and articles.

The above-mentioned aspects, as well as the other facts that we described, show that Rev. Andrei Buzdug, together with all servers in the Orthodox pastoral-missionary field, constitute a great example, source of inspiration for all priests – of today or to come – for a better and better service for the Church and the Nation.