

immediate reality, to the extent that we succeed in integrating the authentic creations of the human spirit into our theological vision of the world and life, we will succeed in making holiness more interesting to contemporary human being than sin, and thus in saving the world.

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Florin DUȚU, *Părintele și pictorul bisericesc Arsenie Boca (1910-1989) – monografie (Father and Church Painter Arsenie Boca [1910-1989] – A Monograph)*, “Florea Albă de Colț” Publishing House, Bucharest, 2021, 491 pp.

In 2021, “Florea Albă de Colț” Publishing House from Bucharest released a beautiful Ph.D. Thesis in Orthodox Theology, written by Florin Duțu and conceived as a monograph of one of the great Romanian Spiritual Fathers, Arsenie Boca.

The first chapter of the book, entitled *Father Arsenie Boca before the restoration of the communist regime*, presents important data related to the Father’s family, about the socio-political context of his time, about the spiritual revival movement undertaken at Brâncoveanu Monastery - Sâmbăta de Sus in “Făgăraș County”, the decisive contribution of Father Arsenie for the (partial) translation and distribution of the Philokalia, for the friendly connection with the Royal House. Simultaneously, aspects related to the Father’s first arrests are detailed (179).

Also in this chapter, we learn more details about the pilgrimage undertaken by Father Arsenie to Mount Athos, aiming to learn the mysteries of monasticism from the Athonite monks. For example, we also learn that

“deacon Zian Vălean Boca was housed in the «Saint Ipatie» hermitage, received from the Vatopedy Monastery, in the 19th century (...) In 1939 (the year in which Father Arsenie undertook

this pilgrimage), the hermitage was led by Father Teodosie Domnariu, the fifth abbot in the history of this monastic settlement, born in Sălișteța Sibiului” (pp. 144-145).

The 2nd Chapter, placed under the generic *Pastoral-missionary activity of Father Arsenie Boca from the establishment of the communist regime until the 410/1959 decree*, covers precious aspects related to the activity of His Holiness in the monastic community at the Prislop Monastery, about the period of detention at the Danube - Black Sea Channel, where Father Arsenie carried the cross of suffering alongside other innocent people, being their support and comfort in suffering; as well as information about the Timișoara and Oradea detention. Regarding the arrests of Father Arsenie Boca, The Patriarch Justinian Marina would testify saying, “I don’t know what’s with this man, that he is always taken (*by the Security*), and always released, and each time comes out more luminous” (p. 149) .

The 3rd Chapter, entitled *Father’s Arsenie Boca activity as a church painter*, provides us with data related to the Father’s activity relating church painting, the practice carried out on church sites together with master Gheorghe Popescu and Nicolae Stoica. Also is presented the activity of “pattern painter at the Workshops of the Romanian Patriarchate” (p. 319). Also it is not forgotten the significant contribution that Father Arsenie brought with the painting of the “Saint Nicholas” church in the Drăgănescu parish, where he first of all, painted Christ in people’s souls, and then on the walls of the holy place (p. 351).

This monograph contains as well valuable Appendices of useful informative character for all those who want to know better the personality and activity of Father Arsenie.

This book (Doctoral Thesis) made a pleasant impression on me, and I’m personally recommending it to all those who want to know more details about the life and activity of Father Arsenie, both as a Clergyman of tens or even hundreds of thousands of Romanians, but also as a church painter. This book successfully enriches the library of any lover of spiritual life and Theology.

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