

Pr. prof. dr. Florin DOBREI, *Dobra (jud. Hunedoara) – file de cronică bisericească (Dobra, Hunedoara County - Church Chronicle Pages)*, Editura Publishing House, Stockholm / Editura Episcopiei Devei și Hunedoarei, 2020, 414 pp.

Bringing a *Praise to the Romanian Village (Elogiu satului românesc)* in the exhibition of the same name held on June 5, 1937 in the Hall of the Romanian Academy, the philosopher Lucian Blaga highlighted the moral and spiritual values of the inhabitants of our villages. He remarked that “for his own conscience the village is located in the center of the world and extends into myth. The village is integrated in a cosmic destiny, in a totalitarian way of life, and there is nothing left beyond its horizon”. In comparison, “citizens live in different horizons and almost always suffer from the consciousness and fear of peripherality. There is a real competition between the big cities to pretend and proclaim all the others as a *province*. The term *province* circumscribes a vast and serious inferiority complex. It should be noted, however, that the problems of psychology related to the polarity of the *metropolis* - the *province* do not touch at all for the soul of the village. Every self-respecting village exists for itself in the center of a world and has the beautiful pride of being a little different than all the others”.

The same Romanian thinker stated that “The man of the city, especially of the city that bears the imprints of modern times, lives in exactly opposite dimensions and states: in fragment, in relativity, in the mechanical concrete, in an awake sadness and in a lucid superficiality. Placed on the precision scale, the impressions of the city man freeze, becoming calculating quantities; they do not amplify by intuitive reference to a cosmos, they do not acquire proportions and they do not solve in mythical warps, like the impressions of the man from the village”.

In this perimeter is also located the locality Dobra from Hunedoara county, documented in 1387, which had several forms of organization over time, both from a political point of view (at first a village community, then the administrative center of the district with the same name, city, fair and communal center), as well as from a Church point of view (ancient Orthodox parish, residence of the archdiocese), thus managing to gain an important role in the troubled history of Transylvania.

The book entitled “*Dobra (jud. Hunedoara) – file de cronică bise-ricască*” (*Dobra, Hunedoara County – Church Chronicle Pages*) which Father Dr. Florin Dobrei proposes to us for reading and study is divided into four chapters.

In the first chapter, entitled *Introductory remarks*, the author refers to the disparate information contained in various volumes, in which he mentions the Church activity in Dobra, about the way in which the chronicle was transcribed, processed and enriched in the middle of the 20th century by the archpriest Alexandru Florea, the one who offered to those interested at the time of his pastorate (1944-1949) and other works left in the manuscript about the Dobra Archdiocese, but not yet identified.

The second chapter, *Fragments from the ecclesiastical past of Dobra*, refers to the specific data about the priests serving in the locality since 1600, but also about the adverse effects the union with the Church of Rome produced in this Orthodox territory from centuries. The section is improved by the conscriptions made in time by the Orthodox Church and the United Church with Rome - Greek Catholic, which highlights the parishes and branches of this church unit, the priestly ministers, the number of families and the faithful. Reference is made to the confessional school and its teachers, being mentioned some of the other Christian denominations (Roman Catholic, Protestant and neo-Protestant) that have managed to create a parallel life among the Orthodox. The author does not miss the description over time of the immovable parish patrimony materialized in ecclesiastical buildings and parish houses (accidentally destroyed and then rebuilt), land, as well as the mobile one highlighted in archive documents, cult books, icons and vestments.

Chapter 3 entitled *A Novel Parish Chronicle* is a synthesis of all the events recorded in handwriting in the chronicle itself. All the most important moments that the inhabitants of the settlement have been part of over time are given in general terms: information of extreme meteorological nature

(floods, fires), civil achievements (introduction of electricity, construction of public buildings, railway). It is recorded the border past of the locality, the fight for the preservation of Romanian ethos through the language spoken in the local administration, the merging of communal lands and the border forest fund. Notable historical moments are overlooked, such as: the election of the lawyer dr. Aurel Vlad as a deputy in the Hungarian Diet, moments from the Great Union period, from the First and Second World War, from the interwar period and the administrative organization. Then the author refers to some Church events (performing holy services, hierarchical visits, building sacred goods, assimilated to them and common goods), and sketches „medallions” of local personalities. It reminds about the religious associations existing in the past: The Reunion of Orthodox Women, The Society of Adult Youth “St. Gheorghe”, Romanian Orthodox Brotherhood, Reunion of songs, as well as about the philanthropic activities of the parish.

In the last chapter - *Chronicle of the Church in Dobra* - on the final pages the text itself of a Gospel of Saguna (Sibiu, 1859) is transcribed, which covers 95 pages (190 pages), another 80 pages (160 pages) being still incomplete. Through these, an incursion is made on the historical-geographical framework of the locality, of the past Church life, of the tract school, continuing with all the annual records from the period 1899-2020.

The critical apparatus comprises 796 bibliographic notes and a vast bibliographic material grouped in sources (unpublished and edited), typed manuscripts, books, studies and articles.

The illustrative *Addition* also includes maps, images of the Church building (interior and exterior), the old inscription, the buildings of the confessional school and the parish house, the crucifixes, immortalizing the faces of the members of the church choir and its conductors, as well as the priests and archpriests.

In the author’s view, the work itself is not a monograph, but the purpose of this edition is to introduce an invaluable historiographical source into the scientific environment that may be a landmark in the future in the specialty circuit.

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