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# Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna and the Diocese of Caransebeş - People, Facts, Places<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The biography of Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna, recorded by the vicar Nicolae Popea, the future bishop of Caransebeş, but also the researches of recent years show many convergences between the people and deeds of the people of Banat in the Diocese of Caransebeş and the great Transylvanian hierarch. Bishop Ioan Popasu, even if he was not elected as metropolitan of Transylvania, to the detriment of bishop Andrei Şaguna, transferred all his efforts to the Diocese of Caransebeş, established by Şaguna and pastored by Popasu. The correspondence kept in the archive of the Diocese of Caransebeş highlights the metropolitan’s concern for the consolidation of the metropolitan synodality and its constitutionality, but also the building of the new diocese on solid principles. However, the Diocese of Caransebeş remains the only institution of this level established by Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna, thus being able to create the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis with the two suffragan dioceses. The elements capitalized in this modest contribution are supported in numerous testimonies of archival documents and the press that confirm the constant devotion of the people of Banat to the Metropolitan of Sibiu. All the hierarchs of the Diocese of Caransebeş, until the abusive abolition in 1949, rightfully declared themselves

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shagunists, organizing annual anniversary events like the sibians, on November 30, until 1873, and then commemorative events dedicated to the hierarch. This aspect confirmed the fact that shagunism did not refer to a person, but to a state of mind, somehow needed in our times as well.

**Keywords**

Diocese of Caransebeș, Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna, Banat, devotion, synodality, constitution, memory, gratitude

**I. Preliminaries**

This year marks 160 years since the essential moment when Emperor Franz Joseph I (1830-1916) declared on 24 December 1864, the separation from the Serbian Orthodox hierarchy of the Romanian Orthodox communities in the empire and the re-establishment of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Transylvania, achievement largely due to Saint Metropolitan Andrei (1808-1873). It is well known in historiography the preoccupation of Saint Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna for the restoration of a regional Romanian church structure articulated in Transylvania. His academic rigor is known, materialized in reference works for the Eastern canon law, but his care for the new diocese of Banat, which becomes a constituent part of the Metropolis of Transylvania, is equally relevant. Historiography records several divergent aspects between Archimandrite Andrei Șaguna and Archpriest Ioan Popasu in 1845-48, respectively in 1852, starting from their joint candidacies for clerical dignities. In the end, each fulfilled his service in the communion of the Metropolis of Transylvania, the first as archbishop and metropolitan, and the second as bishop. The biography of the metropolitan, recorded by the vicar Nicolae Popea, the future bishop of Caransebeș, but also the researches of the last years, show many convergences between the people and deeds of the people of Banat in the Diocese of Caransebeș and the great Transylvanian hierarch.

Equally noteworthy is the special care of Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna for the young diocese of Caransebeș. The correspondence kept in the diocesan archive highlights the metropolitan's concern for the consolidation of the metropolitan synodality and its constitutionality, but also the building

of the new diocese on solid principles<sup>2</sup>. The archival documents capture the interest of Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna for unexpected details, such as the proper distribution of the publication *Telegraful Român (The Romanian Telegraph)*, the transcription in Latin letters of the worship books written in Cyrillic characters, but also other matters of ecclesiastical and national interest. The same documents restore to posterity, through their content, a state of affairs in a rather fragile national context.

The inter-diocesan co-responsibility within the Metropolis of Transylvania strengthened the national consciousness, but above all it gave meaning to the synodal consciousness of the Church through the collaboration between hierarchs, clergy and laity, in a wide variety of problems. The proposed study aims to capitalize on the relationship between Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna and the Diocese of Caransebeş through the coordinates given in the title. Moreover, I propose for reflection the documentary testimonies, with a special air, which confirmed the Shagunian spirit in Banat, a region towards which the holy Transylvanian metropolitan showed special attention.

The Diocese of Caransebeş remains the only institution of this level established by Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna, thus being able to create the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis with the two suffragan dioceses. As a sign of gratitude, in the year 2012, the Diocese of Caransebeş especially honoured Saint Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna, recently canonized (solemn proclamation on 30 November 2011), under the generic *The year of Saint Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna in the Diocese of Caransebeş*. These events included: The International Symposium “Mystery and Communion”, the 6<sup>th</sup> edition (the historical theme was the Church of Banat in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in which issues were particularly discussed with reference to the Sagunian achievements) – with a printed volume; a photo-documentary exhibition about the activity of the Diocese of Caransebeş from its establishment (1865) until the time of Bishop Nicolae Popea (1908) and the printing of a leaflet illustrating the representations of Saint Hierarch Andrei Şaguna in the churches of the Diocese of Caransebeş<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Archives of the Diocese of Caransebeş, *Fond Prezidial (I)*, unnumbered file, unnumbered tab, document no. 31/1866.

<sup>3</sup> <https://ziarullumina.ro/amp/legaturile-sfantului-mitropolit-andrei-saguna-cu-banatul->

In the archive of the Diocese of Caransebeș, there are 22 documents that restore the correspondence of Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna with the diocese that he had established through the hierarchical separation and which implicitly contributed to the restoration of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Transylvania. However, it is quite difficult to restore the connection of Șaguna with the Diocese of Caransebeș, without approaching a wider context and the association of essential elements such as: places, people and facts. In the year 2023, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the great metropolitan's departure to God was commemorated. Equally, the previous year brought together several commemorative events regarding the life and activity of the Holy Metropolitan, such as 190 years since his monkhood at the Hopova monastery in Sirmiu (01 November 1833)<sup>4</sup>; 175 years since the ordination as a bishop (08 April 1848), on the Sunday of St. Thomas, as a result of the election of 02 December 1847 and the recognition of 24 January / 05 February 1848<sup>5</sup>; 170 years since the publication of the imperial decree for the establishment of a Romanian Orthodox gymnasium in Brașov, but also since the failure of the establishment of a school in Abrud, which was no longer established due to the conspiracy of the ultramontanos against him, but also through the involvement of the Minister of Cults, Thun<sup>6</sup>; (the context of the year in which the assassination of Emperor Franz Joseph was attempted – 18 February 1853). Also in 2023, 160 years have passed since his participation in the Romanian National Congress in Sibiu as chairman. Furthermore, starting this year, he participated as a royalist and deputy of Sălișta in the diet of Transylvania as a member of the upper chamber at the imperial senate in Vienna. The year 1863 found him as a participant in the episcopal synod in Carloviț regarding the Romanian metropolis. About the importance of this year, Nicolae Popea said

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67919.html, accessed 15 June 2023; Daniel ALIC (ed.), *Taină și comuniune*, Simpozion Internațional, Caransebeș 24-25 aprilie 2012, Editura Episcopiei Caransebeșului, Caransebeș, 2022, pp. 600.

<sup>4</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Șaguna*, Tiparul tipografiei arhidiecezane, Sibiu, 1879, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Șaguna*, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Șaguna*, p. 47.

“how he excelled at all these gatherings and corporations of the state, the nation and the church, the documents of those pre-treaties document us enough. But even we who lived at that time and were witnesses to all his undertakings and distinctions, still know it and can testify”<sup>7</sup>.

Also 155 years ago, the works of the National Church Congress were inaugurated in Sibiu (1868) where moments of maximum importance are recorded, such as the constitution and organization of the metropolitan province which he called “the crowning of his grandiose and impossible woe in the opinion of 20 years!”<sup>8</sup>. An essential aspect was the introduction of the Organic Statute for the entire metropolis (although it had been introduced in the diocese since 1864). It should be noted that, in Popea’s view, the changes made were not fully in line with the metropolitan’s vision: “It is not the place to leave us here in the trifle of these modifications, in order to show that they differ from the original, and that, even in that in which they differ from it, they do not correspond to the nature of things, the canons and institutions of the church”. Well, very well Şaguna had reflected to the congress, regarding those modifications: “Take good care, gentlemen, so that instead of correcting, you spoil what is good. I draw your attention, gentlemen, that this woe that I have the honour to present to you as a project, is a woe of decades, and not only of one day”<sup>9</sup>. Popea explicitly recalls “the unpleasant scene during the debates”. In the metropolitan’s project, the consistory assessors would only be priests and would have been appointed by the bishop (kiríarhos). The commission in charge of drafting the statute proposed that the consistory should also include laymen, who would be elected by the synod.

“In vain he tried to convince the congress that this institution would be against the canons and ecclesiastical practice; because all his explanations were of no use, the commission insisted on his proposal, and the congress with a majority of votes

<sup>7</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Şaguna*, p. 52.

<sup>8</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Şaguna*, p. 56.

<sup>9</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Şaguna*, p. 56.

accepted it, the metropolitan remaining in the minority [...] the metropolitan, full of bitterness, had locked himself in the house, so that the man believed that from this incident will dissolve the congress itself”<sup>10</sup>.

After a more careful discernment, the next day he tried to smooth out the differences, showing that in his opinion he had in mind the sacramental part, which the congress “did not think to touch”<sup>11</sup>.

## II. Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna – interferences with the Mountain Banat

The people of Banat had a true devotion to Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna, both during his life, as we will show below, and after his departure to the Lord and until now. In addition to the events of 2012, which we have already mentioned, we remember two commemorations from the era, namely the one in 1898, 25 years after the transition to the Lord, and the one in 1909, on the occasion of the centenary of his birth<sup>12</sup>.

### II.1. Places

There are concrete documentary data that attest that the young theologian Andrei Șaguna often visited the town of Oravița, the place where his aunt Alexandra Șaguna lived, a founding member of the *Old Theatre* in Oravița and the first president of the *Society of Orthodox Christian Women* in Oravița - 1819<sup>13</sup>. The house of the Șaguna family, built in 1792, is still preserved today on the street named after the great hierarch, at no. 28.

<sup>10</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Șaguna*, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Șaguna*, p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> See PS LUCIAN, *Episcopul Caransebeșului*, “Comemorări ale Mitropolitului Andrei Șaguna în Episcopia Caransebeșului”, in: Daniel ALIC (ed.), *Taină și comuniune...*, pp. 13-20.

<sup>13</sup> \*\*\* *Reprezentări iconice ale Sfântului Ierarh Andrei Șaguna în bisericile din Episcopia Caransebeșului*, Editura Episcopiei Caransebeșului, 2012, p. 1, apud *Colecția personală de documente a D-lui dr. Felix Weiss din Oravița, nenumerotat*.

Andrei Şaguna visited his relatives in this house during the time he studied theology in Vârset, then while he was a teacher at the same school<sup>14</sup>.

In 1856, tired of fights and long journeys, and finding himself forced to take care of his health, he went to Mehadia to use the healing waters there. “The brothers from Banat, and especially those from the military border, seem that from then on, they looked upon Bishop Şaguna as their future metropolitan, this is how they welcomed him”<sup>15</sup>. Andrei Şaguna visited Băile Herculane several times to treat his rheumatism. On 02 July 1866, he announced his arrival in Caransebeş, where, after a two-day stay, he was going to travel discreetly, without noise and ovations, to the baths, reasoning that the times are pitiful for us. The bishop communicated to the archpriests of the districts where the metropolitan passed through, the archpriests of Lugoj and Caransebeş, to receive him discreetly and with a minimum of people<sup>16</sup>.

## **II.2. People**

### ***a. Bishop Ioan Popasu (1808 – 1889)***

He was born in the same year as Andrei Şaguna (1808), interfering in a wide period of time with the great metropolitan. With the departure of Vasile Moga to the Lord, Popasu undertook discreet but consistent actions to capture the goodwill of the Saxon representatives, which would propel him to hierarchical dignity. Although he apparently had the best chances, Metropolitan Iosif Raiacici, the Primate of the Orthodox Church in the Habsburg Monarchy took the steps for Archimandrite Andrei Şaguna, the abbot of the Kovil monastery, to be appointed as eparchial vicar. Even the Turda synod (1-2 December 1847) places Archimandrite Andrei Şaguna in third place in the order of votes cast, Andrei Şaguna becomes bishop of

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<sup>14</sup> \*\*\* *Reprezentări iconice ale Sfântului Ierarh Andrei Şaguna...*, p. 1. Dr. Ioan CREȚIU, *Considerații istorice și demografice privind evoluția structurii etnice a populației din Oravița în decursul secolelor XVIII, XIX și XX*, Editura Tipo Art, Oravița, 2007, vol. I, p. 32.

<sup>15</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Şaguna*, p. 48.

<sup>16</sup> Nicolae BOÇŞAN, Daniel ALIC, “Andrei Şaguna și Episcopia Caransebeşului (1865-1873)”, in: *Banatica* nr.19/2009, p. 65, apud. Arhiva Episcopiei Caransebeşului, fond *Bisericesc*, dosar III, doc. 124/1866.

Transylvania (through the decree issued by the emperor on 24 January / 05 February 1848), Ioan Popasu remaining archpriest of Brașov<sup>17</sup>.

On 25 January 1865, Șaguna obtained a special audience with the emperor to thank him on behalf of the faithful for the honourable favourable resolution establishing the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Transylvania. He was accompanied by a large delegation of “spiritual sons of the revived metropolis”<sup>18</sup>, who later visited Archduke Rainer as a sign of gratitude, then the ministers and the two royal chancellors of Hungary and Transylvania, after which they offered the delegation a festive lunch at the *Court of Austria* Hotel. At this particularly important moment, personalities were present who were either already involved in the public life of the Mountainous Banat, or were to become worthy servants of these places: Archim. Ioan Popasu, archdiocesan protosyngellos Nicolae Popea, archpriest of Lugoj Ioan Marcu, jurisconsult of Caraș county Filaret Pascu, church curator from Lugoj, merchant Constantin Udrea and the mayor of Caransebeș Ioan Petia<sup>19</sup>. After the election of Archimandrite Ioan Popasu, Andrei Șaguna edits and publishes the booklet *The order of ordination of the new bishop, at the end of which, on 4 pages, he writes The Preparation and Consecration of the Holy Myrrh*, a sacramental approach that is telling with reference to the canonical status of the metropolis<sup>20</sup>. On 15 August 1865, he ordained archimandrite Ioan Popasu as bishop for the newly established Diocese of Caransebeș, in the church in Rășinari, alongside bishop Procopie Ivașcovici (the future metropolitan of Carloviț). He also

<sup>17</sup> Details in Dr. Mircea Gheorghe ABRUDAN, “Ioan Popasu și Andrei Șaguna, contracandidați în cursa pentru scaunul episcopal al Ardealului, aspecte inedite din anii 1845-1848”, in: Pr. Dr Daniel ALIC, Diac. Drd. Lucian Zenoviu BOT (eds.), *Misiune și Propovăduire*, Presa Universitară Clujeană/Editura Episcopiei Caransebeșului, Cluj-Napoca/Caransebeș, 2015, pp. 490-503.

<sup>18</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Vechea mitropolie ortodoxă română a Transilvaniei, suprimarea și restaurarea ei*, Tiparul Tipografiei S. Filtsch (W. Krafft), Sibiu, 1870, p. 310.

<sup>19</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Vechea mitropolie ortodoxă română a Transilvaniei...*, pp. 310-311.

<sup>20</sup> Mircea-Gheorghe ABRUDAN, *Ortodoxie și Lutheranism în Transilvania între Revoluția Pașoptistă și Marea Unire; evoluție istorică și relații confesionale*, Editura Andreiană/Presa Universitară Clujeană, Sibiu/Cluj-Napoca, 2015, p. 682, apud. *Rânduiala hirotoniei noului episcop de relegea ortodocsă răsăriteană*, pp.1-4. Bound in leather covers, the booklet is kept in the Library of the “Andrei Șaguna” Faculty of Theology in Sibiu, at elevation 781.



delegates him to celebrate the enthronement of the bishop in Caransebeş<sup>21</sup>. In March 1873, feeling weak and powerless, he asked bishop Ioan Popasu to ordain as a priest the candidate Iosif Hârcioagea from Gardieni, the Archpriestship of Făgăraş, on behalf of the church dedicated to the Holy Great Martyr George from the same locality<sup>22</sup>.

In 1874 Bishop Ioan Popasu is elected metropolitan by the canonical decision of the Metropolitan Congress, but “the right of supreme inspection”, of the monarch, exercised “de facto” by the Ministry of Cults and Education from Budapest rejected the candidacy, being helped to ascend to the metropolitan seat a hierarch more convenient for the Hungarian authorities<sup>23</sup>. Very few documents (22 documents) related to the correspondence between Andrei Şaguna and Ioan Popasu can be found in the archive of the diocese, taking into account the relationship between them for over a quarter of a century. Most of them were used in the relevant study *Andrei Saguna and the Diocese of Caransebeş* (1865-1873)<sup>24</sup>.

### ***b. Bishop Nicolae Popea (1826-1908)***

He was and remained until the end “one of the most faithful disciples of Andrei Şaguna”<sup>25</sup>.

“Discovering this soldier’s soul early on, he thought it would be a sin to deprive the Romanian church... of the useful services that Popea could bring to him by allowing him to spend his intellectual powers in the administrative career, to which he had dedicated himself after the subsidence of the outbursts of 1848. He had many administrative assignments becoming the right hand of Şaguna, the most sincere admirer and adherent of his great protector...”<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Şaguna*, p. 55.

<sup>22</sup> Arhiva Episcopiei Caransebeşului, *Fond Bisericesc*, dosar III, doc. 240/1873.

<sup>23</sup> Mircea-Gheorghe ABRUDAN, *Ortodoxie și Lutheranism...*, p. 674.

<sup>24</sup> Nicolae BOCŞAN, Daniel ALIC, “Andrei Şaguna și Episcopia Caransebeşului (1865-1873)”, p. 65, pp. 159-171.

<sup>25</sup> Prof. Ioan LUPAŞ, *Episcopul Nicolae Popea, membru activ al Academiei Române*, Tiparul Tipografiei Eparhiei Ortodoxe Române, Cluj, 1933, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Prof. Ioan LUPAŞ, *Episcopul Nicolae Popea, membru activ al Academiei Române*, p. 5.

Through his discussions with King Carol I and with politicians across the Carpathians, the Romanian Academy supported him in his endeavours that continued the cultural-national program of Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna. Between 1877-1889 he was an honorary member of the Romanian Academy<sup>27</sup>.

In 1889, Nicolae Popea became an active member of the Academy, the quality being recognized for the works dedicated to Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna, his mentor: *the Old Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Transylvania (1870)* and *the Archbishop and Metropolitan Andrei baron of Șaguna, or the national-political struggles of the Romanians between the years 1846-1873 (1889); the Memorial of Archbishop Andrei baron of Șaguna (1889)*<sup>28</sup>. It is worth remembering that 35 years after the death of Șaguna, he embodies the bitterness of his spiritual father, being equally saddened by the pettiness of some close ones. He moved to the eternal after a hundred years from the birth of Șaguna, 8 August 1908,

“disgusted by the vileness of life which he could neither master nor change... he left the mire of today to bring a message of mourning and humiliation to the one, in whose name - according to God - he lived, worked and he shepherded in life, his great teacher and spiritual father, Șaguna”<sup>29</sup>.

Due to the convulsions generated by the denationalization action of Count Apponyi, refusing to fire some teachers known for their Romanian feelings, but also feeling betrayed by some of his own, he fell ill with arteriosclerosis<sup>30</sup>, a pathology similar to that of Șaguna.

### II.3. Facts

After the Congress approving the Organic Statute, Metropolitan Șaguna felt the struggles for the fulfilment of the ideal, “feeling disgusted

<sup>27</sup> Ion PÂRVU, *Biserică și Societate în Episcopia Caransebeșului în perioada păstoririi Episcopului Nicolae Popea (1889-1908)*, Editura Eurostampa, Timișoara 2009, p. 62.

<sup>28</sup> Ion PÂRVU, *Biserică și Societate...*, p. 62.

<sup>29</sup> Prof. Ioan LUPAȘ, *Episcopul Nicolae Popea, membru active al Academiei Române*, p. 12, apud. *Neamul Românesc*, an. III, nr. 91.

<sup>30</sup> Ion PÂRVU, *Biserică și Societate ...*, p. 90.

by everything for the misunderstandings between the Romanians”<sup>31</sup> and chose to retire, still caring for the common good. At the Congress of 1870, Metropolitan Şaguna experienced a great disappointment due to an apparently trivial aspect. At the discussions before the congress, he humorously referred to several problems related to some improper behaviour of the clergy (priests and deacons) reported by some church communes.

“Some deputies were offended by the paternal words of the venerable metropolitan, although he had spoken the pure truth. They sounded the alarm, they made harsh accusations against the metropolitan in a private conference asking, no more and no less, than to give him a reprimand, because he harmed the priesthood!!! The two bishops, who were present with other deputies, could hardly calm down their roam, showing them the error in which they were. Metropolitan Şaguna, hearing about what happened, was bitter to the core, that he left the meeting, tore up his will and threw it into the fire!”<sup>32</sup>.

Very representative to point out at this moment is the way in which Nicolae Popea captures the last period of his life. The disease diagnosed by the doctors was *Hypertrophia et dilatatio cordis*, but the episcopal vicar appreciates that it was caused by sadness and anger because he was not understood many times by his own people, receiving “insults and unpleasantness” from them<sup>33</sup>... “Then he was disgusted with everything, he lamented a lot about people’s discontent and malice, and he no longer received anyone except his most trusted ones, who cared for him more in his illness”<sup>34</sup>.

He was very grateful and reverent towards those who took care of him in addition to those who had the right to do so, such as a doctor, secretary or Hieromonk Gherman, respectively towards the theologians from the

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<sup>31</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Şaguna*, p. 57.

<sup>32</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Şaguna*, p. 58.

<sup>33</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Şaguna*, p. 61.

<sup>34</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Şaguna*, p. 61.

institute whom he gifted with clocks, monetary aid for them and for their parents<sup>35</sup>. In two of the last public circumstances of his life, namely at the last meeting with the members of the archdiocesan synod, whom he had received in the great hall and at a lunch with close friends, he wanted to appear in monastic clothes. At the aforementioned lunch he wanted to say: “Do you see what clothes I’m wearing now? In these, as I now stand before you, so you will bury me, and not here, but outside of Sibiu”<sup>36</sup>. During the illness, being in great suffering and feeling his end, in a prophetic way he said to the vicar: “When you will return from at my grave, you will know whom you have lost!”<sup>37</sup> Significant for the understanding of his whole struggle are the words recorded by Popea on the day of the departure of Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna:

“And so, between pains and sufferings of all weight, he lived until Saturday 16/28 June 1873, when in the presence of those closest to him, of several consistorial assessors and in the hands of the archimandrite and the vicar, whom he himself had invited to himself, at 6 o’clock in the afternoon, he gave his noble soul into the hands of the Creator, in the 65<sup>th</sup> year of his life and the 27<sup>th</sup> of his turbulent archpastorship, full of brilliant deeds. He kept his lucidity until his last breath, fighting death in resignation. His last words, addressed to the vicar, were: «I’m done Nicolae! Whatever God wills, everything is in order. Be at peace, have fun, don’t brag!» True parenting words”<sup>38</sup>

### III. Instead of conclusions: the devotion of the people of Banat to Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna

Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna had an intense life, and like the great holy hierarchs, he worked a lot, persevered a lot, but lived a little, seeking to

<sup>35</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Șaguna*, p. 62.

<sup>36</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Șaguna*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>37</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Șaguna*, p. 61.

<sup>38</sup> Nicolae POPEA, *Arhiepiscopul și Mitropolitul Andrei baron de Șaguna*, p. 60.

know, not the gift, but the Giver. As a man, as a hierarch, as a servant he did not gratify himself with anything, not pausing in the fulfilment of his aspirations, but lived his life identifying with its meaning, living a hard reality, a kind of life “without rest”.

Through the effort to valorise freedom, Saint Andrei Şaguna confirmed the universality of faith, which proves authentic spirituality. This authentic spirituality does not standardize, showing us through the saints that although we are different from each other, we remain one in faith. He made his own life a laboratory of constitutionality and synodality, which can be found in the canonical actuality of the Church, but which is valued less and less in the context of a society dominated by the fluidity of post-modernism.

For the Diocese of Caransebeş, his personality remains an unequivocal basis in the affirmation of this diocese. The symbols of this theme are the people he inspired, the places he ennobled with his presence and above all his deeds that compel us today, 150 years after his passing, more than ever.

The three elements capitalized in this modest contribution are supported in numerous testimonies of archival documents and the press that confirm the constant devotion of the people of Banat to the Metropolitan of Sibiu. All the hierarchs of the Diocese of Caransebeş, until the abusive abolition in 1949, rightly declared themselves Şagunists<sup>39</sup>, annually organizing, like the Sibiians, on 30 November, anniversary events until 1873, and then commemorative events dedicated to the hierarch<sup>40</sup>. If the two hierarchs mentioned above knew Andrei Şaguna, the others, such as Miron Cristea<sup>41</sup>, Iosif Traian Bădescu<sup>42</sup>, Filaret Musta<sup>43</sup>, Vasile Lăzărescu<sup>44</sup> or Veniamin

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<sup>39</sup> See the explanation of the term in Diac. Virgil TURCAN, “Şagunismul”, in: *Altarul Banatului*, 3-4 /1944, pp. 105-108.

<sup>40</sup> See Dumitru JOMPAN, *Episcopii Caransebeşului şi muzica. Vol I Ioan Popasu, Nicolae Popea, Miron Cristea* Editura Episcopiei Caransebeşului, Caransebeş, 2022.

<sup>41</sup> Daniel ALIC, *Eparhia Caransebeşului în perioada păstoririi episcopului Miron Cristea (1910-1919). Biserică şi societate*, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeana, Editura Episcopiei Caransebeşului, Cluj-Napoca, Caransebeş, 2013.

<sup>42</sup> Constantin CILIBIA, *Biserica şi societatea bănăţeană în timpul episcopului Dr. Iosif Traian Bădescu : 1920-1933*, Editura Episcopiei Caransebeşului, 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Casian RUŞEŢ, “Bishop Filaret Musta (1839-1930) - a distinguished hierarch from long-ago”, in: *Astra Sabesiensis*, 7/2021, pp. 91-103.

<sup>44</sup> Petrică ZAMELA *Mitropolitul Vasile Lăzărescu al Banatului (1894-1969). Monografie istorică*, Oradea, Editura Universităţii din Oradea, 2011.

Nistor<sup>45</sup>, had the Șagunian conscience, a fact evident from their attitudes.

The theological education from Caransebeș showed a permanent attention to the day of 30 November, interpreting among others: *At the grave of Andrei* by Dimitrie Cunțan; *Know your country* by Ion Vidu and *Prayers* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart<sup>46</sup>. Likewise, the choir of the Romanian Singing Society from Caransebeș, contributed to make such memorable days<sup>47</sup>. Another example in this regard is the “Shaguna” festival on 30 November 1921, when the *Chosen Song* - specified a participant in the event was - “with holy and piercing chants by clerics”<sup>48</sup>. *The Diocesan Sheet*, the press organ of the Diocese of Caransebes, took from the periodical *Glasul Bisericii (The Voice of the Church)*, a letter from Mărioara Rațiu Porumbescu, the sister of the composer Ciprian Porumbescu, in which she expresses her satisfaction, that the musical works of the one who passed away in eternity “... beautiful, melodious and divine”<sup>49</sup> were used in concerts.

Associations, societies and secular and especially religious gatherings have embellished the cultural-artistic and religious life not only in the city of residence of the diocese of Caransebeș but throughout it. Among them, one of the representative ones was the *Andrei Șaguna Association*, but also *Astra*; *the Cathedral Choir* and *the Cultural Committee*; *the Association of Romanian Orthodox Ladies*; *The Army of the Lord*; *The meeting of songs and music*<sup>50</sup>.

Currently, an obvious aspect of the devotion of the people of Banat to Saint Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna is fully highlighted in a unique

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<sup>45</sup> Casian RUȘEȚ, Dorel Viorel CHERCIU, *Episcopul martir Veniamin Nistor – între jertfa administrației bisericești și supliciul reclusiunii – file de monografie (1886-1963)*, Centrul de Studii Banatice/Editura Episcopiei Caransebeșului, Vârșeț/Caransebeș, 2022.

<sup>46</sup> Archive of the Theological Academy in Caransebeș, Register from 1922-1947, P.V. from 1932, f-b.

<sup>47</sup> Yearbook of the “Traian Doda” High School from Caransebeș, year 1919/1920, p. 20.

<sup>48</sup> *Foaia Diecezană*, XXXV (1920) 50, p.6;

<sup>49</sup> *Foaia Diecezană*, XXXV (1920) 18-19, p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> See Pr. Pavel MARCU, “Aspecte ale învățământului religios, cu privire specială asupra vieții cultural-teologice din Eparhia Caransebeșului în perioada anilor 1920-1948”, in: *Altarul Banatului* (T), XXII (2001) 1-3, pp. 157-164.

initiative of the Publishing House of the Diocese of Caransebeş in 2012, when, at the initiative of His Holiness Father Bishop Lucian, a brochure was published that contains all the representations of the Transylvanian Metropolitan in the places of worship of the diocese<sup>51</sup>. In this brochure, there are portraits of the hierarch, painted mainly in the bishop's thrones<sup>52</sup>, and after the canonization, in 2012, he was painted in the frescoes of the founded churches. In the same year, in order to make known the life of the great hierarch, but also the contribution to the spiritual, church and national life of the people of Banat, a leaflet with text and images was printed, in several thousand copies, which were offered to the faithful for information<sup>53</sup>.

The museum collection of the Diocese of Caransebeş preserves to this day all the testimonies of gratitude for Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna, in objects of historical value, such as the founding decree of the Diocese of Caransebeş, or the bishop's crutch offered by the metropolitan to the first bishop of Caransebeş Ioan Popasu<sup>54</sup>, and which was offered to each hierarch enthroned in Caransebeş, precisely so as not to be left under the dust of oblivion the fact that Andrei Şaguna is a strong root of Romanian Orthodox spirituality in Banat.

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<sup>51</sup> \*\*\**Reprezentări iconice ale Sfântului Ierarh Andrei Şaguna în Bisericile Episcopiei Caransebeşului*, Editura Episcopiei Caransebeşului, 2012.

<sup>52</sup> Broşteni parish, painting on wood by Gheorghe Putnic (100cm / 63cm), sculpture by Gheorghe Busuioc; Sasca Montană parish, painting on canvas by Nicolae Basca, 1894 (97cm / 30cm), sculpture by Gheorghe Busuioc; Răcăşdia Parish, painting on wood by Filip Matei, 1903 (910 cm/52 cm), sculpture by Gheorghe Cotârlă; Ciuchici parish, wood painting by Filip Matei, 1904 (130cm / 78cm), sculpture by Gheorghe Busuioc; Var Parish, painting on wood by Nicolae Popovici, 1910, sculpture by brothers Ioan and Aurel Cotârlă, in 1910; Giurgiova parish, unknown author, painting on wood (122cm / 60cm); Gârlişte parish, unknown author, wood painting (35cm / 57cm), Ciclova Română parish, wood painting by Filip Matei, 1910 (100cm / 68cm) sculpture by brothers Ioan and Aurel Cotârlă, in 1910; Vrani Parish, painting on wood by Nicolae Popovici, 1927 (93cm / 35cm), sculpture by Iuliu Busuioc, in 1927.

<sup>53</sup> \*\*\*2012, Anul omagial "Sfântul Mitropolit Andrei Şaguna şi Banatul în Episcopia Caransebeşului", pliantul nr. V, *Sfântul mitropolit Andrei Şaguna şi Banatul*, pp. 4.

<sup>54</sup> See Casian RUŞEŢ (ed.), *Colecţia muzeală "Episcop Elie Miron Cristea" a Episcopiei Caransebeşului*, Editura Episcopiei Caransebeşului, 2020, p. 128.