

**Iuliu-Marius MORARIU, *Religions and Communism: Andre Scrima's Ecumenical Activities Reflected in Securitate Archives*, coll. *Pathways for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Dialogue*, Springer Nature, Zurich, 2025, 178 pp.**

The volume authored by Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Religions and Communism. Andre Scrima's Ecumenical Activities Reflected in Securitate Archives* (Springer, 2025), represents a substantial and carefully documented contribution to the study of the complex relationship between religion and communist power structures in Eastern Europe. By focusing on one of the most significant Romanian Orthodox intellectuals of the twentieth century, Andre Scrima, Morariu offers both a historical reconstruction and a methodological intervention in the field of religious studies under totalitarian regimes.

Morariu, already well known for his prolific scholarly activity in theology, intellectual history, and ecumenical studies, consolidates in this monograph years of sustained research dedicated to Scrima's personality and legacy<sup>1</sup>. What distinguishes this book from previous studies is its

<sup>1</sup> The present monograph builds upon a series of earlier studies dedicated to Andre Scrima, in which Morariu progressively explored the reflection of Scrima's activity in the archives of the former Securitate. Among these contributions are: "Elements of Father Andrei Scrima's Ecumenical Activity as Reflected in File No. 0005468 from the 'Securitate' Archives" (*Review of Ecumenical Studies*, 12 [2020], no. 3, pp. 497–511); "The Indian Correspondence of Father André Scrima with Father Benedict Ghiuș Reflected in the Securitate Archives" (*Revista Teologică*, New Series, 115 [2022], no. 2, pp. 19–40); "Corespondența părintelui Andrei Scrima cu Patriarhul Justinian reflectată în arhivele Securității" (*Tabor*, 14 [2020], no. 10, pp. 79–85); "Fr. André Scrima's Activity from France Reflected in Securitate Dossiers" (*Symposium*, XXIX [2022], no. 1, pp. 85–102); and, in collaboration with Flavius-Cristian Mărcău, "Ecumenism and Communism: Priests Virgil Gheorghiu and André Scrima in the Dossiers of the Securitate" (*European Journal of Science and Theology*, 19 [2023], no. 1, pp. 21–28). To these may be added "Spirituality, Hesychasm and Monastic Life – the Vision of Father André Scrima (1925–2000)" (*Studia Monastica*, 64 [2024], no. 1, pp. 225–235), as well as the chapter "André Scrima's Openness to Dialogue as Reflected in the Romanian Securitate Archives", published in the collective volume *Eastern Orthodox Christianity and the Culture of Dialogue: The Legacy of André Scrima (1925–2000)* (ed. Viorel COMAN and Ioan Alexandru TOFAN, Cerf, Paris, 2024, pp. 293–307).

systematic and critical use of documents preserved in the archives of the former Securitatea. Rather than treating these materials as mere sources of factual data, the author approaches them as discursive constructions shaped by ideological suspicion, bureaucratic logic, and political paranoia.

The book is structured into three main chapters, preceded by an introduction (pp. 1–7) and followed by conclusions (pp. 51–58) and an extensive documentary appendix (pp. 59–178). In the Introduction, Morariu outlines the state of current scholarship on André Scrima, identifies methodological challenges, and justifies the need for a renewed archival-based approach. Although Scrima’s personality and theological legacy have attracted growing attention, the specific issue of how his ecumenical engagement was reflected in Securitate files had not yet been thoroughly investigated. The author convincingly argues for the importance of reading these documents critically, as products of an ideological and bureaucratic system shaped by suspicion and political control.

The first chapter (pp. 9–15) provides bio-bibliographical landmarks of Fr. André Scrima (1925–2000). Morariu sketches the intellectual and spiritual trajectory of a theologian associated with the “Burning Bush” movement, whose departure to India in 1956 marked a decisive turning point in his life. This section offers a concise yet informative overview of Scrima’s academic formation, ecclesial engagements, and international ecumenical activity, thus preparing the ground for the archival analysis that follows.

The core of the monograph lies in the second chapter (pp. 17–49), dedicated to Scrima’s image in the Securitate archives. Morariu distinguishes between different phases: the period before his departure from Romania and the decades following his establishment abroad. Through a careful reading of surveillance reports, informant notes, and institutional assessments, the author demonstrates how Scrima’s theological and ecumenical initiatives were frequently interpreted in political terms. His international contacts, participation in ecumenical dialogues, and involvement in interreligious encounters were often perceived as potentially subversive or ideologically suspicious.

One of the major strengths of the book is the author’s balanced methodology. Morariu neither sensationalizes the archival material

nor limits himself to a purely descriptive presentation. Instead, he contextualizes each document, highlighting the rhetorical strategies and ideological presuppositions embedded in the language of the Securitate. In doing so, he sheds light not only on Scrima's activity, but also on the broader mechanisms through which the communist regime monitored and reframed religious and ecumenical initiatives.

The Conclusions synthesize the findings and emphasize the importance of reassessing Eastern European ecumenism in light of its interaction with totalitarian power structures. The extensive appendix, comprising selected documents from the archives, significantly enhances the scholarly value of the volume, providing researchers with direct access to primary sources that were previously difficult to consult.

Well written, clearly structured, and grounded in a rich and partly unpublished bibliography, Morariu's work stands as an important contribution to contemporary scholarship. It will be of particular interest to theologians, historians, scholars of religion, and researchers concerned with the complex entanglements of spirituality, politics, and surveillance under communist regimes. By combining archival rigor with theological sensitivity, this monograph offers both new insights into André Scrima's ecumenical legacy and a methodological model for future research on religion under totalitarianism.

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