

A HIERARCH AND HIS AGE. THE LIFE AND THE ACTIVITY OF BISHOP VASILE MOGA (1774-1845) AS REFLECTED IN THE ROMANIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

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Abstract: *The life and the activity of bishop Vasile Moga (1774-1845) were briefly analysed in the Romanian historiography both because of the absence of some systematic researches on the archivist material existing in Romania and abroad and also due to the rich activity developed by his successor, the bishop and afterwards archbishop and metropolitan Andrei, baron of Şaguna. His figure was analysed after his contribution to the development of the Romanian education, to the improvement of the moral-religious life of the eparchy, to the national-political fight of the Transylvanian Romanians and less after his contributions to the institutional realities, the organization of the bishopric, the relation with the archpriestships and the eparchies, constituting a lack of the historiography that remains to be solved. We will aim through our study, based on the analysis of the Romanian writings dedicated to the life and the activity of bishop Vasile Moga, at capturing the main phases and research directions as well as its significations hoping that this modest study will focus the attention of the historians and theologians in order to make this honest hierarch, unduly marginalized come into prominence. The historiographical passages referring to bishop Vasile Moga's life and activity demonstrated the fact that over time he was an „aggrieved” of the historical writing compared to his successor, Andrei Şaguna.*

Keywords: Transylvania, Vasile Moga, bishop, historiography, analyzes.

The life and the activity of bishop Vasile Moga (1774-1845), the first Transylvania's Romanian Orthodox hierarch after the passage of a part of the Church under the Roman obedience and the suppression of the Orthodox hierarchy were briefly analysed both because of the absence of some systematic researches on the archivist material existing in Romania and abroad and also due to the rich activity developed by his successor, the bishop and afterwards archbishop and metropolitan Andrei, baron of Şaguna, an exceptional personality that marked the Transylvanian ecclesiastical, cultural and political life during the 19th century. If until now there have been elaborated and published five monumental biographies, signed by Nicolae Popea,¹ Ioan Lupaş,² Keith

¹ Nicolae Popea, *Archiepiscopul și metropolitul Andrei Baron de Şaguna*, Sibiu, Archdiocese Printing Press, 1879.

² Ioan Lupaş, *Mitropolitul Andrei Şaguna: monografie istorică*, Sibiu, Archdiocese Printing Press, 1911.

Hitchins,³ Johann Schneider⁴ and Mircea Păcurariu,⁵ as well as hundreds of studies, articles, collections of documents⁶ about the last one, the life and the activity of bishop Vasile Moga represented the topic of a doctoral thesis during the interwar period, signed by priest Sebastian Stanca⁷ and published in the year 1938.⁸ One is to notice the fact that compared to his successor, the bishop Vasile Moga has been „an aggrieved” of the historiography, few being the ones who have focused on outlining different aspects of his life and activity. Taking as a starting point this assertion, we will aim through the analysis of the Romanian writings dedicated to the life and the activity of bishop Vasile Moga at capturing the main phases and research directions as well as its significations hoping that this modest study will focus the attention of the historians and theologians in order to make this honest hierarch, unduly marginalized come into prominence.

Bishop Vasile Moga (1774-1845), the first Romanian Orthodox hierarch after Transylvania’s annexation by the Habsburg Empire and after the passage of a part of the Transylvanian Orthodox Church under the Roman obedience was born in the year 1774 in Sebeșul-Săsesc, within Ioan Moga’s priest family. He began his scholar instruction within the Romanian school that functioned by the town’s Orthodox Church and from 1786 within the Evangelic Gymnasium from Sebeș. Beginning with 1789 he attended for four years the courses of the Roman-Catholic High School from Alba-Iulia, while from 1793 he moved to the Catholic Royal High School from Cluj. In the year 1798, after his father’s death

³ Keith Hitchins, *Ortodoxie și naționalitate: Andrei Șaguna și românii din Transilvania: 1846-1873*, Bucharest, Univers Enciclopedic Printing Press, 1995.

⁴ Johann Schneider, *Die Hermannstädter Metropolit Andrei von Șaguna: Reform und Erneuerung der orthodoxen Kirche in Siebenbürgen und Ungarn nach 1848*, Wien, Böhlau-Verlag GmbH, 2005.

⁵ Mircea Păcurariu, *O viață dăruită Bisericii și Neamului. Sfântul Ierarh Andrei Șaguna, Mitropolitul Transilvaniei*, Sibiu, Andreiana Printing Press, 2012.

⁶ Voichița Bițu, Bogdan Andriescu, *Andrei Șaguna (1808-1873). Biobibliografie*, Sibiu, Andreiana Printing Press, 2012.

⁷ Mihai-Octavian Groza, „Un cleric-cărturar uitat. Protopop stavrofor Sebastian Stanca”, in *Astra Salvensis*, year II, no. 4, 2014, pp. 85-93; Mihai-Octavian Groza, „Un cleric cărturar aștrist uitat: protopop stavrofor doctor Sebastian Stanca (1878-1947). Viața, activitatea și opera”, in *Analele Aradului*, year I, no. 1, 2015, pp. 614-630; Mihai-Octavian Groza, Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan, „Un colaborator destoinic și „prim sfetnic” al episcopului Nicolae Ivan: protopopul cărturar Sebastian Stanca (1878-1947)”, in *Tabor*, year X, no. 2, 2016, pp. 86-106.

⁸ Sebastian Stanca, *Viața și activitatea episcopului Vasile Moga (1774-1845)*, Cluj, Romanian Orthodox Diocese Printing Press, 1938.

and as a result of his uncle's insistences, protopope Avram Moga, Vasile Moga turned to Sebeș, where he was active as a protopope chaplain until his consecration as a bishop (he was consecrated as a celibate priest within the bishopric of Arad in the year 1798). On the 21st of December 1810, fourteen years after the death of the last bishop of Serbian nation, through an imperial decree Vasile Moga was appointed as bishop of Transylvania, having to present himself in Karlowitz for his consecration (the 23rd of April, 1811). Through his assignation decree, the new bishop was imposed nineteen points, „restrictions” that circumscribed his activity. In spite of all these limits, to the hierarch there were owed the sedentariness of the bishopric within the town of Sibiu (due to the acquisition of a building where the Consistory, the seminary and the archive established their residence), a better organization of the archpriestships which at the moment much more numerous (in spite of the many passages to the Greek-Catholicism) became real administrative units, the improvement of the religious-moral life of the eparchy, the amelioration of the relation with the Greek-Catholic Church, the foundation of schools and the support for the Romanian education, the opening of the so-called „school of priests” (the basis of the future theological seminary) and of the courses for the preparation of the future teachers, the printing of the Romanian books, the maintenance of an active collaboration with the Transylvanian and Banathian scholars and, of course, their encouragement. In addition to this, bishop Vasile Moga was the one who, through a series of memories, addressed to the Imperial court or to the local authorities, fought for the Transylvanian Romanians' rights, the recognition of their equality with the other nations living in the province and their coming to the position of the fourth nation, according to the Orthodox priests canonical portions, their absolution from taxes and impositions, bestowing on them aids from the allodia houses and from other public institutions. At the moment of his death, Vasile Moga left as a heritage a residence house in Sibiu, a meadow, a special fund for study scholarships, a fund for the Church costs, a well-defined consistory, a number of organized archpriestships, preparing the path to the future Șaguna's bishopric.⁹

From the very beginning it is to mention the fact that in the case of the writings dedicated to the life and activity of bishop Vasile Moga,

⁹ Mihai-Octavian Groza, „Un arhiereu uitat și epoca sa. Biserica, societate și cultură în vremea episcopului Vasile Moga (1811-1845)”, in Nicolae Dumbrăvescu (coordinator), *Tinerii istorici și cercetările lor*, volume II, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut Printing Press, 2015, pp. 37-51.

the classical framework of analysing the historiography dedicated to the history of the Transylvanian Orthodox Church in the modern epoch cannot be applied.¹⁰ So, after an exhaustive reading of the special literature and in the absence of a historiographical program dedicated to the Moga's bishopric we propose the following phases of the historical writing dedicated to this topic: **1845-1938** (the first generation of historians was contemporary to the hierarch and presented the Moga's bishopric as a dark period compared to Șaguna's bishopric, being followed by a new generation, educated in the shadow of the former one, that continued this direction); **1938-2014** (a period marked by the emergence of the paper signed by Sebastian Stanca that came to rehabilitate the hierarch's figure, by the printing of studies dedicated to various aspects of Moga's bishopric as well as by the fragmentary mentioning of bishop Vasile Moga's figure in different papers and special studies); **2014-nowadays** (period which in the context of bishop Vasile Moga's commemoration, after 240 years since his birth and 170 years from his death, brought a revival of the studies and of the scientific manifestations dedicated to this hierarch).

The first who analysed Moga's bishopric, even if briefly, was no one else than George Barițiu, a Greek-Catholic. In an article entitled „Episcopatul românesc neunit în Ardeal” [“The Romanian United Bishopric in Transylvania”], published in the pages of the supplement „Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură” [„Page for Mind, Heart and Literature”] of „Gazeta de Transilvania” [„The Transylvanian Gazette”], the first Romanian newspaper from Transylvania, founded by Barițiu in the year 1838 at Brașov, he made in the introduction a brief historical presentation of the Transylvanian Orthodox Church, followed by the reconstitution of the context of Vasile Moga's consecration as a bishop, the imposed restrictions (emphasizing the nineteen restrictions), as well as illustrating his results, concluding as it follows: „[...] *taking into account these aspects, one can see that the bishop function of former bishop Vasilie must be understood from the point of view offered above by the discussed instruction. The same bishop had the great merit for his clergy both for the journeys to Vienna and also for the demand formulated in the name of his clergy within the Assembly from 1837. The well-balanced analysis of this bishop supported by many of his protopopes and shared by such a vivid behaviour of the greatest part of the United protopopes added much to the dissolution of the inherited hatred that ruled within the Transylvanian Romanians*

¹⁰ For more details see: Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan, *Ortodoxie și Luteranism în Transilvania între Revoluția Pașoptistă și Marea Unire. Evoluție istorică și relații confesionale*, Cluj-Napoca/Sibiu, Universitary Printing Press/Andreiana Printing Press, 2015, pp. 47-94.

*and dishonoured him. The number of the simple analphabetic people reduced during the 34 years and due to this the non-United clergy began to gain much more importance compared to the previous period”.*¹¹

Andrei, baron of Șaguna, bishop Vasile Moga's successor at the bishopric would dedicate to him in the second volume of the work *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Răsăritene Universale* [History of the Universal Eastern Orthodox Church], published in the year 1860, a portrait almost hagiographic, asserting that he was surrounded by a „sanctity” aureole, his legacy being presented in a positive light.¹² A totally different image is presented by Andrei Șaguna in his correspondence with the Serbian metropolitan of Karlowitz, Iosif Rajacici, under whose dogmatic, spiritual and administrative obedience there was also the Transylvanian Orthodox Church. Having a secret, personal character, the letters sent to the Serbian metropolitan, dating from the period in which Șaguna served as a general vicar of Transylvanian bishopric (1846-1848) presented bishop Vasile Moga as a weak hierarch, who „[...] did not gain any personal or official popularity”, who „[...] knew so little about the Church”.¹³ In the letter dated on the 14th of February 1847, Andrei Șaguna criticised the bad administration of the bishopric finances, both inherited by his own nephews, both lost through the loans accorded to various local notabilities. „[...] The former bishop worked well and through his testament one can see that he had good intentions, but it hardly could be understood which this fortune consisted of and we do not know if our Church could benefit from it because it had lent it to some Hungarian magnates from whom the former bishop, not managing to take the Church money back, preserved his right to ask the emperor for help so as to sum those innumerable obligations that at the moment are in the hands of the great creditors together with the excessive cash sums [...] constative that were left to his relatives”.¹⁴ Then, in the letter dated on the 3rd of June 1847, there was presented the hostile attitude related to the new hierarch manifested by certain „elements” close to the former bishop and also the situation of the confessional schools „[...] lacking of any order and discipline” in which hold the lessons „[...] simple, uneducated people, who read and wrote in a scandalous way and were totally incapable”.¹⁵ At the same time, the letter

¹¹ *Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură*, year VIII, no. 46, 1845, pp. 366-369.

¹² Andrei Șaguna, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Răsăritene Universale: de la întemeierea ei până în zilele noastre*, volume II, Sibiu, Archdiocese Printing Press, 1860, p. 196.

¹³ Idem, *Correspondență*, volum I/2, edition, introductory study and notes by Nicolae Bocșan, Ioan-Vasile Leb, Gabriel-Viorel Gârdan, Bogdan Ivanov, Vasa Lupulovici, Ioan Herbil, Cluj-Napoca, University Printing Press, 2007, pp. 72-73.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 76.

dating from the 5th of October 1847 focused the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities of Karlowitz on the machinations developed by Moga's faction that „[...] irritated the protopopes and the clergy against me in the sense that if I were to be elected, the priesthood would be in the future lacked of the right of choosing a bishop since I am a foreigner and not a Transylvanian” and that „[...] agreed with the United bishop and with the Roman-Catholic one”. The same letter was reproaching the former bishop the nepotism, mentioning that „[...] Moga's partisans strongly believe in these mean combinations because as it is well-known, the biggest part of the protopopes are their relatives and those who are not their relatives are their instruments and creatures”. Outlining the fact that on the episcopal see „a sort of Moga” could be elected, the vicar bishop Andrei Șaguna mentioned that: „[...] our Church from here is completely disorganised and there is no human being that could save it from its destruction since the priesthood and in particularly the protopopes are people totally blinded by their personal interests and that are by the side of the Unites”.¹⁶

Archimandrite Nicolae Popea, a closer collaborator of bishop and then of metropolitan Andrei Șaguna, bishop secretary, teacher, consistory assessor, vicar of the Archbishopric of Sibiu and bishop of Caransebeș, published in the year 1870 the paper *Vechi'a metropolia ortodosa romana a Transilvaniei, suprimarea și restaurarea ei* [*The old Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan of Transylvania, its suppression and restoration*], in which even though he recognised the merits of bishop Vasile Moga regarding the establishment of the episcopal see within the walls of the town of Sibiu, the material support ensured to the young students, the foundation of the clerical course, the fight for the political-national emancipation of the Transylvanian Romanians, condemned the lack of energy of the bishop who allowed „[...] to a very numerous part of our faithful to pass to the United Church”.¹⁷ In the biography dedicated to Andrei Șaguna, published in the year 1879, Nicolae Popea restated the assertions previously formulated to which he added the lack of authority of bishop Vasile Moga („[...] he was totally limited in his activity and in his episcopal vocation without any authority”), the bad administration of the bishop funds, the precarious instruction of the priests and teachers of the confessional schools, appreciating that „[...] if we had had at the head of the ecclesiastical

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 77-79; for more details see: Idem, *Memoriile Arhiepiscopului și Mitropolitului Andrei Șaguna din anii 1846-1871: publicate de consistoriul Arhidiecezei Ortodoxe Române de Alba-Iulia și Sibiu, la aniversarea a 50-a de la adormirea în Domnul a Marelui Arhiereu*, Sibiu, Archdiocese Printing Press, 1923.

¹⁷ Nicolae Popea, *Vechi'a metropolia ortodosa romana a Transilvaniei, suprimarea și restaurarea ei*, Sibiu, S. Filtsch Printing Press, 1870, p. 148.

affairs more appropriate men for their high vocation, more interested people in the common welfare of our Church, we would have not got lost in so many ways, we would have been better under many aspects".¹⁸

The accusations formulated by Andrei Șaguna, by the Serbian hierarchy, by Nicolae Popea were adopted by historians, such as Ilarion Pușcariu,¹⁹ Ioan Lupaș,²⁰ Gheorghe Bogdan-Duică,²¹ Nicolae Iorga,²² who even if they based their researches on a series of archivist sources (to the extent to which they were preserved and could be consulted, knowing the fact that in the year 1848 a part of the episcopal archive was destructed by the Hungarian troops which conquered the town of Sibiu), perpetuated this negative image of Moga's bishopric, presented in direct relation with Șaguna's one.

Archimandrite Ilarion Pușcariu, secretary, consistory assessor and archbishopric vicar, initiated in the year 1889 a monumental collection, in two volumes, entitled *Documente pentru limbă și istorie* [*Documents for language and history*], a consistent part of the first volume being reserved to the dates and documents „*from the period of Vasiliu Moga*”: the first letter emitted by bishop Vasile Moga (dated on the 10th of August 1811), pastorals, documents regarding the bishop's initiative with the purpose of gaining a new see, different indications concerning the moral-religious life of the faithful, the fast periods, the normative documents related to the clergy instruction and documents related to the devolvement of the

¹⁸ Idem, *Arhiepiscopul și mitropolitul Andrei baron de Șaguna*, Bucharest, Profile Publishing Printing Press, 2002, pp. 15-27.

¹⁹ Ilarion Pușcariu, *Metropolia românilor ortodocși din Ungaria și Transilvania. Studiu istoric despre reînființarea metropoliei. Dimpreună cu o colecțiune de acte*, Sibiu, Archdiocese Printing Press, 1900, p. 21.

²⁰ Ioan Lupaș, *Mitropolitul Andrei Șaguna. Monografie istorică*, Sibiu, Archdiocese Printing Press, 1909, pp. 45-46, 382; Idem, *Viața și faptele lui Andrei Șaguna mitropolitul Ardealului*, Bucharest, C. Sfetea Printing Press, 1913, pp. 10-15; Idem, „Episcopul Vasile Moga și profesorul Gheorghe Lazăr”, in Idem (editor), *Studii, conferințe și comunicări istorice*, volume III, Sibiu, Cartea Românească din Cluj Printing Press, 1941, pp. 103-110; Idem, *Istoria bisericească a românilor ardeleni*, 2nd edition, introduction, edition, notes and comments by Doru Radosav, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Printing Press, 1995, pp. 139-141, 179-183; Idem, „Doisprezece pețitori ai episcopiei transilvane vacante de la 1796-1810”, in Nicolae Edroiu (editor), *Ioan Lupaș (1880-1967). Scrieri alese, I, Studii asupra istoriei Evului Mediu și istoriei bisericești*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Printing Press, 2006, pp. 587-605.

²¹ Gheorghe Bogdan-Duică, *Gheorghe Lazăr*, Bucharest, Cultura Națională Printing Press, 1924, pp. 46-50.

²² Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria românilor din Ardeal și Ungaria, volume II, De la mișcarea lui Horea până astăzi (1915)*, Bucharest, Saeculum I. O. Printing Press, 2009, pp. 94-111.

exams.²³ In his manual of ecclesiastical history dedicated to the middle and commercial schools, published in the year 1901, the same Ilarion Pușcariu reminded the humiliating conditions in which bishop Vasile Moga was constrained to develop his activity.²⁴

In addition to this, the historian Sterie Stinghe initiated the voluminous collection *Documente privitoare la trecutul românilor din Șchei* [*Documents related to the past of the Romanians from Șchei*], in five volumes, published in the years 1901-1906, within the third volume publishing a series of documents regarding the figure of bishop Vasile Moga: the hierarch's correspondence with the protopopes, the documents referring to the donations initiated by the bishop, the documents related to the consecration of the priests and protopopes, the faithful from Șchei demands for the priests' election, various reclamations addressed to the bishop, demands concerning the situation of the teachers and the activity developed by them.²⁵

The documents reproduced in the two collections did not do anything else than bringing into spotlight the life and the activity of bishop Vasile Moga, demonstrating that contrary to the assertions of the historians mentioned in the lines above, he was a capable hierarch, preoccupied by the situation of his faithful, by the moral-religious situation of the believers, by the instruction of the future teachers and priests, by the situation of the teachers, priests and protopopes, who moved in the limits imposed by the imperial decree of nomination from the 21st of December, 1810.

The theologian, historian and teacher Ioan Lupaș was the one who opened the path to a re-evaluation of bishop Vasile Moga's life and activity, in the year 1911 publishing within the pages of the magazine „Biserica Ortodoxă Română” [„The Romanian Orthodox Church”], a study meant to realize an incursion into the context of the epoch during which the hierarch devolved his activity, in the annex of the study presenting in an original version, not translated, the documents regarding the bishop's consecration.²⁶ This was followed by a series of articles through which Ioan Lupaș managed to capture aspects related to bishop

²³ Ilarion Pușcariu, *Documente pentru limbă și istorie*, volume I, Sibiu, Archdiocese Printing Press, 1889, pp. 177-198.

²⁴ Idem, *Manual de Istoria Bisericească pentru tinerimea de confesiunea greco-orientală din școlile medii și comerciale*, 2nd edition, Sibiu, Archdiocese Printing Press, 1901, p. 134.

²⁵ Stere Stinghe, *Documente privitoare la trecutul românilor din Șchei, volume III (1812-1845)*, Brașov, Ciurcu&Comp. Printing Press, 1903.

²⁶ Ioan Lupaș, „Acte privitoare la alegerea și instalarea episcopului ardelean Vasile Moga (1810-1811)”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, year XXXV, no. 7, 1911, pp. 781-790.

Vasile Moga's intellectual formation (publishing his registry book from the Royal Catholic High School from Cluj),²⁷ to his contribution in the establishment of the episcopal see at Sibiu,²⁸ as well as to his contribution at the development of the formative courses for the future clerics.²⁹ Furthermore, in the year 1930, within the pages of the journal „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională din Cluj” [„Annuary of the National History Institute of Cluj”], he published in German an obituary of bishop Vasile Moga, together with two illustrations that presented the hierarch and his funeral procession, taken from „Illustrierte Zeitung” [„The Illustrated Newspaper”] from Leipzig, number 140 (the 7th of March 1846).³⁰

In the same period, following the example offered by the historian Ioan Lupaș, Ioan Mateiu, teacher within the Andreiana Academy, published in the pages of the magazine „Biserica Ortodoxă Română” [„Romanian Orthodox Church”], a study entitled „Cultura episcopului Vasile Moga” [„The culture of bishop Vasile Moga”] through which he presented the hierarch's personality according to his intellectual formation and to his culture. Like Lupaș, he would publish the registry book which contained the results obtained by Vasile Moga during the studies attended in Cluj, combatting different authors who argued that he was a man with a precarious, rudimentary theological and cultural instruction.³¹

The year 1938 represented however a turning point in the Romanian historiography dedicated to the life and activity of bishop Vasile Moga through the publishing of the first monography dedicated to him, entitled *Viața și activitatea episcopului Vasile Moga (1774-1845)* [*The Life and Activity of Bishop Vasile Moga (1774-1845)*], signed by priest Sebastian Stanca, consistory assessor of the Bishopric of Vad, Feleac and Cluj. On its basis, his doctoral thesis, coordinated by the historian Ioan

²⁷ Idem, „Câteva informații privitoare la Vasile Moga și Gheorghe Lazăr ca student în Cluj”, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională din Cluj*, year II, no. 2, 1923, pp. 377-381.

²⁸ Idem, „Sibiul ca centru al vieții românești din Ardeal”, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională din Cluj*, year V, no. 5, 1928-1930, pp. 52-55.

²⁹ Idem, „Cum erau învățăturile în seminarul din Sibiu pe vremea episcopului Vasile Moga?”, in *Tribuna*, no. 218-219, 1911, pp. 218-219.

³⁰ Idem, „Un necrolog al episcopului Vasile Moga”, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională din Cluj*, year V, no. 5, 1928-1930, pp. 491-495; translated by: Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan, „Un necrolog nemțesc al episcopului Vasile Moga (+17 octombrie 1845)”, in *Telegraful Român*, no. 37-40, 2015, p. 9.

³¹ Ioan Mateiu, „Cultura episcopului Vasile Moga”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, year XLI, no. 12 (510), 1923, pp. 922-926.

Lupaș, took as a starting point the hypothesis that a series of famous historians who were interested in the period of the pastorate of bishop and metropolitan Andrei, baron of Șaguna, blamed the personality and the activity developed by his predecessor, Vasile Moga managing to a closer extent, focusing on the archivist material and on the researches made formerly,³² to rehabilitate the figure of the worth hierarch. Within the paper, the bishop's biography, the campaign and the insides related to the bishop's election were presented; together with this, there were also included the list with the nineteen restrictions imposed through the investing diploma, analysed gradually, the establishment of the see and the acquisition of the building that became the episcopal centre, the organization of courses for priests and teachers, the pastoral, scholar and political-national activity developed by the bishop, the relation with the Transylvanian Greek-Catholic Church, the conflicts with Gheorghe Lazăr (obliged after these dissensions to search for a refuge in the Romanian land), as well as the relation with the Saxons (being surprised his involvement in the conflict between the Saxons and the Romanian community of Sebeș, a conflict that would be called in the epoch documents „*the process of the mills*”).³³ The controversies regarding the bishop Vasile Moga's personality coming to an end, Nicolae Iorga³⁴ would display the efforts made by Sebastian Stanca, asserting the following: „*Good for you, father Stanca! Finally the story of Vasile Moga has come to an end*”.³⁵ Unfortunately, the paper had a biographical character, the author insisting on bishop Vasile Moga's life and activity and to a lesser extent on the institutional realities, on the organization of the bishopric, on the relation with the other archpriestships and eparchies, episodes that remained unknown up to our times.

The paper signed by Sebastian Stanca has represented up to now the first, single and the most complex paper dedicated to the bishop Vasile Moga's life and activity, based on a rich archivist material which

³² ***, „Un circular al episcopului Vasile Moga”, in *Renașterea. Organul Oficial al Eparhiei Ortodoxe Române a Vadului, Feleacului, Geoagiului și Clujului*, year I, no. 1, 1923, pp. 3-4; Sebastian Stanca, *Gheorghe Lazăr la Sibiu*, Cluj, Archdiocese Printing Press, 1934, pp. 1-16.

³³ Idem, *Viața și activitatea episcopului Vasile Moga*, pp. 7-113.

³⁴ Nicolae Iorga, „Sebastian Stanca, *Viața și activitatea episcopului Vasile Moga (1774-1845)*, Cluj, Tipografia Eparhiei Ortodoxe Române, 1938, 125 p.”, in *Revista Istorică*, no. XXV, 1939, pp. 279-280.

³⁵ Ioan Băndean, „Protopop stavrofor doctor Sebastian Stanca (1878-1947). Contribuția sa la cunoașterea istoriei bisericii transilvane și la reînființarea Episcopiei Vadului, Feleacului și Clujului”, in *Mitropolia Ardealului*, year XXXI, no. 5, 1986, pp. 62-63.

unfortunately nowadays we cannot access anymore, excepting the documents conserved in the archive of the Transylvanian Orthodox Metropolitan of Sibiu. In spite of these, in the period of the years 1938-2014 the period of Moga's bishopric has been analysed on different segments or briefly mentioned within some general papers by a series of historians such as Mircea Păcurariu, David Prodan, Gheorghe Em. Marica, Nicolae Bocșan, Ladislau Gyémant, Pavel Cherescu, Ciprian Ghișa, Daniel Dumitran, Paul Brusankowski or Ovidiu Boc.

The academician Mircea Păcurariu, in his monography dedicated to the two hundred years of theological education at Sibiu, published in the year 1987, mentioned the so-called „school of priests” and the „school of norm” that functioned in the period of the years 1811-1846, as well as the intention of bishop Vasile Moga to create a theological seminary (the court decree 1300 from the 25th of May, 1809 stated the fulfilment of the bishop see and the foundation of a seminary), the problems encountered and the failure of this action, the problem of elaborating the school manuals. Moreover, it was presented the conflict between the bishop and Gheorghe Lazăr, ended with the departure of the last one from the Romanian land where he had dedicated his entire life and activity to the development of the Romanian national educational system.³⁶

Within the third volume of *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române [History of the Romanian Orthodox Church]*, dedicated to the evolution of the Romanian Church during the 19th and 20th centuries, father Mircea Păcurariu realised a radiography of Moga's bishopric, starting from the presentation of the Transylvanian Orthodox Church before the election of bishop Vasile Moga and continuing with the presentation of the hierarch's biography, „his household achievements” (the acquisition of the building that became the bishop centre, centre of the consistory and of the formative course for the future clerics), the cultural activity (reflected in the organization of the formative courses for the future clerics and teachers, in the support of the young students attending the universities from the Empire, in the attention paid to the organization of the Romanian elementary schools, in the support for the various editorial apparitions), the pastoral and social activity (reflected in the pastorals released by the bishop) and the national-political activity (reflected in the petitions addressed by the bishop whether by his own, whether accompanied by the Greek-Catholic bishop to the Imperial court and to

³⁶ Mircea Păcurariu, *Două sute de ani de învățământ teologic la Sibiu, 1786-1986*, Sibiu, Archdiocese Printing Press, 1987, pp. 35-55.

the Assembly).³⁷ Under the title „Primul episcop de neam român la Sibiu: Vasile Moga” [„The First Bishop of Romanian Nation at Sibiu: Vasile Moga”], the presentation of hierarch’s life and activity was restated and within the volume *Cărturari sibieni de altădată* [*Scholars of Sibiu from the Past*], published in the year 2002.³⁸

Brief biographical medallions were published by father Mircea Păcurariu both in the volume *Scurtă istorie a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române* [*A Short History of the Romanian Orthodox Church*]³⁹ as well as in the *Enciclopedia ortodoxiei românești* [*The Encyclopaedia of the Romanian Orthodoxies*]⁴⁰ and in the *Dicționarul teologilor români* [*The Dictionary of the Romanian Theologians*].⁴¹

The historian David Prodan, in the pages of his monumental work *Supplex Libellus Valachorum. Din istoria formării națiunii române* [*Supplex Libellus Valachorum. From the History of the Romanian nation’s foundation*] illustrated the national-political activity of bishop Vasile Moga reporting it to the context of the fight for national emancipation of the Transylvanian Romanians, presenting and analysing also the text of the memoirs dating from the years 1834, 1837 and 1842.⁴² Ladislau Gyémant would be the one who would continue the direction inaugurated by Prodan through the analysis of the three memoirs launched by the bishop by himself or in collaboration with the Greek-Catholic bishop, demonstrating that in spite of the absence of concrete results, these documents put the national-political movement of the Transylvanian Romanians in a new light, that of overcoming the confessional splits and of cooperating with the purpose of achieving the Romanian national program.⁴³

³⁷ Idem, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, volume III, Secolele XIX și XX*, Bucharest, The Biblical Institute and Mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church Printing Press, 1994, pp. 64-73.

³⁸ Idem, *Cărturari sibieni de altădată*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Printing Press, 2002, pp. 47-55.

³⁹ Idem, *Scurtă istorie a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Printing Press, 2002, pp. 195-196.

⁴⁰ Idem, *Enciclopedia ortodoxiei românești*, Bucharest, The Biblical Institute and Mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church Printing Press, 2010, p. 404.

⁴¹ Idem, *Dicționarul teologilor români*, 3rd edition, Sibiu, Andreiana Printing Press, 2014, voice „Vasile Moga”.

⁴² David Prodan, *Supplex Libellus Valachorum. Din istoria formării națiunii române*, Bucharest, Scientific and Encyclopedic Printing Press, 1984, pp. 382-395.

⁴³ Ladislau Gyémant, *Mișcarea națională a românilor din Transilvania între anii 1790 și 1848*, Bucharest, Scientific and Encyclopedic Printing Press, 1986, pp. 131-158; Idem, „Memoriul românilor ardeleni din anul 1834”, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie din Cluj*, no. XVII, 1974, pp. 98-117; Idem, „O încercare de reluare a Supplexului în

The historian Keith Hitchins, professor of the University of Illinois, interested in the Romanian modern history, taking a series of information from the papers and the documents published at the end of the 19th century, built a negative image of Moga's bishopric,⁴⁴ attributing to the bishop „*the disorder, the simony and the ignorance*”, the confusing situation of the bishopric finances, the languishing instruction of the clergy and also the situation of the confessional schools, „*their badness*”.⁴⁵

To the father professor Pavel Cherescu we owed a study dedicated to „Contribuția episcopului Vasile Moga la dezvoltarea învățământului românesc din Transilvania” [„Bishop Vasile Moga's contribution to the development of the Romanian education from Transylvania”] published in the pages of the journal „Mitropolia Ardealului” [„Transylvanian Metropolitan”] which had the great merit of presenting, except from the contribution brought to the development of the confessional education, based on the information extracted from the metropolitan archives of Sibiu, a complete list of the students who benefitted from subventions from bishop Vasile Moga (within these, we can find Ioan Moga, Ioan Tipeiu, Nicolae Popea, Nifon Bălășescu, Ilie Măcelariu, Sava Popovici-Barcianu, Petru Dobra etc.).⁴⁶ Gheorghe Em. Marica, in his turn, would mention George Barițiu as a beneficiary for two times of the stipends provided by Vasile Moga.⁴⁷ At the same time, in the first volume of the work *Învățământul confesional ortodox român din Transilvania între anii 1848-1918* [*The Romanian Orthodox Confessional Education from Transylvania in the years 1848-1918*] Paul Brusnovski presented in a positive way the contribution of bishop Vasile Moga as supreme inspector of the Orthodox schools to the development of the Romanian confessional

anul 1837”, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie din Cluj*, no. XXII, 1979, pp. 389-406.

⁴⁴ Keith Hitchins, *Conștiință națională și acțiune politică la românii din Transilvania (1700-1868)*, volume I, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Printing Press, 1987, pp. 116-117.

⁴⁵ Idem, *Ortodoxie și naționalitate. Andrei Șaguna și românii din Transilvania: 1864-1873*, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Univers Printing Press, 1995, pp. 39-48.

⁴⁶ Pavel Cherescu, „Contribuția episcopului Vasile Moga la dezvoltarea învățământului confesional românesc din Transilvania”, in *Mitropolia Ardealului*, year XXXV, no. 5, 1990, pp. 10-27 (republished in: Pavel Cherescu (editor), *Contribuții la studiul istoriei Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (secolele XVIII-XIX)*, Oradea, Adsumus Printing Press, 2001, pp. 157-185).

⁴⁷ George Em. Marica, „*Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură*”. *Biobibliografie analitică cu un studiu monografic*, Bucharest, For Literature Printing Press, 1969, p. 135, note 2.

education, stating the fact that in the period of the years 1815-1843 the number of the Romanian schools raised from 41 to 282.⁴⁸

It is the same father Pavel Cherescu to whom we owed a historical-liturgical study dedicated to the corporals from the collection of the archbishopric museum from Sibiu in whose pages there were also mentioned the palls printed by bishop Vasile Moga in the years 1815, 1829 and 1837.⁴⁹

A series of volumes and studies presented information referring to the intellectual formation of the bishop,⁵⁰ to his election for the episcopal see (mentioned in the correspondence),⁵¹ to the presence of his name on the list of members of different journals of the epoch,⁵² to the volumes, manuals and liturgical books printed from the bishop's initiative or supported by him,⁵³ to the bishop's support and active collaboration with the scholars from Banat,⁵⁴ to his contribution at the edification of the new Orthodox Church from Sebeș (the bishop's native place)⁵⁵ and of the stone churches from the Sebeș Valley.⁵⁶ Furthermore,

⁴⁸ Paul Brusonowski, *Învățământul confesional ortodox român din Transilvania între anii 1848-1918. Între exigențele statului centralist și principiile autonomiei bisericești*, volume I, Cluj-Napoca, University Printing Press, 2010, pp. 78-81.

⁴⁹ Pavel Cherescu, „Antimisele din colecția muzeului Arhiepiscopiei Sibiului. Studiu istorico-liturgic”, in *Revista Teologică*, year IV, no. 4, 1994, pp. 49-72 (republished in: Pavel Cherescu (editor), *Contribuții la studiul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, p. 94).

⁵⁰ Remus Câmpeanu, *Intellectualitatea românească din Transilvania în secolul al XVIII-lea*, Cluj-Napoca, University Printing Press, 1999, p. 150; Nicolae Afrapt, *Un liceu în calea vremurilor. Colegiul Național „Lucian Blaga” Sebeș*, Alba-Iulia, Altip Printing Press, 2003, p. 16.

⁵¹ Nicolae Bocșan, „Petru Maior și Moise Nicoră”, in Calinic, Archbishop of Argeș and Muscel, Alexandru Moraru, Vasile Raus, Vasile Coția (coordinators), *Slujitor al bisericii și al neamului. Părintelui profesor universitar doctor Mircea Păcurariu, membru corespondent al Academiei Române, la împlinirea vârstei de 70 de ani*, Cluj-Napoca, Renașterea Printing Press, 2002, pp. 455-465.

⁵² George Em. Marica, *Studii de istoria și sociologia culturii române ardeleni din secolul al XIX-lea*, volume I, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Printing Press, 1977, pp. 20-21.

⁵³ Elena Dunăreanu, Aurelia Popa, *Cartea românească sibiiană (1544-1918)*, Sibiu, 1979, pp. 26-29; Ciprian Ghișa, „Denominarea Bisericii Romano-Catolice și a suveranului pontif în cultura religioasă a românilor uniți din Transilvania”, in *Arhiva Someșană*, 3rd series, 2004, p. 175.

⁵⁴ Partenie Pop, „Episcopul Vasile Moga colaborator al oamenilor de cultură bănățeni?”, in *Mitropolia Banatului. Revista Oficială a Arhiepiscopiei Timișoarei și Caransebeșului și a Episcopiei Aradului*, year XXIII, no. 1-3, 1973, pp. 116-119.

⁵⁵ Gheorghe Fleșer, Ioana Rustoiu, *Biserica ortodoxă „Învierea Domnului” din Sebeș*, Alba-Iulia, Altip Printing Press, 2005, pp. 6-10.

⁵⁶ Nicolae Afrapt, *Sebeșul-satul de pe Valea Sebeșului. Monografie istorică*, Alba-Iulia, Altip Printing Press, 2009, pp. 115-116.

in the volume *Românii sud-transilvani în secolul al XIX-lea: județul Covasna* [*The Romanians of Southern-Eastern Transylvania in the 19th century*] signed by Ana Grama Brescan, there were various references to Vasile Moga Fond identified in the archive of the Transylvanian Orthodox Metropolitan from Sibiu.⁵⁷

The historians Ciprian Ghișa and Daniel Dumitran provided us with valuable information related to the relation built by bishop Vasile Moga with the hierarchy of the Greek-Catholic Church from Transylvania,⁵⁸ as well as the secret negotiations initiated by the bishop with the Roman representatives and with those of the central authorities with the purpose of facilitating the union or the adopting the religious union (as a matter of fact, one of the nineteen restrictions constrained the bishop to prove no hatred opposition to the „spread” of the union).⁵⁹

A re-evaluation of the historical sources regarding the life and the activity of bishop Vasile Moga was presented by Ovidiu Boc, demonstrating that the idea of the total destruction of the eparchial archive during the 1848 revolution is a false one, the metropolitan archives preserving a series of inedited sources (documents in Romanian, Latin, German and Hungarian referring to the bishop, to the consistory, to the priests and protopopes, to the parochialism, to the faithful and their issues, dispositions, decrees and documents emitted by the epoch authorities, the bishop’s correspondence with the protopopes, priests and the faithful of the eparchies as well as statistics) that would allow the hierarch’s complete rehabilitation.⁶⁰

A revival of the studies dedicated to the life and activity of bishop Vasile Moga took place beginning with the year 2014 in the context of the reactivation of the Astra Association, Sebeș section, that chose the hierarch as spiritual patron. The series of the cultural manifestations developed by this cultural association was opened by a commemorative conference at 240 years from the bishop’s birth (on the 5th of December 2015), an event that was organized in partnership with the Institute of

⁵⁷ Ana Grama Brescan, *Românii sud-transilvani în secolul al XIX-lea: județul Covasna. Contribuții documentare*, Sfântu Gheorghe, Arcuș Printing Press, 2007, p. 18, 27, 29.

⁵⁸ Ciprian Ghișa, *Episcopia Greco-Catolică de Făgăraș în timpul păstoririi lui Ioan Lemeni: 1832-1850, volume I, Biserica Greco-Catolică din Transilvania după 150 de ani de la unirea cu Roma*, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut Printing Press, 2008, pp. 343-345.

⁵⁹ Daniel Dumitran, *Un timp al reformelor. Biserica Greco-Catolică din Transilvania sub conducerea episcopului Ioan Bob (1782-1830)*, 2nd edition, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut Printing Press, 2007, pp. 196-217.

⁶⁰ Ovidiu Boc, „Biserică și societate în timpul episcopului Vasile Moga (1810-1845). Evaluarea surselor”, in *Buletinul Cercurilor Științifice Studențești*, no. 15, 2009, pp. 97-106.

Ecclesiastical History of the Babeş-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca and coordinated by the late historian Nicolae Bocşan.⁶¹

As a continuation of this event there was published a series of studies dedicated to the life and activity of bishop Vasile Moga (meant to rehabilitate his figure),⁶² as well as to clarify certain episodes of Moga's bishopric.⁶³

A re-evaluation of Moga's bishopric through the documents found in the archives from our country and abroad was provided by the historian Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan in his excellent thesis *Ortodoxie și Luteranism în Transilvania* [*Orthodoxy and Lutheranism in Transylvania*], dedicated to the relations between the two confessions in the period of the years 1848-1918,⁶⁴ paragraphs also restated in a distinct study.⁶⁵ The same author offers us a series of information regarding the administrative organization of the bishopric during the bishop Vasile Moga,⁶⁶ the title, the jurisdiction and the order in diptychs of the hierarchy,⁶⁷ the problem of succession at his death,⁶⁸ the bishop's portrait

⁶¹ The works of this conference were published in the first supplement of „Astra Sabesiensis” journal/2017.

⁶² Mihai-Octavian Groza, „Un arhiereu uitat și epoca sa”, pp. 37-51; Idem, „Episcopul Vasile Moga (1774-1845). Scurtă schiță biografică”, in „Der Untervalde”. *Zweisprachige Kultur-und Informationszeitschrift*, no. 24, 2015, pp. 26-27.

⁶³ Idem, „Un document inedit despre implicarea episcopului Vasile Moga în „procesul morilor” din Sebeş”, in Doru Sinaci, Emil Arbonie (coordinators), *Administrație românească arădeană. Studii și comunicări din Banat-Crișana*, volume XII, Arad, „Vasile Goldiș” University Press, 2017, pp. 263-277.

⁶⁴ Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan, *Ortodoxie și Luteranism în Transilvania*, pp. 131-144.

⁶⁵ Idem, „O serie de considerații referitoare la păstoria episcopului Vasile Moga (1810-1845)”, in Varga Attila, Iosif Marin Balog (coordinators), *Diversitate culturală, realități politice și multiconfesionalism în Transilvania și Banat (secolele XVIII-XX). Cercetătorului științific grad I doctor Dumitru Suciu la împlinirea vârstei de 70 de ani*, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut Printing Press, 2014, pp. 49-61.

⁶⁶ Idem, „Organizarea administrativă a Eparhiei Ardealului între anii 1766-1920”, in *Îndrumător Bisericesc pe anul de la Hristos, 2016*, year 164, Sibiu, Andreiana Printing Press, 2016, pp. 394-403.

⁶⁷ Idem, „Titulatura, jurisdicția și ordinea în diptice a Eparhiei Ortodoxe a Transilvaniei și a ierarhilor ei între păstoria lui Dionisie Novacovici și vicariatul lui Andrei Șaguna (1761-1848)”, in *Tabor*, year IX, no. 12, 2015, pp. 24-25.

⁶⁸ Idem, „Ioan Popasu și Andrei Șaguna, contracandidați în cursa pentru scaunul episcopal al Ardealului, aspecte inedite din anii 1845-1848”, in Daniel Alic, Lucian Zenoviu Bot (coordinators), *Misiune și propovăduire. Anul omagial al misiunii parohiei și mănăstirii așii. Anul comemorativ al Sfântului Ioan Gură de Aur și al marilor păstori de suflete din eparhii. 150 de ani de la întemeierea episcopiei ortodoxe române a Caransebeșului*, Cluj-Napoca/Caransebeș, University Printing Press/The Bishopric of Caransebeș Printing Press, 2015, pp. 491-499.

in the German press from Leipzig,⁶⁹ together with the recuperation of documentary fragments related to the life and activity of the bishop (biography elaborated by Constantin von Wurzbach in his 18th volume of the *Lexicon biografic al Imperiului Austriac* [*Biographical Lexicon of the Austrian Empire*], published at Vienna in the year 1868 as well as the essay written by the Transylvanian Court Chancellery on the 27th of November 1845 concerning the bishop's death, his legacy and his succession and also the eparchial administration during the absence on the bishopric see).⁷⁰

The historiographical passages referring to bishop Vasile Moga's life and activity, commented in the lines above, demonstrated the fact that over time he was an „aggrieved” of the historical writing compared to his successor. Although the figure of this hierarch was analysed in the studies and the volumes just mentioned, these being focused on the bishop Vasile Moga's life, activity and epoch, on his contributions to the development of the Romanian education, to the improvement of the moral-religious life of the eparchy, to the national-political fight of the Transylvanian Romanians, the institutional realities, the organization of the bishopric, the relation with the archpriestships and the eparchies, constituting a lack of the historiography that remains to be solved. We strongly believe that only a detailed and systematic research of the metropolitan archives from Sibiu could offer a complete image of Moga's bishopric, as it was said by the bishop's nephew, the theologian Ioan Moga in the pages of „Gazeta de Transilvania” [„The Transylvanian Gazette”]: „*At present the life of the late crossed the frontiers of the history and the topic of this history is found in the archives. Not a man who sees only the defects of the dead one, not a man like me who sees only his virtues could write the history of the dead one: but an objective man, without any passion, could be able to write his history corresponding with the truth. Only a man like that could judge what the bishop did*

⁶⁹ Idem, „Doi mari păstori de suflete ai românilor ortodocși ardeleni în presa de la Leipzig: Vasile Moga și Andrei, baron de Șaguna”, in Vasile Stanciu, Cristian Sonea (coordinators), *Misiunea parohiei și a mănăstirii într-o lume în continuă schimbare. Lucrările Simpozionului Internațional de Teologie, Istorie, Mușicologie și Artă, 3-4 noiembrie 2015*, volume I, Cluj-Napoca, Renașterea Printing Press, 2016, pp. 434-441.

⁷⁰ Idem, „O biografie austriacă de secol XIX a episcopului Vasile Moga-la 240 de ani de la nașterea lui”, in *Telegraful Român*, no. 41-44, 2014, p. 5, Idem, „Activitatea și moștenirea episcopului Vasile Moga în lumina unor documente culese din Arhivele de la Viena”, in Florin Dobrei (coordinator), *Păstori și păstorire în trecutul bisericii noastre*, Cluj-Napoca/Deva, Argonaut Printing Press/The Bishopric of Deva and Hunedoara Printing Press, 2015, pp. 439-466.

Astra Salvensis, an VI, număr 11, 2018

and did not do, what the bishop could have done and could not have done for his clergy and for his nation”.⁷¹

⁷¹ *Gazeta de Transilvania*, year VIII, no. 92, 1845, p. 365.