



Adrian Ignat

Relevant Aspects of Social-Philanthropic Work in the Romanian Orthodox Church

Abstract

On this period of special challenge from medical perspective (SARS CoV-2 epidemy), a short presentation of presence and work of Romanian Orthodox Church will underline the importance of its involvement on society. Seeing on the neighbor an *alterus Christi*, as our Savior Jesus Christ said on the presentation of the frightening judgment (Matthew 25), Romanian Orthodox Church constantly sought to take care of the disadvantaged, of those who faced great trials of life. For that, this article presents some historical perspective about social-philan-



Rev. Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Adrian Ignat is Assoc. Professor of Christian Church and Romanian Orthodox History at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology and Education Science of Valahia University of Târgoviște, Romania.

thropical work of Romanian Orthodox Church on society.

Keywords

philanthropy, hospital, Orthodox Church, monastery, hospice

1 Introduction

The gospel of Christ, preached and embraced by the Romanian people, became the model of social life for the inhabitants of these lands. Taking over the Byzantine model, in which the church goods were administered by economists under the direct control of the bishops, having the role of: maintenance of the clergy; expenses for church service and construction; maintenance of the poor¹ and the salvation of prisoners of war, the Romanian Orthodox Church has always shown special concern for those in need and trouble, for the "afflicted of life"².

The social-philanthropic action of the Church has continuously focused on this category, seeking to support the poor and foreigners, those in prison and the abandoned (widows, orphans

¹ On the social activity of the Christian Church in the first centuries, but also in the Byzantine Empire, see: Gh. I. Soare, *Biserica și asistența socială - doctrina și organizarea în primele șase secole*, Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, București, 1948; Demetrios J. Constantelos, *Filantropia bizantină și asistența socială*, traducere de Dr. Florina Georgeta Mureșan, Editura Doxologia, Iași, 2014.

² A particularly important study for the research of the philanthropic activity of the Romanian Orthodox Church is the doctoral thesis of Pr. Prof. Dr. Ioan Vicovan, *Dați-le voi să mănânce! Filantropia creștină: istorie și spiritualitate*, Editura Trinitas, Iași, 2001.

and the sick)³. "Social protection has always been imposed by inexorable needs and promoted both by the natural feeling of compassion for those who have suffered and unable to snatch themselves from its clutches, and by the very instinct to preserve social groups"⁴.

The old Romanian law took over these obligations assumed by the Church for all these disinherited of life. Thus, in the codes of laws of the seventeenth century, it is stipulated that: "The bishop should be a lover of strangers, a lover of the poor, give to the poor"⁵, and the bishop "to take careful care /.../ of the things of the church and not to give any of those to his relatives, without only what he will give as poor"⁶. The bishop, the priest and the deacon (the whole church clergy) had as a moral obligation the

3 The social-philanthropic activity carried out by the Christian Church since the first centuries has followed and is following the command given by the Savior Jesus Christ, seeking to reach all categories of disadvantaged or hard-trying people. A particularly important landmark in the history of Christian philanthropy is the work of St. Basil the Great, symbolically called "Vasiliada". "If the material traces have perished, the leading idea and the memory of that great hierarch, scholar and doctor, who found, first, so much soul and so much mercy and energy, to shelter the lepers, the poor, the infirm, the children, persisted. and on hikes. His thought was fruitful and ... he was at the beginning of a long series of similar achievements, in all countries of the world". N. Vătămanu, *1600 de ani de la înființarea Vasiliadei - cel dintâi așezământ de asistență socială și sanitară*, in „Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, LXXXVII (1969), nr. 3-4, p. 310.

4 Ioan Lupaș, *Biserica și problemele asistenței sociale*, in vol. „Biserica și problemele sociale”, Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, București, 1933, p. 231.

5 *** , *Îndreptarea Legii (1652)*, Editura Academiei, București, 1962, p. 79. On Byzantine institutions, see Charles Diehl, *La Société byzantine à l'époque des Comnènes*, in „Revue Historique du Sud-Est Européen”, VI, 1929, pp. 342-349; Timothy S. Miller, *Byzantine Hospitals*, in „Dumbarton Oaks Papers”, tom. 38, 1984, pp. 53-63.

6 *** , *Îndreptarea Legii*, p. 382.

supervision of the wealth of the poor orphans until they came of age or "the help of widows and the care of the sick and sick"⁷. "Let the bishop dare and go to the king and lord for the poor and widows and for those who suffer rich needs, to ask them to be of help to them and to have mercy on them to have mercy on them"⁸.

Similar provisions appear in other codes of laws from the 18th century, during the time of Stephan Racoviță (1765) and Scarlat Ghica (1766)⁹. In the 19th century, Romanian Zilot, a writer by legal training, passed in a secular writing the bishop's duties towards the poor: "The escaped and the widow from the care of not coming out / And to all the poor to be open to the table"¹⁰.

For the monks, the Romanian legislations provided that the one who left the monastery, giving up the monastic robe, should lose his fortune. In case of inheritance (lack of descendants), all the wealth remained to the monastery. When he had descendants, the fortune was divided between him and them in equal shares, his share returning to the monastery¹¹.

A study on social assistance in the Romanian Orthodox Church states from the beginning that: "Until the sixteenth century,

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 387-388.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 450.

⁹ Speaking about the relationship between the state and the Church, and involvement in the social aspects of society, Italian Minister Giovanni Gentile said: As "... the state, which is not interested in religion, is not a state, the more rightly we are to say that the Church, if it is not interested in the problems of social protection, it is not a Christian Church!". Cf. Ioan Lupaș, *Biserica și problemele asistenței sociale*, p. 238.

¹⁰ Zilot Românul, *Opere complete*, ed. Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă, Editura Minerva, București, 1996, p. 125.

¹¹ ***, *Îndreptarea Legii*, pp. 153-154.

most actions to help various categories of disadvantaged people were done in monasteries and religious congregations"¹².

The diminution of these actions will be achieved after the establishment of the modern Romanian state, with the secularization of the monastic fortunes (1863). However, in the interwar period, at the beginning of 1936, there were 521 social assistance units, of which 50 state units and 471 associations operating within the Church¹³.

2 Care for the poor

Faced with the phenomenon of poverty, generalized to the majority of the population in the Romanian Lands, the Romanian Orthodox Church showed a special concern for this social category, materialized in support of those who believed and wanted its help. Christ the Savior often asked those who came and invoked His help, "Do you think I can do this?" In the same way, the Church sought to be with all those who needed her help, facing various challenges: spiritual and material¹⁴.

Taking over the Byzantine tradition of the monastic way of life, the Romanian monks and monasteries took a special care for the poor. The role of the monks in assisting them was very important, especially during the great calamities that marked his-

¹² Rodica Țugui, Daniela Țigmeanu, *Asistența socială în Biserică. Evaluări și cercetări în cadrul programelor sociale ale Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, Editura Doxologia, Iași, 2010, p. 10.

¹³ F. Manoiu, V. Epureanu, *Asistența socială în România*, Editura ALL, București, 1996, pp. 10-13.

¹⁴ A considerable study of philanthropy in the early days of the Christian Church was conducted by Pr. Mihai Vizitiu, *Filantropia divină și filantropia Bisericii după Noul Testament*, Editura Trinitas, Iași, 2002.

tory, especially famine and plague. Despite the pragmatic aspects of the social-philanthropic service of the Church in Romanian society, we must not forget that philanthropy remains essentially a form of prayer. "Monastic charity is not an end in itself, but only a liturgical exercise. Often the shelter for travelers and pilgrims or the place for the sick are outside the monastery grounds, and the distribution of clothes, food or money in favor of the poor usually takes place at the monastery gate"¹⁵.

The Romanian monasteries had two attitudes towards the poor: the first treats the poor as an external and complementary reality to the monastery; the second integrates him within the monastic community as a monk. On the first attitude, it should be noted that all monasteries have a philanthropic dimension, hospitable to those who knock at their gates. The second attitude refers to the possibility of the poor, of the "chalices", who were not in the service of others, to enter monasticism, living in the monastery according to the rules imposed by it. In this way, "the monastery regulated the image of poverty, transforming what was disorder and calamity into a regular and therefore bearable model of life"¹⁶.

However, entering monasticism was seen by most Romanians as a sign that God had chosen those worthy to serve Him. This is what the great ban Pârveu Craiovescu says in his donation to the Tismana monastery from April 14, 1529: "I, however, the slave of the lord of God and our Savior Jesus Christ, the ban ban of Craiova, who was together in this world with you all, until this time, and now God has separated me and loved me from among

¹⁵ Ligia Livadă-Cadaschi, *De la milă la filantropie. Instituții de asistare a săracilor din Țara Românească și Moldova în secolul al XVIII-lea*, Editura Nemira, București, 2001, p. 104.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 106.

you and I am separating myself from this world of vain life and from you"¹⁷.

A very important edifice built by the Orthodox Church in Wallachia during the time of Constantin Brâncoveanu, was founded by the country's metropolitan himself, Antim Ivireanul. He built a monastery dedicated to All Saints, which would later be called "the church or monastery of Antim." Built between 1713-1715, the monastery was endowed by the founder with estates, necessary for the maintenance of the monastic community and to help the needy. His will entitled: Teachings for the establishment of the honest monastery of all the saints, Chapter 32, between which to include all the goods of the monastery and the order of the miles that were decided to be made for the poor and needy of the house, presents the provisions of the founder to support the needy, who called on the help of this holy place¹⁸. In the opinion of Fr. Prof. Dr. Mircea Păcurariu these provisions can be summarized as follows: in Chapter I the founder ordered that the monastery should not be worshiped by anyone: neither by the bishop who will be after the time, nor by any of the boyars"; in Chapter 6 he came to the aid of poor children, eager to learn a book, and ordered that every four years three poor children, aged between 10 and 15, should be cared for, and given six pennies a day for food and clothing. Easter. One of the priests of the monastery had the duty to teach him books in Romanian and Slavonic. He ordered that these young men, when they get married, receive from the monastery an aid of 15 thalers, and those who will become priests, another 13 thalers; in chapters 7-11 he provided that the monastery should give 300 thalers for burying the poor, to help with money, every

¹⁷ ***, *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, B, vol. III, pp. 115-116.

¹⁸ Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. II, p. 154.

Saturday and Sunday, those in prison, to buy clothes for three poor and three poor girls every year in On Easter Thursday, to give 15 thalers each year for the marriage of a poor girl, to support in turn, for three days, "three foreigners from another country when they happen to come here first in the country for mercy"; chapter 22 spoke of the fact that the abbot, like the other priests of the monastery, had to examine the sick, including the gypsies, "since they are also baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity and are Christians like us"; Chapter 31 specifies that if the income of the monastery increased, "this order of almsgiving which they have decided to give to the poor and others as we write in these heads"¹⁹.

At the beginning of the 19th century, one of the contemporaries spoke about other social services of the monasteries. They were "houses adorned on the inside with all manner of expensive tools, royal and royal, and on the outside with estates, vineyards, shops, and other things, and welcoming many strangers to feed and clothe themselves, as well as to marry girls." poor and other escaped cheeks to help and with them to glorify the name of God"²⁰. Soldiers wounded or maimed during military campaigns were also entrusted to monasteries for care²¹.

3 Monastic hospitals

In our historical past, as a result of a visible need within the Romanian society, a social-medical institution appeared, meant

¹⁹ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 155.

²⁰ Zilot Românu, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

²¹ See Nicolae Iorga, *Calicii lui Mihai Viteazul - o nouă orânduire a lui*, in „Analele Academiei Române”, Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice, tom. XXI, București, 1939.

to treat and heal the wounds and diseases of the body and soul. This institution, called the hospital, appeared in our monasteries and was gradually replaced by hospitals. Healing services were frequently held here - the Sacrament of the Holy Anointing, solemnities, prayers, prayers, etc. - while some of the monks had medical knowledge, offering adequate medical treatment.

The hospitals were built around hierarchical seats and monasteries, following the Byzantine model. The documents preserved to this day speak of the fact that in some old monasteries, such as Cozia, Bistrița, Hurezi, Polovraci or Câmpulung-Muscel, there were small churches for the care of the sick. The word "sick" usually means "this little church itself, without taking into account the possible buildings next door, once intended to house the infirm and the sick"²².

It seems that the oldest hospital was the one at the Jghiabul Hermitage. It was founded by Radu Negru (ca.1377-ca.1383). In Moldova, the oldest hospital is considered to be the one in Putna. Alexandru I. Gonța points out that although the deeds do not mention this patient, she worked here with a school²³. After the fire of March 15, 1484, which caused serious damage to the monastery and its annexes, the hospital was completely restored, being endowed with many donations, by the faithful

²² Gheorghe Brătescu, *De la bolnița mănăstirească la spitalul civil*, in: „Mitropolia Olteniei”, XXI (1969), nr. 9-10, p. 694; Valeriu Bologa, *Fapte și oameni din trecutul medicinei din patria noastră*, București, 1962, p. 27.

²³ Alexandru I. Gonța, *Un spital de mănăstire la Putna*, in vol. „Studii de istorie medievală”, Editura Dosoftei, Iași, 1998.

Prince Stephen the Great²⁴. The same prince will build a nunnery near the Citadel of Thron, in Pătrăuți. Here he will also organize a hospital for the soldiers wounded in the battles²⁵. The oldest documented hospital is the one from Bistrița monastery. It was founded by the boyar Barbu Craiovescu. At this monastery were the relics of "the most holy and miracle-working Gregory the Decapolis, especially in times of plague"²⁶. The deed of July 24, 1542 mentions the existence of a hospital in Simidreni, to which the voivode Vladislav III gave "the place and the place called the hospital in Simidreni, where it is the patron saint of the Holy and glorious Great Martyr Dimitrie and those who live in this place ... to be for the food of the brothers from the hospital ..., the whole house, no matter how much will be chosen from Pădureț County "²⁷.

The hospital from *Dintr-un Lemn* monastery seems to have been founded by Ancuța, the daughter of Chiajna and Mircea Ciobanu. A miracle-working icon of the Mother of God was brought here. Since it was a monastery of monks, only women will be treated here.

The faithful voivode Constantin Brâncoveanu will be involved in the founding and endowment of some monastic hospitals in Wallachia. Thus, the most important founders of Constantin Brâncoveanu will benefit not only from his material support,

²⁴ The founder of the monastery offered him: a part of the revenues from the Jicov customs, from Siret, mills, villages, vineyards, salt shakers, etc.

²⁵ Arhim. Nestor Vornicescu, *Îngrijirea sănătății în vechile noastre mănăstiri*, in „Mitropolia Olteniei”, XX (1968), nr. 1-2, p. 66.

²⁶ Pompei Samrian, *Medicina și farmacia în trecutul românesc (1382-1775)*, vol. III, Călărași, 1935, p. 56.

²⁷ Nicolae Vătămanu, *Contribuții la istoricul bolniței de la Simidreni și a xenodohiului de la Athos*, in „Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, LXXXVI (1968), nr. 11-12, pp. 1382-1391.

but will also be endowed with social assistance institutions: Sadova Monastery (Dolj), Hurez Monastery and Brâncoveni Monastery. Built on the foundations of an old church from the 16th century, rebuilt by Matei Basarab in 1640, the current church of the Brâncoveni monastery was built around 1699. Here, around 1700, a hospital will be built, which will carry out a prodigious social-philanthropic activity²⁸.

There are historical testimonies about the existence of a hospital at the Hurezu monastery. The hospital was built in 1696. From the inscription we find out that Constantin Brâncoveanu's wife, Mrs. Marica, raised the hospital "for the glory of God to our Virgin Mother and Master"²⁹. In this monastery there were relics of Saints Fevronia, Procopius and Pantelimon, having a special role in healing the sick. Also, Mrs. Bălașa Brâncoveanu will build an asylum, about which the great historian Nicolae Iorga said: „she built here (in Târgoviște) the houses of a shelter for the poor, for another it had been built in Simidreni, and the second one before the gate of the church in the monastery from Argeș, since the time of Neagoe”³⁰. This asylum founded by her and located next to the church of Sfânta Vineri (from Târgoviște), is considered to be our first.

Dragomirna Monastery, founded by Metropolitan Anastasie Crimca, has a special place in the history of hospitals. Here, the metropolitan will raise at his expense a hospital, in 1602, in the

²⁸ Radu Constantinescu, *Monumente religioase*, Editura Editis, București, 1994, p. 108.

²⁹ Lucian Roșu, *Mănăstirea Hurez*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1978, p. 24.

³⁰ ***, *Enciclopedia României*, vol. III, Imprimeria Națională, București, 1939, p. 520.

old church of the monastery³¹. In the Romanian Lands, the monastic hospitals were the first organized institutions that offered help to the sick³². Until the end of the 17th century, the monastic hospitals represented the Romanian hospital, which offered medical help to many³³.

In the 18th century, the hospital was built at the Câmpulung-Muscel monastery (Wallachia)³⁴ and the hospitals from the Todireni monastery (Piatra Sfântă), near Iași, from the Adam monastery and from Târgu-Ocna³⁵. The hospital at the Neamț monastery, attested by a news item from 1735, had an existence prior to this attestation for at least several decades. Rebuilt by Bishop Varlaam of the Roman, it will suffer several damages, which determines Paisie Velicicovschi to restore it in turn.

The most important hospital in the 18th century was that of the Bishopric of Râmnicu³⁶. Founded by Bishop Clement in 1744, together with a chapel, the hospital is preserved until late, undergoing only minor changes.

At Roman, towards the end of the 18th century, a hospital will be erected, near the Precista church, by Bishop Ioanichie. He is also the one who founded the hospital in 1753 next to the church founded by Ruxandra Lăpușneanu (1569). Precista

³¹ Alexandru I. Gonța, *Studii de istorie medievală*, Editura Dosoftei, Iași, 1998, pp. 259-260.

³² V. Rășcanu, Gh. Gh. Năsturel, Șt. Bârsan, Gh. Băleanu, *Istoricul spitalului orașenesc clinic de adulți din Iași*, vol. I, București, 1956, p. 15.

³³ P. G. Samarian, *Medicina și farmacia în trecutul românesc*, vol. III, București, 1938, p. 57.

³⁴ Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Bisericii Românești și a vieții religioase a românilor*, vol. II, Editura Ministerului de Culte, București, 1928, p. 67.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 66-68.

³⁶ ***, *Istoricul Eparhiei Râmnicului Noul Severin*, Tipografia Gutenberg, București, 1906, pp. 183-184.

Monastery "received from the very beginning a completely original destination ... It became a social assistance institution, undeclared but effective"³⁷.

In the nineteenth century, hospitals were reduced and transformed into hospitals. However, patients are now being raised at: Țigănești monastery, St. Prophet Ilie from Focșani, Secu (1847), Văratec (1853), Horaița (1874), Râșca (1875), Slatina (1881) and Agapia (1891)³⁸.

4 Construction of hospitals in the Romanian Countries

For most Romanian monasteries, the founders stipulated in the deeds of donation the role and significance of these settlements within the local community and the Romanian state. Thus, in some acts of donation, the philanthropic settlement intended for the sick (the hospital) or the shelter for travelers (the waitress) are mentioned as explicit beneficiaries. The source of hospital maintenance was the tax (a penny on a lion) from the business that ended at the Friday fair, held on the city's estate, and the income from the mercy box of every church in the city. Among the Romanian voivodes who took care "to bring a doctor for the needs of the crowd, for the needs of the city"³⁹, was Saint Stephen the Great. He was the one who donated to the Zografu monastery "100 Hungarian ducats a year" for the health of the

³⁷ Epifanie Cozărescu, *Bolnița mănăstirii „Precista” din Roman - precursora a spitalului actual*, in vol. „Semnificația medico-istorică a bolnițelor mănăstirești”, in „Mitropolia Olteniei”, XXII (1970), nr. 1-2, p. 5.

³⁸ Cristina Ionescu, C. Romanescu, *Semnificația medico-istorică a bolnițelor românești*, in „Mitropolia Olteniei”, XXII (1970), nr. 1-2.

³⁹ Pompei Samarian, *Medicina...*, p. 27.

monastery community. For the same settlement, "the great voivode built a gifted hospital, beginning with September 13, 1471," ordering another 500 harsh ones each year⁴⁰.

4.1 Medical establishments in Moldova

In the context in which the Romanian monasteries are not only foci of Orthodox culture and spirituality, but also ways in which the Church poured its support for the helpless, these monasteries will be the privileged beneficiaries of the generosity of all those who had something to give.

During the time of Gavril Movilă and Alexandru Iliăș, the monasteries of Stănești and Argeș (1619 and 1626) received royal privileges to be "food for monks, travelers and the poor"⁴¹. A hospital will be erected by the future Metropolitan of Moldova, Anastasie Crimca, at his foundation in Dragomirna. He will also be the one who will set up a hospital in Suceava in 1619. It is the first hospital in our country documented in a city⁴². A doc-

⁴⁰ I. Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. I, București, 1913, pp. 99-103 și 162-163; Alexandru I. Gonța, *Un spital de mănăstire la Putna*, in vol. „Studii de istorie medievală”, Editura Dosoftei, Iași, 1998, p. 250.

⁴¹ ***, *Catalogul documentelor Țării Românești din Arhivele Statului*, vol. II (1601-1620), 1974, pp. 491-492, doc. 980; ***, *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, vol. XXI, B, Țara Românească (1626-1627), Editura Academiei, București, 1965, pp. 528-532.

⁴² Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. II, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1992, p. 9. The excessive morbidity of the time, due mainly to the plague epidemics (in the period 1700-1830 there were 12 major epidemics) and extreme poverty, often required the intervention of all social actors, especially the Church and the State. The first hospital for plagues was built by Grigore Ghica in 1735 in Wallachia, followed by Alexandru Moruzi in 1792 in Moldavia and in 1796 in Wallachia. In Bucharest, the hospital for those affected by the plague will be organized in case of the epidemic at the church of St. Visarion, near the monastery of St. Pantilimon.

ument by Gașpar Grațiani, dated May 16, 1619, confirms that the ruler gave Metropolitan Anastasie Crima "a place in the middle of the fair ... Suceava, from the royal place ... to make there, on that place a hospital for the name of the Lord, to be for the poor and helpless and lame and blind and others who want to rest all there in that hospital"⁴³. Also, the ruler Gașpar Grațiani gave to the same metropolitan and a mill ford on the Suceava river, below the village of Buninți, it will be the will of the abbot, because that hospital was made in the name of God by the founder of the holy monastery, our father and prayer, Anastasie Crimcovi, Metropolitan of Suceava"⁴⁴.

The hospital founded by Metropolitan Anastasie Crimca in Suceava still existed in 1641, when it was seen by the Catholic missionary Pietro Diodato Baksic: "In the square, in front of the lord's palace, there is a hospital for the sick and poor, but it is not big"⁴⁵. The hospital and the hospital founded by Metropolitan Anastasie Crimca will seek to provide medical and social assistance to the needy. It is not known exactly how long this hospital operated, but the news from 1641 attests to its existence. The same metropolitan took care of his foundations, endowing them with numerous gifts and arranging them by "will" so that they would never be worshiped.

At the Dragomirna monastery, in the 18th century, Paisie Velicicovschi will introduce as a rule of his community, moved later to Secu in 1778 and then to Neamț, the fact that "in the monastery a hospital must be built immediately, because the

⁴³ Cf. V. Gonța, A. Gonța, *Mitropolitul Anastasie Crimca, fondatorul celui dintâi spital din Moldova*, in „Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei”, XXVIII (1962), nr. 1-2, pp. 36-37.

⁴⁴ Cf. Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. II, p. 9.

⁴⁵ See V. Gonța și Al. Gonța, *Mitropolitul Anastasie Crimca, fondatorul celui dintâi spital din Moldova*, pp. 33-39.

monks who get sick to have a special care of food, drink and peace ... Two guest houses must be made, one inside the monastery, for the spiritual and lay people who come to the monastery and one outside the monastery for those who come with carts"⁴⁶. The monks were to receive "those who come to worship, as well as the poor and sick who have nowhere to bow their heads, some in the guest house, and others in the hospital and benevolently caring for their illnesses"⁴⁷.

During the abbot Paisie, the leader of the hospital in Dragomirna was Brother Honor. He subordinated several monks, who had the duty to "serve the sick as the Lord." It is recorded that "every week the bleaches were changed and the sick were washed and washed, their clothes, beds and bedding were cleaned ... In the summer, the rooms were ventilated as often as possible, removing them all to the air and sun. The abbot demanded that an exemplary cleanliness be kept inside the hospital, and that incense or other fragrant materials be smoked every day. He also commanded that the sick be given more nutritious food, better bread and wine"⁴⁸.

The model established by Metropolitan Anastasie Crimca and continued by Paisie Velicicovchi, will be followed by the secular elites: rulers and boyars. "At the end of the 17th century or at the beginning of the 18th century, the Cantacuzino family,

⁴⁶ Ioan Ivan, *Așezământul Starețului Paisie Velicicovchi*, in: „Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei”, XXXIII (1957), nr. 8-9, p. 609.

⁴⁷ G. Brătescu, *De la bolnița mănăstirească la spitalul civil*, in: „Mitropolia Olteniei”, XXI (1969), nr. 9-10, pp. 688-696. Relevant aspects related to the problem of patients are presented in a short article of Mitropolitului Antonie Plămădeală, *Bolnițele mănăstirești în istoria grijii Bisericii pentru bolnavi. Câteva scurte precizări*, in „Telegraful Român”, Sibiu, an 140, nr. 23-24, 15 iunie 1992, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁸ Serghei Cetfericov, *Paisie Starețul mănăstirii Neamț*, translation by Nicodim Patriarhul României, Mănăstirea Neamț, 1943, pp. 227-228.

through the backrest of Mihail Cantacuzino, laid the foundations of the Colțea hospital. In 1735, Grigore II Ghica founded the monastery and the hospital of St. Pantilimon, in 1757 Constantin Mihai Cehan Racoviță founded the hospital of St. Spiridon (Iași), and around 1814-1815, through a public check, the foundations of the Philanthropy hospital in Bucharest were laid. All these foundations respond to the biblical commandment of neighborly mercy and love⁴⁹.

Saint Spiridon Hospital from Iași is the most important hospital in Moldova, with a much higher capacity to receive patients. The hospital is named after a great saint of the early Church: Saint Spiridon, having the role of healing and supporting the sick, like his spiritual patron. The beginnings of this hospital are related to the erection by Dimitrie Bosie from Huși of a small wooden church around 1721, on a plot of land near Măgura Iașului. In 1734, Grigorie Ghica Prince and his son, Matei Ghica, built a stone hermitage on the same land, with the consent of the epitrop Ștefan Bosie - the Țărâța hermitage. A lazaret⁵⁰ for hosting plague patients will also be organized here⁵¹.

A new social-philanthropic institution will be built in the city of Târgu-Neamț. This hospital was under the patronage of Neamț Monastery between 1852-1866. A document from 1859 attests to the fact that the hospital was maintained from the fortune of

⁴⁹ Lgia Livadă-Cadaschi, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-169.

⁵⁰ Lazaret - isolated hospital for people suspected of being or quarantined due to contagious diseases.

⁵¹ Cronicar, *Două sute de ani de la întemeierea Așezămintelor spitalicești, Sfântul Spiridon din Iași*, in „Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, LXXV (1957), nr. 1-2; Cronicar, *Bicentenarul spitalului Clinic din Iași*, in „Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei”, XXXIII (1957), nr. 8-9, p. 677; V. Râșcanu, Gh. Năstase, St. Bârsan, Gh. Răileanu, *Istoricul spitalului orășenesc clinic de adulți din Iași*, Editura Medicală, București, 1956, p. 10.

the Neamț Monastery⁵². The Organic Regulation specified the obligation of the Neamț Monastery to take care of the health of those on its estates. In order to carry out this decision, a special committee is set up, which addressed a letter to Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi of Moldova, asking him to urge the abbot of the monastery to set up a doctor's office and a pharmacy for the sick⁵³.

In May 1847, began the work for the current hospital. These works will be completed in 1850. The hospital will be inaugurated on October 16, 1852, when the chapel was consecrated, in the presence of Metropolitan Sofronie Miclescu and Prince Grigore Alexandru Ghica, the Country Council, the abbot Neonil with the council and many believers⁵⁴.

Other hospitals will be built in Moldova: Precista Mare Hospital in Roman, Hospital in Bârlad, Galați, Târgu-Ocna and Focșani⁵⁵. The hospital in Bârlad was founded at the initiative of the monk Sofronie Vârnav. He started a fundraiser for the establishment of a hospital, an aspect related by Bishop Veniamin Pocitan⁵⁶.

⁵² Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunii Publice, *Dosar*, 1859/981 apud Virgil Molin, *Date noi cu privire la trecutul instituțiilor pentru îngrijirea sănătății patronate de mănăstirea Neamț*, in „Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei”, XL (1964), nr. 5-6, p. 252.

⁵³ T. G. Bulat, *Biserica Moldovei și așezămintele spitalicești în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX*, in „Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, XC (1972), nr. 11-12, p. 1228.

⁵⁴ Ion Vicovan, *Filantropia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române - repere istorice*, in vol. „Asistența social-filantropică și medicală organizată de Biserica Ortodoxă Română în trecut și astăzi”, Editura Basilica, București, 2012, p. 285.

⁵⁵ Nestor Vornicescu, *Îngrijirea sănătății în vechile noastre mănăstiri*, in „Mitropolia Olteniei”, XX (1968), nr. 1-2, p. 69.

⁵⁶ Veniamin Pocitan, *Sofronie Vârnav*, in „Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, XLIX (1931), nr. 4, p. 298.

Along with these hospitals there will be temporary hospitals. These hospitals were born in times of war. Among these we mention: the hospitals from the Galata and Hlincea monasteries from Iași, established in 1808, housing the first 270 patients, and the second 75 patients. These hospitals had a pharmacy, a house for the priest, etc. At the same time, in times of calamity or epidemic, ad-hoc hospitals were set up. The monasteries had a special role. Professor Constantin N. Tomescu noted in a pamphlet about the "Samaritan purpose of the monks and sisters of the monastery", which "descends through the canvas of the time since the apostolic days, from the deacons"⁵⁷. He reports that the nuns carried out an extensive administrative-household, cultural and philanthropic activity. "At the forefront of these occupations is the Samaritan obedience, adequate in the monasteries of nuns to be orphanages, nursing homes and institutes for the preparation of sisters of charity, necessary for hospitals and sick individuals"⁵⁸.

4.2 Medical establishments in Wallachia

With the increase of the number of inhabitants in the Romanian Lands, with the social development and the economic growth, the need was felt more and more for the granting of a specialized medical assistance in suitable institutions. If at first this was done in the monastic hospitals, later the care of the poor was done in hospitals. Among these hospitals we list here: Colțea hospital, Saint Pantelimon hospital, Dudești hospital, etc. Analyzing the care for the physical and mental health of the inhabitants of Wallachia, through the prism of the documents of

⁵⁷ Constantin N. Tomescu, *Ascultări la călugărițele românce-surori infirmiere*, in colecția „Biblioteca misionarului ortodox”, Chișinău, 1939.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 7-8.

the time, the pomelnic of the Arnota monastery, from 1706, says that: " Christians, gentlemen and ladies, boyars and jupanese, to those who belong to the church and to those of the laity, who in divine urgency will come and need to have mercy on this holy and divine monastery according to their power, with village with the estate, with the mills, with the gypsies, with the tools of the beast, with the beast, and with others, who would endure what they could, according to their power. And let their names be written on this holy pomelnic"⁵⁹.

The period of Constantin Brâncoveanu's reign can also be characterized by the humanization of the legislation, by the construction of the first hospitals, by the increase of the educational level of the clergy and the people, as well as by other achievements of culture, art, etc. The first hospitals, as they appear in our history, are related to the Orthodox Church, and the activity carried out by them had a deep Christian motivation. But the gentleman is no stranger to the activity of the hospital and settlements in Colțea, from the beginning of the 18th century. The Romanian gentleman not only supported the philanthropic activity of the Orthodox Church, but was closely interested in the evolution of "Francke's Settlements" in Halle, then the most important pietistic center in Germany, following the model of which he also wanted to organize the settlements in Colțea⁶⁰. Colțea Hospital and its settlements were founded by Mihai Cantacuzino in 1706⁶¹. The finalization of the works at

⁵⁹ Gabriel Ștrempel, *Catalogul manuscriselor românești*, vol. II, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1983, p. 171.

⁶⁰ This idea is developed by Viorel Ioniță și Constantin Pătuleanu, *Constantin Brâncoveanu și relațiile sale cu Europa veacului al XVIII-lea*, Editura Mitropolia Olteniei, Craiova, 2006.

⁶¹ In one of his studies, N. Vătămanu lists the reasons why Mihai Cantacuzino will build the hospital in Colțea: Mihai Cantacuzino's backrest

this philanthropic complex ended in 1715, after the death of the Romanian voivode martyr⁶².

In the opinion of some historians, such as Nicolae Vătămanu, the Colțea hospital was primarily an asylum for the poor, without them necessarily being sick, but only the elderly or infirm⁶³. Pompey Samarian says: "In 1715 the Colțea Hospital was founded - a new institution, brought from abroad, which clothed some of the characteristics of the East, some of the West, but keeping the common ground of all these settlements, the religious system springing from deep faith"⁶⁴. On the other hand, Dan Berindei considers that "the hospital tends to have a secular character", although it "was set up in connection with a religious foundation"⁶⁵. Making a beautiful presentation of the activity of the Wallachian prince, on the occasion of the consecration of the Colțea hospital, Patriarch Samuel of Alexandria said: "... on the place called Colțea, spending a lot of wealth, they built various and wonderful buildings, strong and spacious, that

was very impressed in his famous trip to Mount Sinai, when he saw Christian and Arab hospitals in Egypt and in Palestine; the exhortations of Dr. Jacob Pylarino, as well as his own memories and those of his older brother from Venice; overlapping his old readings, from the time of the school, when, according to the custom of the feudal lords, the writings of the Church Fathers formed the main object of study. N. Vătămanu, *Contribuții la istoricul înființării spitalului Colțea*, in „Din istoria medicinei românești și universale”, București, 1962, p. 150.

⁶² Nicolae Vătămanu, *Moments de la vie quotidienne d'un ancien hôpital de Bucarest*, București, 1958, p. 1; Ștefan Meteș, *Istoria Bisericii românești din Transilvania*, vol. I, Sibiu, 1935; Alexandru C. Galeșescu, *Eforia spitalelor civile din București*, București, 1899.

⁶³ Nicolae Vătămanu, *Moments de la vie quotidienne d'un ancien hôpital de Bucarest*, p. 8.

⁶⁴ Pompei Samarian, *Medicina și farmacia în trecutul românesc (1382-1775)*, vol. III, Călărași, 1935, p. 75.

⁶⁵ Dan Berindei, *Spitale în Bucureștii veacului al XVIII-lea*, in „Munca sanitară”, București, 1957, nr. 3, p. 275.

is, holy places, hospitals, houses for the food of the poor and the hospital and schools for various teachings and the teaching of singing ... "66.

In this hospital, both those who have material possibilities and those who are chalices will be treated for diseases. The boyars, the sick children or the sick boyar servants, sent especially by their masters to Colțea, benefited from a "pantry", meaning "a special seat in the hospital"⁶⁷. For those who escaped, coming from the middle category or from the high society, the Colțea monastery is the source of some charities, which materialize in money, food or clothes. Thus, among the expenses of the monastery, coffee and sugar are mentioned, one goose from each and per person, "to two cheeks of honor escaped from the founders of the monastery"⁶⁸, some money "to a girl who escaped help to a girl they married, from the family of the founders"⁶⁹, 3 thalers "for a blind escaped merchant who had been a Cossack" or 4 thalers "for a poor girl who helped at her wedding from the founder's relatives"⁷⁰, 4 thalers "for two foreign and escaped boyars"⁷¹ etc.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 275. Dan Berindei considers that "the establishment of the Colțea hospital on the threshold of the Phanariot period reflects new needs, imposed by the development of the city", but also that this would represent "... a beginning of the victory of science over the Church". "Of course - he continues - that the doctors of those times were still far from the real requirements, but compared to the monastic hospitals, where prayers were the basic treatment, the care of the sick begins to acquire, however primitive, new aspects".

⁶⁷ ***, *Biblioteca Academiei Române* (B.A.R.), fond „Manuscrise românești”, mss. 129, f. 22, 24, 68, 108.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, mss. 129, f. 25.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 71.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 73.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, f. 104.

In its first years of existence, the settlement did not have a doctor, who could be called from the city or sent there by royal order. The vessels for the "bakery" (of which we have no mention, except the desire of the founder) or what must have been the ancestor of the typhoon, the star, bought annually for the poor, were related mainly to hygiene, than to a "dermatological profile" clearly defined and assumed⁷².

Significant funds were needed to support this edifice. Therefore, it is worth mentioning the participation of the city's merchants in the management and support of Mihai Cantacuzino's settlements. During the 18th century, in Bucharest, other hospitals will be built, such as: Saint Pantelimon, Saint Visarion, Dudești hospital, etc.

St. Pantelimon Hospital, whose founding act of October 12, 1735⁷³, is preserved, it expresses the lord's desire to build and endow a hospital for the poor. In addition, the ruler ordered the construction and operation of a hospital for plague patients⁷⁴, outside the walls of the monastery, with a lazaretto regime. The hospital was endowed with 12 beds, with a pharmacy and was meant to treat those "who would suffer from chronic diseases (long-term illnesses that can also be cured by taking doctors)." All those who served this settlement were exempt from gifts and any other obligations to the reign. Administered by two great epitropes, the logophat and the treasurer, who controlled the accounts of the monastery and the annexes, the whole com-

⁷² Nicolae Vătămanu, Paul Cernovodeanu, *Opt ani din viața spitalului Colțea, 1731-1739*, in: „Spitale vechi și noi”, Editura Medicală, București, 1976, pp. 81-88.

⁷³ Alexandru Galesescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-175.

⁷⁴ See Paul Cernovodeanu, *Spitalul de ciumați Sf. Visarion de la Pantelimon*, in: „Apărarea sănătății ieri și azi. Studii, note și documente”, Editura Medicală, București, 1984, pp. 73-81.

plex of St. Pantelimon will continue to function, serving the needs of the city and the country in the conditions it will face diseases and epidemics, especially the plague.

The hospital in Dudești appears at the end of the 18th century, as a result of the plague epidemic of 1795. Then it was seen that the plague hospital in St. Pantelimon was insufficient. The organization charter specifies the desire of the founders to put into practice the evangelical commandment of the care of the sick⁷⁵. The hospital in Dudești was organized around the church dedicated to Saints Haralambie, Alexander, Visarion and Dimitrie Basarabov (protectors against the plague). It consisted of two separate arrangements, "one common for nonsense," with 15 rooms, and the other "specially arranged for the best people." This last arrangement was divided into four states, each state having its own large room, a small room and a pantry with its courtyard, with a well in the middle. The complex also included a infirmary (quarantine) for the infected, but healthy, consisting of 40 rooms each with yard and well each. The income of the hospital came from the three monasteries dedicated to him: Tismana, Cozia and Câmpulung. The hospital staff consisted of 60 people and an economist. During the plague, this staff was supplemented by various employees.

As all these hospitals failed to provide adequate and sufficient medical care for the entire population, the foundations of the Philanthropy Hospital were laid⁷⁶. The hospital was built out-

⁷⁵ V. A. Urechia, *Istoria Românilor*, tom VI, București, 1893, pp. 725-735, doc. from 1 July 1796.

⁷⁶ See Liliana-Nicoleta Hanganu, *Din istoria unui vechi așezământ medical. Spitalul Filantropia*, in „București. Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie”, XIII (1999), pp. 98-99. Here it is specified that the hospital was put into use in 1815, with 20 rooms, of which eight were intended for the 60-90 patients. In 1817 a chapel was built here.

side the city and served the poor, with a primary and secondary physician, as well as a pharmacist. Initiated by the care and expense of the logopath from Țara de Sus, Grigore Băleanu, and the doctor of the poor Constantin Caracaș, the Arnota and Govora monasteries were dedicated to the hospital. At the Sunday services, alms for the poor philanthropists from the Philanthropy gathered in various churches in Bucharest.

Analyzing the establishment and functioning of all these medical establishments, we can conclude that during the 18th century, the city of Bucharest was endowed with hospital establishments, built near or near some churches⁷⁷. We also consider that by worshiping monasteries and raising funds in churches for their proper functioning, the Church and her servants have cared for the sick, at the urging of Christ the Savior.

Along with the capital's hospitals, there will also be hospitals in other cities in Wallachia. Thus, the Gârlași-Buzău hospital was founded in 1792 by the cupbearer Maria Minculeasa, in the courtyard of the church that also gave it the name of Gârlași. The church of the settlement was built by Mihail Mincu, the husband of the cupbearer, when he was a doctor.

The Brâncovenesc hospital was one of the most famous hospitals. It was built by Safta Brâncoveanu, through the diata of 1835. The idea of building "a hospital for the sick" dates back to 1751, when Miss Bălașa Brâncoveanu built the church and the asylum⁷⁸.

Obedeanu Hospital in Craiova was founded by Constantin Mavrocordat in the third reign (1735-1741), in 1737. However, not many details are known regarding its foundation. Also, in

⁷⁷ Viorel Ioniță, Constantin Pătuleanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.

⁷⁸ V. Gomoiu, V. Plătărescu, *Centenarul spitalului brâncovenesc (1837-1937)*, București, 1937, p. 13.

the Oltenia region, the Ionașcu hospital from Slatina was built. The merchant Ionașcu founded a church dedicated to Saints Nicolae, Dimitrie and Gheorghe. Also, here, the founder wanted to build a hospital. In a document from 1797, his wife Neaga talks about the hospital "what began to be done by the deceased husband". She feels compelled to continue this foundation by saying, "I bind myself like a brick and a lime and a shingle that is on the spot, to make two rooms, and a shell and an oven of bread also next to those rooms, all of the wall"⁷⁹.

Another hospital also operated in Targoviste, the old capital of Wallachia. For the sick here, but also for the foreigners who stopped here, a four-room hospital and a house for the doctor's house, a house for the hospital and a pharmacy, with everything necessary for the sick, functioned starting with January 31, 1822.

In the first half of the twentieth century, at the initiative of Bishop Nicolae Colan, with the help of the National Orthodox Society of Romanian Women, the St. Elizabeth Monastery was established in Cluj, in 1935. This monastery was meant to train nuns for the care of the sick⁸⁰.

The communist period was a difficult time for the Church's philanthropy. The communist regime sought to limit and marginalize the Church's actions in society. However, the social-philanthropic actions of the Orthodox Church did not contain. The Church has shown concern for the poor, the sick, the persecuted and the marginalized.

⁷⁹ Pompei Samaritan, *Medicina...*, p. 175.

⁸⁰ Ion Vicovan, *Dați-le voi să mănânce! Filantropia creștină: istorie și spiritualitate*, p. 192.

5 Hospices in the Romanian Countries

For the alienated persons from the Romanian Lands, the Church and the State sought to find the adequate means for their treatment and hospitalization. Thus, hospices were built next to various monasteries, considering that prayer, as well as the presence of icons or relics that work miracles, will bring healing.

The hospice on Good Friday in Bucharest was founded around 1645 by Nicolae Spătarul, next to the monastery of the same name. Here was also the miracle-working icon of Saint Parascheva. Being much sought after by the sick, Ban Constantin Năsturel, in his will of 1765, said that "he made the cells next to the church for the poor sick"⁸¹.

Along with the cells from Good Friday, where non-aggressive patients were treated, a new hospice was built at the Sărindar Monastery⁸². Aggressive patients were treated here. The presence of the miracle-working icon of the Mother of God was considered to be "a source of healing to all who run with piety and faith, chasing devils, blinding the weak and healing all kinds of diseases and infirmities"⁸³.

Another hospice from Wallachia operated for a long time at the Dudu church in Craiova⁸⁴. And here, as in other cases, there was a miracle-working icon - the icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

⁸¹ Petre Miroiu, *De la bolnița mănăstirească la spitalul organizat*, în „Mitropolia Olteniei”, XXIII (1971), nr. 5-6, p. 362.

⁸² Nicolae Vătămanu, *Semnificația medico-istorică a bolnițelor mănăstirești*, în „Mitropolia Olteniei”, XXI (1969), nr. 11-12, p. 884.

⁸³ Manoliu Valeriu, *Din istoria medicinei românești și universale*, București, 1969, p. 884.

⁸⁴ Ion Vicovan, *Filantropia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române - repere istorice*, p. 279.

In Moldova there is a hospital for the mentally insane at the Neamț Monastery. Elder Paisie, a renewer of Romanian monasticism, reorganized the old hospital at the Neamț Monastery and founded a new hospital where "lay people, men with impotence and impure spirits suffering" were treated, being fed "at the public refectory ... and he sat down as long as he wanted, some to death"⁸⁵. This settlement will be called the Hospice of the Insane in the Neamț Monastery and will operate in the houses near the Maghernița bridge, then in the houses near the Odae bridge, in a body of houses built by the abbot Dionisie Romano, so that in 1864 it moves to the buildings built between 1841-1843, on the site of the current seminary.

Prince Grigore Alexandru Ghica will establish in 1853 a new hospice, called the Galata hospice. The founding charter states that "I did not consider it superfluous to return our parental attention to the bitter sufferings of the poor, who have reached the weakness of old age and are no longer able to agonize over their daily food. We have determined, however, to found a hospice for the poor, the elderly and the infirm, more vigorously that such settlements will also facilitate measures to eradicate the impropriety of beggars in the streets"⁸⁶. At the beginning, a number of 60 patients were received and treated here, so that later its capacity reached 100 people. Placed under the administration of the General Epitropy of the House of St. Spiridon,

⁸⁵ Nestor Vornicescu, *Instituții pentru îngrijiri patronate de mănăstirea Neamț*, în „Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei”, XXXVIII (1962), nr. 5-6, p. 445.

⁸⁶ ***, *Hrisovul de fondare din 26 iulie 1885*, apud ***, *Contribuții la istoricul spitalelor din Moldova*, Editura Medicală, București, 1957, p. 75.

the settlement had "a doctor, a hypo surgeon and an economist"⁸⁷.

A hospice, founded by the logophat Ioan Golia, will operate at the Golia monastery in the middle of the 16th century. Lacking the most basic medical care, "the sick were healed - according to the testimony of a Greek abbot - only by the Mother of God"⁸⁸. Inside the monastery there was an icon of the Mother of God, a miracle worker. The fame of this icon went a long way, which led to the erection of cells around the monastery. Later the monastery will be transformed into a hospice. In 1866, as all the hospices passed into the care of the state, the authorities decided that the hospice should be for women, and the one in Neamț for men⁸⁹.

6 Philanthropy of the Orthodox Church in Transylvania

The foreign domination of this part of the Romanian land made difficult the mission and pastorate of the Orthodox Church here. Not only the Romanians here were not part of the recognized nations (*unio trium nationem*: Hungarians, Saxons, Szeklers), but also the Orthodox Church was not part of 4 prescribed religions (Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and Unitarian). Calvinist and Catholic proselytism, supported by the Hungarian and Austro-Hungarian authorities, aimed at converting Romanian Orthodox

⁸⁷ D. Ivănescu, *Introducere, la Epitropia Generală a Casei Spitalelor Sfântul Spiridon Iași 1824-1948*, p. 17.

⁸⁸ Sever Zotta, *Mănăstirea Golia, schiță istorică*, Iași, 1925, p. 26 apud D. Ivănescu, *Introducere la „Epitropia Generală a Casei Spitalelor Sfântul Spiridon din Iași 1824-1948” - inventar arhivistic*, Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului din RSR, București, 1971, p. 17.

⁸⁹ Ion Vicovan, *Filantropia ...*, p. 281.

to these denominations. However, the ancestral law - our orthodoxy and Romanian - has kept our national being unaltered even in the hardest trials of history.

The Orthodox Church in Transylvania and Banat supported its faithful in tribulation and trial. Although he did not have the right to establish social assistance institutions, "Romanian churches and monasteries became, if necessary, institutions of almsgiving, of Christian charity for their suffering parishioners"⁹⁰.

A very important side of the philanthropic work is the cultural-school activity, which will be strongly asserted during the metropolitan Andrei Șaguna (1808-1873). The schools built by the metropolitan, the printed books, but also the aids and scholarships granted to poor pupils and students from the funds of some foundations or from their own incomes, are just as many examples of the great metropolitan's involvement in the cultural-school activity in Transylvania.

The Romanian Telegraph newspaper, founded by Andrei Șaguna in 1853, published in its columns concrete examples of philanthropic actions in the direction of protecting the family, mother and child, orphaned children and other disadvantaged categories. Thus, in the 18th century, a significant number of orphanages are mentioned: Sibiu (1767, 1876), Cluj (1872), Arad (1873), Brașov (1877), Oradea (1887), Alba Iulia, Beiuș, Gherla, Lugoj and Târgu Mureș⁹¹.

⁹⁰ Alexandru Moraru, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română între anii 1885-2000*, vol. III, tom I, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2006, p. 595.

⁹¹ Elena Macavei, *Protecția orfanilor și a altor defavorizați sociali*, in: „*Telegraful Român*” 1853-1953, in „*Telegraful Român*”, Sibiu, 1993, nr. 23-24, p. 3; Idem, *Protecția familiei, a mamei și a copilului în „Telegraful Român 1853-1953”*, in „*Telegraful Român*”, Sibiu, 1993, nr. 7-10, p. 6.

The successors of Metropolitan Andrei Țaguna, Metropolitans Miron Romanul (1874-1898) and Ioan Mețianu (1898-1916), materially supported those in need. This activity intensified after December 1, 1918, when Nicolae Bălan (1920-1955) came to lead the metropolis. The love for the needy has preoccupied Nicolae Bălan since he was a professor at the Theological Academy in Sibiu.

Taking over the ideas of the assessor Dr. Miron Elie Cristea (the future patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church), Nicolae Bălan, as a deputy of the Archdiocesan Synod of Sibiu, proposed in 1912 the establishment of an orphanage for orphaned children from priestly families⁹². Although initially the proposal remained without result, later a public collection will be initiated, at the end of which the amount of 523,000 crowns will be collected. World War I will delay the opening of this orphanage. It will open after his election as metropolitan, in 1920, in Sibiu.

The care of the metropolitan will also be directed to the widows and orphans of the priestly families. At his intervention with the poet Octavian Goga, the Minister of Cults at that time, the amount of 262,000 lei will be obtained to support these categories. The accident in the Jiu Valley on April 21, 1922, resulting in the death of 80 people, resulted in the initiation of a collection in the Archdiocese of Sibiu and the transmission to the families of the victims of the amount of 32,892 lei⁹³.

After returning to his motherland (1918), the Transylvanian Orthodox Church, like the other dioceses in the country, will be actively involved in raising funds to support various people or

⁹² Nicolae Bălan, *Un orfelinat pentru copiii orfani ai preoților noștri*, in: „Revista Teologică”, VI (1912), nr. 7-8, pp. 240-241.

⁹³ ***, *Protocolul Sinodului Arhidiecezei Sibiului pe anul 1923*, Sibiu, 1924, p. 95.

communities hard hit by trouble. Thus, through circulars sent, clergy and believers will be urged to participate in the collection to support: the poor in 1926 (Circular with no. 964/1926); in 1932 (No. 1311/1932); for the Basarabian Romanians tried by famines (no. 2340/1936); for families in Spain who suffered in the fratricidal war (no. 2966/1939) or for poor Romanians during the winter (no. 12403/1939)⁹⁴.

During the Second World War, the Romanian Orthodox Church mobilized by keeping the national flame burning during the Horthy occupation, but also by supporting the military and humanitarian efforts made by the Romanian state in the conflagration. Through the circulars of 1941 (nos. 15912/1941 and 15913/1941) collections were initiated to help the wounded and war orphans. During the war, the orphanage in Sibiu was transformed into a hospital for the wounded.

After the end of the war, Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan will request through a new circular (no. 3499/1945) the support of the clergy and the faithful from the Diocese of Sibiu for supporting the war orphans, as well as for the reopening of the orphanage in Sibiu. Following the support received, the orphanage will be reopened in Sibiu, in Str. Dealului no. 9.

Due to the famine that Moldova faced between December 1, 1946 and February 1, 1947, at the call of Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan, 808 Moldovan children were cared for by certain families in Sibiu and the surrounding area. Also, 10 wagons of cereals and food were collected, which will be sent to Moldova, around Easter 1947⁹⁵.

⁹⁴ Alexandru Moraru, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română între anii 1885-2000*, vol. III, tom I, p. 597.

⁹⁵ ***, *Calendarul bunului creștin pe anul 1948*, Sibiu, 1948, p. 169.

The care of the Church for the afflicted is all the more visible today in the present day⁹⁶. Currently, the Church carries out social assistance activities through its own system, with the support of organizing the laws issued by the state, promoting social policies and social protection measures that we find throughout society. It provides the human resources and logistics at its disposal⁹⁷.

The new millennium has brought with it new challenges: the economic and financial crisis, which started in the USA and reaches the whole world; the galloping secularization of all aspects of life; globalization and atheism of society, etc. To all these challenges the Romanian Orthodox Church will seek to bring an appropriate answer by: creating specific institutions for better communication with the world (television, radio, newspaper, internet portal⁹⁸); the Church's involvement in social projects aimed at the immediate needs of society (asylums, hospitals, care centers, kindergartens, schools, etc.); the erection of a patriarchal cathedral representative for the Romanian Orthodox Church; elaboration of an ample social and spiritual program for the Romanian diaspora, considering the massive emigration from Romania etc. All these coordinates of the pastoral-missionary work of the Romanian Orthodox Church have

⁹⁶ Stelian Gomboș, *Biserica Ortodoxă și rolul Ei social – filantropic în societatea postmodernă, secularizată*, <http://www.totpal.ro/biserica-ortodoxa-si-rolul-ei-social-%E2%80%93-filantropic-in-societatea-postmoderna-secularizata/>

⁹⁷ Stelian Gomboș, *Biserica Ortodoxă în fața provocărilor lumii contemporane și rolul Ei social – filantropic în societatea postmodernă, secularizată*, p. 33, at <http://www.totpal.ro/biserica-ortodoxa-si-rolul-ei-social-%E2%80%93-filantropic-in-societatea-postmoderna-secularizata/>

⁹⁸ Nicolae Dascălu, *Parabola făcliei aprinse. Comunicarea religioasă în era informațională*, Editura Basilica, București, 2012, 624 pp.

involved and involve both desire and dedication, but also good governance of existing financial resources.