

Carmen CIORNEA  
Faculty de Theology – „Ovidius” University

# MONK AGATON (SANDU TUDOR) AND THE DESIRES OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSION

Review  
Article

---

## Keywords

Sandu Tudor;  
Alexandru Teodorescu;  
Monk Agaton;  
Christian mission;  
The Burning Bush

---

## JEL Classification

I20, K49, Z12

---

## Abstract

*Very few historical moments are inevitable. However, the generalized war that shook the foundations of Europe again, represented, apparently paradoxically, the favorable context for some people to fully realize that everyday experience – regardless of the rhythm of their lives – only makes sense if it shapes them spiritually. Among them was also Sandu Tudor, who, at the end of the Second World War, sharpened his need to consolidate the contents of the assimilated orthodox mystical tradition, which was, in his vision, an efficient way of preserving humanity. It is well-known that the proclamation of the Romanian communist state was equivalent to the introduction of the new wave of repression against the Orthodox believers and, in particular, the mystics, so that in 1948 it resulted in the arrest of many members of the Rugul Aprins (The Burning Bush), especially among the students. In these circumstances, wishing to keep them from the roll of the anticipated communist oppression, Patriarch Justinian ordered, after 1948, the removal of Fathers Benedict Ghiuș, Sofian Boghiu and Arsenie Papacioc, but also of the founder of the Rugul Aprins – Sandu Tudor, a fact which did not escaped the watchful eye of the Securitate (Security). In this context, as the world became more and more feared because the atheist communist offensive against the Church slowly became visible, Monk Agaton Tudor, becoming the abbot of the Crasna Monastery, continued his spiritual mission, credibly pleading (hence the popularity) for a doctrine other than the accepted one (communist ideology).*

## INTRODUCTION

At the end of World War II, the evidence of the spiritual ascension of Alexandru Teodorescu (alias Sandu Tudor) was becoming more and more open: he had become not only a frequenter of the Antim Monastery (Tudor, 1999), but even started the restoration of the monastery (Ciornea, 2015), badly damaged by the earthquake of 1940 (Braga, 1995), with his own financial efforts, in conjunction with several generals (his friends) (Tudor, 1999). On June 3, 1947, the abbot of the Antim Monastery – father Vasile Vasilache – submitted to the Archdiocese of Bucharest the request from June 1, 1947 – (The Sunday of Pentecost), by which Sandu Tudor requested his entry, as a brother, “into the synaxis of this holy monastery” (Tudor, 1999): „With a clear and strong determination, I come today to Your Very Reverence to ask for my reception and joining this very devout synaxis, thus understanding, according to the ordinance, to get the honour to take the monastic vows here” (Tudor, 1999).

On June 25, 1947, the auxiliary bishop Veniamin Ploieşteanul signed the address sent to the abbot, father Vasile Vasilache, notifying him that the joining of Sandu Tudor with his monastery had been approved (Tudor, 1999).

Of course, the activity of Sandu Tudor, the founder of the Rugul Aprins (The Burning Bush), the refined intellectual who proved a thorough research of medieval Romanian literature and ancient Romanian manuscripts, fascinated especially by the figure of Paisie Velicikovski and Vasile from Poiana Mărului, was distorted by the logic of the Securitatea (Security) in other terms: «After August 23, 1944, i.e. after returning from the front, he began an illegal activity against the democracy in Romania. Thus, he gets in touch with the members of the former P.N.Ț. Also, in 1945 Teodorescu lays the foundations of the so-called circle of mystical studies at the Antim church. In fact, this circle is the documentation circle of the legionaries, who come in contact with it” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 78, f. 151).

Also from the Archive of the Securitatea (Security) the author finds that in 1947 Sandu Tudor held the position of administrator at the Antim Monastery (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 79). Moreover, Father Adrian Făgeţeanu confirmed this status of brother Alexandru (Sandu Tudor) in the interrogation report of March 4, 1958: «As I arrived at Antim (in June 1947), I was asked to deal with some problems related to the reparation and beautification of the monastery, such as procuring materials, hiring workers, maintaining and arranging the park. The instructions regarding these attributions were received from Sandu Tudor” (A.C.N.S.A.S.,

Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 90 (typed copy) and f. 96 v.).

Therefore, after April 20, 1947 – the date of divorce from Cornelia Teodorescu (born Dristoreanu) – Sandu Tudor moved his residence into a small cell in the monastery bell tower, being integrated into the community of Antim. Saint Symeon the New Theologian became his spiritual patron, and the modest residence became a place of the „Rugul Aprins” meetings. All the wealth he kept from his secular life consisted of the impressive library (†Antonie Plămădeală, 2002), whose volumes and manuscripts adorned the walls of the new dwelling, a fact which did not escape the watchful eye of the Securitatea: „The said owns a library that counts a few hundreds of volumes” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 79), nor did it escape the memory of the former disciples: „His residence was a room in the bell tower of the Antim church, just above the gate. A fact which impressed us, as students invited to see it, is that he installed there a fine library, with beautifully bound, elegant books, and he did not only have them but also knew them, so that when we were talking, he exemplified his speech each time with a book he took from the shelf. He had this habit of documenting his word with what was there” (Ciornea, 2015). According to the address of the Archdiocese of Bucharest, which communicates to the Antim Monastery that they noted the tonsure into monasticism of the brother Sandu Tudor by The Most Reverend Firmilian Marin, the Archbishop of Craiova, the change of the name from Sandu to Agaton happened on September 3, 1948 (Tudor, 1999).

## FROM THE BROTHER ALEXANDRU TO THE MONK AGATON

If 1947 marked a peak of the Soviet refugees persecution, resulting in the inhuman deportation of the Father Ioan Kulîghin, 1948 brought a generalization of the oppression. In this respect, a law prohibiting the existence of religious associations appeared, which obviously led to the dissolution of the Rugul Aprins group as an Association that had claimed its legal status, as the author has shown. However, the most faithful participants continued to meet in a climate of extreme caution.

In these conditions, it is impossible to determine the date of the disbanding of Rugul Aprins exactly, although this happened approximately in April of the aforementioned year, an aspect confirmed also by the text of the *Indictment* of Father Benedict Ghiuş, of July 3, 1958, in which the following was specified: „In April 1948 they were forbidden to hold such meetings at the Antim Monastery, but the aforementioned continued to maintain links with

each other, and during 1955 they resumed their subversive activity within the so-called association „Rugul Aprins”, constituting a clandestine group consisting of elements recruited especially from students, with whom they organized and held subversive meetings, at different addresses and monasteries in Bucharest” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 219).

Moreover, in the Interrogation Minutes of June 17, 1958, Father Benedict Ghiuș added: „This activity was carried out in the form shown above until the year 1948, I do not remember the precise date, when we were forbidden to organize and hold such meetings, receiving instructions from the Archdiocese that such meetings are prohibited by law” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 195 (typed copy) and f. 198 v. (the original)).

At that time, Archimandrite Valerian Zaharia was the abbot of the Antim Monastery, Father Vasile Vasilache being forced to leave the ecclesiastical institution almost immediately after the death of the Patriarch Nicodim Munteanu (Vasile, 2005), precisely because the close connection between them, which had not escaped the vigilance of the communist Securitatea, turned him into an undesirable person. One of the informative notes of the diligent agent „Vlaicu” (a source from which the Securitatea had asked for the plan of the room in which he slept and worked, with the obvious purpose of diversifying its informational resources by implanting a technical interception device, thanks to the precious information provided during the 9 years since he was infiltrated in the Monastery of Antim) of December 23, 1949, included the picture of the succession of Antim’s abbots that was presented in the following terms:

„Agaton came to Antim during the abbotship of Father Vasile Vasilache, who although could not swallow him, however, accepted him because he knew how to use the weakness of Father Vasile Vasilache, namely: Father Vasile Vasilache wanted to do something „material”, to repair the Antim church in order to gain glory so he could then reach the rank of bishop, he was from the Patriarch Nicodim’s suite and inherited some of his qualities and defects [sic!]. At that time, Sandu Tudor had extensive relations with rich people and brought father Vasile Vasilache the necessary money with a little effort, a fact which he enjoyed and accepted Sandu Tudor as he was. When Father Vasilache fell into disgrace, Sandu Tudor no longer considered him a protector, and they even argued, bringing Father Benedict Ghiuș to the abbotship. For a short time after the father Vasile Vasilache, the father Valerian Zaharia was the abbot, a man with whom Sandu Tudor did not get along at all. On the other hand, between Father Ghiuș and Agaton there is an unbreakable connection, both of them being closely

linked by the „mysticism” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 002214, vol. 1, f. 461).

The value of the aforementioned Archive document is confirmed especially if one would consider the uncovering of the Securitatea’s obsessions and of the legend under which the agent „Vlaicu” was sent to join the Antim’s monastic staff. The undesirable status of the former Patriarch and of the people in his immediate subordination is connoted by the grotesque strokes through which their portraits are filtered. The flagrant contortion of reality also arises from the zeal with which the informant (who could not be unfamiliar with the canonical rigors related to the church hierarchy, given the long time he spent at the Antim Monastery) attributed to Sandu Tudor the power to name in the function of the abbot of Antim Monastery (or of any other monastery, that is to say) a person desirable to him, an interpretation that borders the absurd. And last but not least, the graphic underlining of the term *mysticism* connotes, in fact, the fear / contempt of the communist ideologue in particular, but also of the totalitarian system in general, towards the temptation of the mysticism, a disease that evaded the fanatics Agaton and Benedict Ghiuș from carrying out their tasks regarding strengthening the democratic regime in the RPR

By imposing the abbot Valerian Zaharia, the communist authorities sought, on the one hand, to obtain valuable information about the activity of Patriarch Justinian and, on the other hand, to ensure the abolition of the consolidated spiritual movement around Antim. Being fully aware of the risks to which the clerics of the Rugul Aprins were exposed, the Patriarch Justinian, in the effort to protect Antim, assumed an extremely dangerous political game in order to save what could be saved in the given situation.

The inauguration of worthy clerics to the dignity of the abbot of Antim Monastery represented one of the directions of the protective strategy. Thus, at the beginning of 1949, Father Benedict Ghiuș (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 211015, vol. 3, ff. 10-11) was appointed and when, in February 1950, he was forced to replace him, the Patriarch Justinian also installed in the position of abbot a former member of the „Rugul Aprins” – no one other than Father Sofian Boghiu (Enache, 2010). Later, Professor Alexandru Mironescu would have also penetrate the hidden point of the decision of Patriarch Justinian, who proved to be a loyal protector of the leaders of Rugul Aprins, as evidenced by the archive documents (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 236137, vol. 1, f. 20, ff. 25-29): „After the coming of Patriarch Justinian, this work of a high spiritual quality was dispersed, suppressed. Then, I was surprised, but we obeyed, because it was a bishop’s command and we have to obey the bishops. Later, much later, I realized how much wisdom was in

this decision, which surprised us and, to some extent, even shocked us” (Tudor, 1999).

The first stage of the Rugul Aprins was ending now, that of „formation and consolidation”, as Father André Scrima called it. Since 1950, the core of the group moved to the Monachal Seminary of the Neamț Monastery (Pr. André Scrima, 1996) in the hope of continuing its activity there. During another interrogation (of June 17, 1958) Father Benedict Ghiuș stated: “After receiving the instruction we stopped holding such meetings and, in March 1950, the undersigned went to the Neamț monastery, as a teacher at the theological seminary and stayed there until January 1955. During this time, the undersigned continued to come to Bucharest on a regular basis and to meet with the monk priests Sofian Boghiu and Felix Dubneac, as well as with the Professor Mironescu Alexandru, with whom we had been attending the „Rugul Aprins”. Also during this period, after 1950, the priest Teodorescu Alexandru was arrested – I do not know for what reasons and I did not see him until 1953, when he was released and settled in the monastery of Sihăstria in the region of Neamț, visiting me once at the Neamț monastery” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 194 v. (typed copy) and f. 198).

So, the plans of the communist authorities were foiled again. On September 2, 1948, Sandu Tudor became the Monk of Agaton (Tudor, 1999) and was appointed as the abbot of the Crasna Monastery within the Metropolitanate of Oltenia, where he was ordained priest. His arrest in 1950, like of many of the other members of the group, did not extinguish the light of the Rugul Aprins, which was deeply embedded in their being, and, with the liberation of the founder, the connections of the leaders (sheltered in the lavras of Moldova in Slatina, Neamț and Sihăstrie), endowed with suffering, reach new and unexpected depths, capable of generating a rebirth of the Christian reality of existence.

#### **MONK AGATON – THE ABBOT OF THE CRASNA MONASTERY**

In the context in which the world became more and more feared because the atheist communist offensive against the Church slowly became visible, the Monk Agaton Tudor, now – the abbot of the Crasna Monastery, continued his spiritual mission, credibly pleading (hence the popularity) for a doctrine other than the accepted one (communist ideology).

Of course, the main memorialistic source in reconstructing the portrait of the Monk Agaton from Crasna was a book written by the Metropolitan Antonie Plămădeală himself – *Rugul Aprins* – who felt that he had to honor the memory

of the one who loved him, considering himself „one of his followers”. This resulted in an affective perspective of the recollection, the author being fully aware of the resurrectional and restorative role of the Writing act: “I considered it my duty to write about His Reverence, as I understand it, to write my memories regarding everything he meant for me and my whole generation” (Plămădeală, 2002). In order to ensure the accuracy of reconstructing the dynamics of the relationship between Father Daniil Sandu Tudor and his disciple, the author corroborated the memorialistic source with the sheets from the CNSAS Archive that contain relevant aspects on this topic.

It is well-known that the proclamation of the Romanian communist state was equivalent to the introduction of the new wave of repression against the Orthodox believers and, in particular, the mystics, so that in 1948 it resulted in the arrest of many members of the Rugul Aprins, especially among the students. In these circumstances, wishing to keep them from the roll of the anticipated communist oppression, Patriarch Justinian ordered, after 1948, the removal of Fathers Benedict Ghiuș, Sofian Boghiu and Arsenie Papacioc, but also of the founder of the Rugul Aprins – Sandu Tudor, a fact which did not escape the watchful eye of the Securitatea (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 002214, vol. 1, f. 460). In turn, Leonida Plămădeală got a heavy sentence in absentia since 1949 and was a fugitive at that time. The indissoluble link between the master and the disciple is reaffirmed by the courage of Father Daniil Sandu Tudor who, meanwhile becoming the abbot of the Crasna Monastery in Gorj, sheltered the monk Antonie Plămădeală, whose entrance into the monastic life was endorsed by him as a priesthood godfather (Plămădeală, 2002): „I was already convicted at that time and I was walking from place to place in order to lose my track. I went with him to Crasna. He was the abbot, I used to sing at the lectern, and Father Adrian Făgețeanu, who of course lives in the Antim Monastery today, was at the altar. He was the priest, I was the singer and Father Daniil was the people. There were three of us in the whole Monastery” (Plămădeală, 2002). The Metropolitan Firmilian entrusted this mission to the monk Agaton with the intention of transforming this place into a monastery of intellectuals, a fact confirmed by another disciple of his, Father Adrian Făgețeanu, who, according to the Interrogation Minutes of March 12, 1958, declared to the investigator the following: „Coming to the Crasna hermitage [in 1950], Sandu Tudor told me that he wanted to realize his old plan of setting up that monastery of intellectuals. He told me to prepare the necessary for the accommodation of the intellectuals which would be brought to this hermitage. My call was for the purpose of putting into practice the hermitage with intellectuals and

Sandu Tudor had to prepare us for this action. There also was the monk Leonid-Antonie Plămădeală, who knew about Sandu Tudor's action, agreed with it and accepted to come to this hermitage at the call of Sandu Tudor. For the same purpose, Sandu Tudor also invited the monks Iuvenalie Ceanvic from the Metropolitanate of Craiova, Moldovan Titus from the Polovragi-Craiova monastery and a monk named Cristofor Stupar from the Lainici monastery. I do not know what Sandu Tudor discussed with them, but they did not agree to stay at the Crasna hermitage, leaving it after 3-4 days. I mention that they took part in the evening conferences held by Sandu Tudor" (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 102 (typed copy) and f. 108).

The concerns of the three monks, more focused on intellectual work and prayer, if not exclusively on them, since they went to church „seven times a day and a night”, led, in a short time, to the neglect of administrative tasks and, inevitably, to severe losses in the household patrimony: „One evening I told the abbot: „You know, I forgot to close the hens”. „What, do I need hen? We go to the church service”. That night, fortunately, our hens were stolen. Once, I forgot to open the gates so that the horses that freely grazed in the mountains could enter. The horses did not enter that night, but they never entered! They were probably eaten by the wolves, or they strayed in the woods, or someone stole them. The same happened with the pigs ... In a very short time, we urgently liquidated the farm, to the satisfaction of Father Daniil, who did not need the farm" (Plămădeală, 2002).

The time spent together at the Crasna Monastery was brutally ended. The first one who was forced to leave the monastic institution was Antonie Plămădeală. The protector who warned him in time was, again, Father Daniil, who, while being in Bucharest, found out that the Securitatea had discovered the hiding place of his disciple, and made his way back the same day to save him (Plămădeală, 2002).

Of course, all the activity of Monk Agaton was carefully monitored by Securitatea's agents. On December 23, 1949, the serious source – agent „Vlaicu” – diligently noted the information relevant for the objectives of the oppressive communist apparatus about the visit of Father Agaton (Sandu Tudor) to the Antim Monastery on December 8, 1949, following the invitation of Father Benedict Ghiuș, when, predictably, he spoke the sermon. The fact that the space allotted to Father Agaton's speech in front of the believers constitutes the content of the *Note* almost integrally, uncovers the obsession of full control that the *political power* wanted to exercise over the crowd. Although, in this situation, the circumspection of the agent „Vlaicu” regarding the inspiring *sermon* of the insurgent cleric Agaton (who, despite the obvious

consequences of a criminal nature, supported a vision released from the political constraints of the time) perfectly fits the objectives of the job description of any worthy organ of Security: „He came to Bucharest only for the „sermon” which was scheduled on the Thursday evening. Someone else could talk instead of him, but the priest Benedict Ghiuș insisted on Agaton to talk, whom he called from Craiova by phone. The main ideas of the liturgy are: the liturgy and our mystery life. The word mystery is forcibly announced, because here it is about the mystique. The priest Agaton, together with Benedict Ghiuș, who, by the way, was a professor of the Mystique Department at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, want to spread this mystique among the clergy. This „mystique” is orthodox, but it belongs to the monks, and especially to the monks living in monasteries or deserts. The priest Agaton wanted to show in the sermon that only the man who has this mysterious mystical life, who descends the mind into the heart, is an upstanding man. All these elements form, according to his own expression, „the mystical body of Christ”. Some of that people, being convinced to the depths of their being about the happiness they receive from Christ, are able, after they leave the church, to confess Christ so boldly that they become martyrs. Those who do not have Christ in their hearts do not have a mystical life and therefore do not believe in God, they are traitors. Such denizens are among the people all over the globe and also in the caves of hell. It is not known whether he alluded to the devils or the sinners condemned to eternal torments in hell. The above mentioned are his own ideas, personal reflections with which he wants to make a „pedagogy” according to his own expression” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 002214, vol. 1, f. 460).

The supervision of the activity of the Palace of the Metropolitanate of Oltenia and then of the Crasna - Gorj hermitage was meticulously carried out by the Craiova Regional Directorate of the Security of the People, which had already submitted the *Report no. 13/6389* of February 4, 1950, to the Bucharest General Directorate of the Security of the People, by which the identification of the monk Agaton (Sandu Tudor) at the headquarters of the Metropolitanate of Oltenia was reported (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 114). The reading of the following two Reports – *Report no. 13 / 11.623* (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 115) and *Report no. 13 / 14.381* (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 185002, vol. 1, f. 78) – exceptionally complete the moral portrait of Monk Agaton, fully dedicated to his neighbor's service in scriptural and patristic truth.

As the author mentioned, on June 2, 1950, Monk Agaton was arrested by the Craiova Regional Directorate of the Security of the People

(A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 157), from where he was transferred to the Jilava Penitentiary on July 11, 1950 (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 160). At the end of the same year, Father Adrian Făgețeanu was also locked up, being convicted by the sentence of the Bucharest RPR Court of Appeal – Criminal Section I, by the criminal decision no. 139, within the Public Hearing of March 31, 1952, «based on the arrest warrant no. 1551/1951, of October 24, 1951 of the Prosecutor’s Office of the Bucharest Court for the fact provided and punished by the provisions of the art. 3 let. a.c. and b. of the Decree 207/1948 regarding the war crime combined with art. 4 in the same decree, to 8 (eight years) of heavy imprisonment and 5 (five) years of civic degradation, at the same time ordering the confiscation of his assets » (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 68). Thus, the disciple would follow the prison periplus of the mentor, since both arrived in the position of detainees at Jilava’s dungeons and at the Danube-Black Sea Canal, the spacious extermination camp for the enemies of the socialist people, the one rightly called the Romanian *Auschwitz*.

#### THE PORTRAIT OF THE MONK AGATON DROWN FROM THE SECURITATEA’S DOSSIERS

It is fascinating that the moral, intellectual and spiritual profile of the monk Agaton, provided by the reports and informative notes of the Securitate’s agents, does not suffer the usual contortions. Around the Christmas holidays of 1949 (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 185002, vol. 1, f. 78), Monk Agaton was at the palace of the Metropolitanate of Craiova, as a guest of the Metropolitan Firmilian, with which – as the Securitate’s agents also recorded – he had a lifelong friendship, being preoccupied with the translation of a prayer book, a mission he assumed for the rest of his life: „I observed that from the date of 5.II current year [1950] and until now, the aforementioned monk did not leave the building except for two Sundays, when he attended the worship service at the cathedral church in the locality. He spends the rest of the time only in the palace of the Metropolitanate, without having any connection with any of the officials except for the Metropolitan. He invokes the work on a prayer book for the Metropolitan Firmilian as the reason for his stay in the palace” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 115).

On February 23, 1950, the Archdiocese of Craiova requested the approval of the Archdiocese of Bucharest for the joining of Monk Agaton with one of its monasteries (Tudor, 1999), an approval which was given on March 3, 1950 (Tudor, 1999).

The statements of the Father Adrian Făgețeanu, the first one of the group „Rugul Aprins” to be arrested, during the investigation, recorded in the *Interrogation Minutes* of March 4, 1958, provide us with the following data about this period of becoming of the Father Daniil: „in 1950, by the month of March, I settled at the Crasna Monastery. The abbot of the monastery was Sandu Tudor, with the monachal name of Agaton. At this monastery, there also was the legionary monk [sic!] Antonie Plămădeală (Mihai Plămădeală, 2011). At that time, Sandu Tudor affirmed that he was going to make a monastery of intellectuals in Crasna, in which sense about 100 intellectuals would arrive. As he said, they are going to do the translations of some biblical books from their Greek original, because – as Firmilian, the Metropolitan of Oltenia claimed – the existing translations are far from the original” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, ff. 93-94 (typed copy) and ff. 99 v.-100).

According to the document no. 43/21494 of June 23, 1950, by which the Security Directorate of Bucharest requested the Regional Security Directorate of Craiova to arrest „Teodorescu Alexandru, alias Sandu Tudor, alias Agaton”, he attended „a school in order to become an abbot” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 159, f. 162). Appearing as a result of the activity of overseeing the *objective*, which, par excellence, decomposes the totalitarian ideological thinking, which transforms a man into a simple instrument, into a maneuver table, the documents of the Informative fund, this time, exceptionally configure the portrait of an authentic Christian, deeply concerned with finding the meaning of the Truth in this new form of living (the monasticism): „It has been observed that from the coming of the monk Agaton as an abbot to the Crasna-Gorj monastery, a work is being made among the believers who come to the confession, regarding the rectification of the mysticism, and the confession of the citizens is made for free” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 185002, vol. 1, f. 78).

#### INSTEAD OF CONCLUSIONS

Of course, the project of transforming Crasna into a *monastery of intellectuals* was not possible. In the summer of 1950, the monk Agaton was arrested and, shortly afterwards, Antonie Plămădeală also left Crasna, who, according to the words of Father Adrian Făgețeanu (registered in the *Interrogation Minutes* of March 4, 1958): „(...) found out about the arrest of some legionnaires students and was afraid that he would also be arrested because he probably had some joint activity with them. In December 1950 I was arrested too” (A.C.N.S.A.S.,

Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 94 (typed copy) and f. 100).

But all these attempts did not cause a weakening of the spiritual boldness, on the contrary, he continued to clarify the meanings of the incessant prayer of the hearts of detainees' that accompanied him on the path of the spiritual ascendance, to which he thus explained the paradox of the unrestrained freedom behind bars (Maxim, 2002).

This stage marks the sinking of Father Daniil Sandu Tudor (Monk Agaton) in an existence of an advanced spiritual feeling, the winged impetus of the Monk making it possible to wear an increasingly heavy cross so that, finally, through a martyr's death, he would complete his own martyrdom.

### REFERENCES & NOTES

- [1] Tudor, Ieroschimonahul Daniil Sandu (1999). *Taina Rugului Aprins. Scrieri și documente inedite [The mystery of the Rugul Aprins. Unpublished writings and documents]*. Bucharest: Ed. Anastasia, p. 99: „In the Antim Monastery, there is living, since July 20, 1945, the brother Sandu Tudor. (...) Since all the time he lived in our monastery, he had an exemplary behavior and proved that he had learned the rules of the monastic life. Considering that through his efforts the works of restoration of the monastery church in the summer of 1945, 1946, 1947 could be carried out;”
- [2] Tudor, Ieroschimonahul Daniil Sandu (1999). *Taina Rugului Aprins. Scrieri și documente inedite [The mystery of the Rugul Aprins. Unpublished writings and documents]*. Bucharest: Ed. Anastasia, p. 89: The Father abbot Vasile Vasilache asked the Archdiocese of Bucharest to approve the establishment of a committee for the restoration of the Antim monastery, the composition of the committee including „Mr. General Gh. Iorgulescu, Mr. General Gh. Stratilescu, Mr. General Traian Tetrat, Mr. Professor Al. Mironescu, Mr. Professor Anton Dumitriu and Mr. Sandu Tudor, publicist and writer ”.
- [3] Ciornea, Carmen (2015). Interviu cu Părintele Nicolae Bordașiu [Interview with Father Nicolae Bordașiu]. In Ciornea, Carmen, *Chipul Rugului Aprins [The Image of the Rugul Aprins]*. Bucharest: Ed. Eikon, p. 250: „Probably he was richer, I do not know elements of his life, but I know that with his own money and with what he gathered from the acquaintances and the friends from back then, from the communist time, he repaired the church of Antim and gave it a beautiful appearance”.
- [4] Braga, Arhim. Roman (1995). *Rugul Aprins [The Burning Bush]*. In *Pe drumul credinței [On the path of faith]*. Mănăstirea Adormirea Maicii Domnului, Rives Junction, MI, SUA: HDM Press, p. 175.
- [5] Tudor, Ieroschimonahul Daniil Sandu (1999). *Taina Rugului Aprins. Scrieri și documente inedite [The mystery of the Rugul Aprins. Unpublished writings and documents]*. Bucharest: Ed. Anastasia, p. 94.
- [6] Tudor, Ieroschimonahul Daniil Sandu (1999). *Taina Rugului Aprins. Scrieri și documente inedite [The mystery of the Rugul Aprins. Unpublished writings and documents]*. Bucharest: Ed. Anastasia, p. 95.
- [7] Tudor, Ieroschimonahul Daniil Sandu (1999). *Taina Rugului Aprins. Scrieri și documente inedite [The mystery of the Rugul Aprins. Unpublished writings and documents]*. Bucharest: Ed. Anastasia, p. 96: “At Your Very Reverence Report, we inform you that His Beatitude The Patriarch deigned to approve the reception within the inhabitants of that holy monastery, as a brother, of Mr. Sandu Tudor, who wishes to devote himself to the monastic life”.
- [8] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 78, f. 151.
- [9] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 79: „[Sandu Tudor] Is currently appointed as the administrator at the Antim monastery, from the Antim street no. 89”.
- [10] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 90 (typed copy) and f. 96 v.
- [11] Plămădeală, †Antonie (2002). *Rugul Aprins [The Burning Bush]*. Sibiu: Ed. Archiepiscopiei Sibiului, electronic edition, p. 28: „[Sandu Tudor] comes and joins the Antim Monastery as a brother. He is given a cell in the bell tower. He lived there, under the bells, all the time, in a small cell and he cramped there, in several rows, the 8000 volumes he had and to which I also had access. I remember that later, when the Rugul Aprins was finished, he came to Sihla with that 8000 volumes, above Sihastria, where I used to go and stay for weeks with him, and he provided me with all the books”.
- [12] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 79.
- [13] Ciornea, Carmen (2015). Interviu cu Părintele Nicolae Bordașiu [Interview with Father Nicolae Bordașiu]. In Ciornea, Carmen, *Chipul Rugului Aprins [The Image of the Rugul Aprins]*. Bucharest: Ed. Eikon, pp. 249-250.
- [14] Tudor, Ieroschimonahul Daniil Sandu (1999). *Taina Rugului Aprins. Scrieri și documente inedite [The mystery of the Rugul Aprins. Unpublished writings and documents]*. Bucharest: Ed. Anastasia, p. 102.

- [15] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 219.
- [16] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 195 (typed copy) and f. 198 v. (the original).
- [17] For a broad treatment of the subject, see: Cristian Vasile (2005). *Biserica Ortodoxă Română în primul deceniu comunist (1945-1959)* [*Romanian Orthodox Church in the first communist decade (1945-1959)*]. Bucharest: Curtea Veche, *passim*.
- [18] A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 002214, vol. 1, f. 461.
- [19] Father Benedict Ghiuș was born on October 21, 1904, in the village of Domnești, Pufești commune, in Vrancea county. Between 1919-1926, he attended the courses of the Theological Seminary in Galați. After the brilliant completion of theological studies at the Faculties of Theology in Chisinau and Bucharest, Father Benedict was proposed for a scholarship at the Faculty of Theology in Strasbourg. The studies in France were rewarded with the title of doctor of theology, Benedict Ghiuș thus becoming one of the best trained theologians in Romania at that time. Unfortunately, the lack of confidence of the Communist rulers in the person of Archimandrite Benedict led to a permanent persecution and made it impossible to appoint him on a function correspondent to his training. He was arrested in 1958 in the group „Teodorescu Alex. and others”, recognized as one of the central figures of this spiritual group: „He is a legionary from 1937. During the legionary rule he was proposed to be part of the patriarchal lieutenantcy, in order to be promoted as patriarch. In 1947, together with Sandu Tudor and others, they re-established the basis of the hostile mystical group „Rugul Aprins al Maicii Domnului” („The Burning Bush of the Virgin Mary”) and, within this group, led a feverish activity of rapprochement with the Catholics, in order to create a common anti-communist platform. In 1948 they were forbidden to hold any meetings at the Antim monastery. Benedict Ghiuș is part of the Sandu Tudor group and participates in all their meetings. Benedict Ghiuș was closely engaged in the mystical nationalistic training of the students from the group organized by Sandu Tudor. The head of the group of students, the said Văsi George, acted in his activity according to the directives given by Benedict Ghiuș until March of the current year [1958], when the group passed under the guidance of the monk Sofian Boghiu from the Plumbuita Monastery. He spreads hostile mystical material, multiplied on a machine, among the members of the group. (we have photocopies)” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 211015, vol. 3, ff. 10-11) He expiated his punishment at Aiud and Salcia. Being released in 1964, he returned to the position of minister and confessor priest at the Patriarchal Cathedral in Bucharest. In 1974 he retired and moved to the Cernica monastery, where he continued his service as a confessor. He died on June 12, 1990, at the Cernica Monastery. See Pr. Petroniu Tănase (2003). *Icoane smerite din Sfânta Ortodoxie românească* [*Humble Icons from the Saint Romanian Orthodoxy*]. Bucharest: Ed. Bizantină pp. 41-45.
- [20] Enache, George (2010). Jurnal de supraveghere a Mănăstirii Antim [Monitoring Journal of the Antim Monastery]. In *Ziarul Lumina*, August 07, 2010, p. 1.
- [21] In this sense, the Informative Note of January 11, 1958, signed by the source „Aurel” (conspirative name), is edifying. It is about how Olivier Clément presented the Romanian Orthodox Church in the article „Rugul Nestins” („The Unburnt Bush”), published in the magazine *Reforme*, no. 644, July 20, 1957, in Paris, following the discussion with Father André Scrima (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 236137, vol. 1, f. 20, ff. 25-29). For a broad treatment of the theme, see: Carmen Ciornea (2018). Arhimandritul Sofian Boghiu și „Rugul Aprins” [Archimandrite Sofian Boghiu and „The Burning Bush”]. In Father Mihail-Simion Săsăujan (coordinator), *Mărturisitori ai Ortodoxiei în timpul regimului comunist. Studii și evocări* [*Confessors of the Orthodoxy during the communist regime. Studies and evocations*], a work that appeared with the blessing of the Most Blessed Father Daniel, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Bucharest: „Cuvântul Vieții”, the Publishing House of the Metropolitanate of Muntenia and Dobrogea, pp. 215-275.
- [22] Tudor, Ieroschimonahul Daniil Sandu (1999). *Taina Rugului Aprins. Scrieri și documente inedite* [*The mystery of the Rugul Aprins. Unpublished writings and documents*]. Bucharest: Ed. Anastasia, p. 131.
- [23] Scrima, Pr. André (1996). *Timpul Rugului Aprins. Maestrul spiritual în tradiția răsăriteană* [*The Time of the Rugul Aprins. The spiritual master in the Eastern tradition*]. Bucharest: Ed. Humanitas, p. 161.
- [24] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 194 v. (Typed copy) and f. 198.
- [25] Vasilescu, Gheorghe (1999). Cuvânt înainte [Foreword]. In Tudor, Ieroschimonahul Daniil Sandu, *Taina Rugului Aprins. Scrieri și documente inedite* [*The mystery of the Rugul*

- Aprins. Unpublished writings and documents*]. Bucharest: Ed. Anastasia, p. 15.
- [26] Plămădeală, †Antonie (2002). *Rugul Aprins [The Burning Bush]*. Sibiu: Ed. Archiepiscopiei Sibiului, electronic edition, p. 3.
- [27] A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 002214, vol. 1, f. 460: "On December 8, 1949, Agaton Tudor (Sandu Tudor) returned from Craiova. It is said that on the 9th of December he would return to Craiova again. In Craiova he works with the Metropolitan Firmilian Marin on the prayer book they will print soon. This work is ordered by Patriarch Justinian".
- [28] Plămădeală, †Antonie (2002). *Rugul Aprins [The Burning Bush]*. Sibiu: Ed. Archiepiscopiei Sibiului, electronic edition, p. 3: "He was present at my tonsuring into monasticism, which took place in 1949, on September 14, on the day of The Holy Cross, at the Prislop Monastery in Hunedoara County. He was my monastic godfather".
- [29] Plămădeală, †Antonie (2002). *Rugul Aprins [The Burning Bush]*. Sibiu: Ed. Archiepiscopiei Sibiului, electronic edition, p. 42.
- [30] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 102 (typed copy) and f. 108.
- [31] Plămădeală, †Antonie (2002). *Rugul Aprins [The Burning Bush]*. Sibiu: Ed. Archiepiscopiei Sibiului, electronic edition, p. 42.
- [32] Plămădeală, †Antonie (2002). *Rugul Aprins [The Burning Bush]*. Sibiu: Ed. Archiepiscopiei Sibiului, electronic edition, p. 42.
- [33] A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 002214, vol. 1, f. 460.
- [34] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 114.
- [35] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 115.
- [36] A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 185002, vol. 1, f. 78.
- [37] According to the *Note* of the Directorate of the Security of the Capital no. 43/21494 of July 12, 1950, to the General Directorate of the Security of the People, the monk Agathon was arrested „by the order of GDSP no. 5 R/33066 of June 20, 1950”, „by RDS Craiova, following our radiogram no. 43/21494 of June 23, 1950” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 157).
- [38] See the *Note* of the Directorate of the Security of the Capital no. 43/21494 of July 11, 1950, to the Jilava Penitentiary, in which the following was mentioned: „We submit to you, together with the present, the said Teodorescu Alexandru, alias Sandu Tudor, monk, former publicist, with the last residence in Crasna commune, Gorj county, who is sentenced to forced labour for life, by the mandate of the Prosecutor’s Office of the Bucharest Court No. 2961 of 1948, for war crimes” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 160).
- [39] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 68.
- [40] A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 185002, vol. 1, f. 78.
- [41] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 115.
- [42] Tudor, Ieroschimonahul Daniil Sandu (1999). *Taina Rugului Aprins. Scrieri și documente inedite [The mystery of the Rugul Aprins. Unpublished writings and documents]*. Bucharest: Ed. Anastasia, p. 103.
- [43] Tudor, Ieroschimonahul Daniil Sandu (1999). *Taina Rugului Aprins. Scrieri și documente inedite [The mystery of the Rugul Aprins. Unpublished writings and documents]*. Bucharest: Ed. Anastasia, p. 104.
- [44] Leonida Antonie Plămădeală, the Metropolitan of Transylvania, born on November 17, 1926 in Bessarabia, Stolnicești, Lăpușna County, was convicted for conspiracy, by the sentence no. 210/1949 of the Bucharest Military Tribunal, 2nd section, to seven years of heavy imprisonment, and in 1954 he was arrested again and convicted by the sentence no. 31/14 of January 1956 to four years of heavy imprisonment. He executed the punishments at Jilava, Văcărești and Galați. For a broad treatment of the subject, see: Plămădeală, Mihai and Adrian Nicolae Petcu (2011). *Mitropolitul Antonie Plămădeală. Detalii biografice. Partea I. „Dosarele nu știu tot!”*. Perioada 1948-1956 [Metropolitan Antonie Plămădeală. Biographical details. Part I. „The dossiers do not know everything!”. Period 1948-1956]. Sibiu: Ed. Andreiana, *passim*.
- [45] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, ff. 93-94 (typed copy) and ff. 99 v.-100.
- [46] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 013495, vol. 2, f. 159, f. 162.
- [47] A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 185002, vol. 1, f. 78.
- [48] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 94 (typed copy) and f. 100.
- [49] Maxim, Virgil (2002). *Imn pentru crucea purtată [A hymn for the cross worn]*. Bucharest: Ed. Antim, pp. 257-258.