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**COLLECTIVE PORTRAIT OF THE CHISINAU DIOCESANS DURING  
THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE XIX-th CENTURY AND THE BEGINNING  
OF THE XX-th**

*- Abstract -*

An important conceptual direction of modern historical science is the study of the personality principles in historico-cultural phenomena and processes (“history in faces”), creation of collective portraits of various social or professional groups expanding the social and cultural information through the worldview and activities of individual representatives of the region.

A significant place in the social history and structure of the population of Bessarabia in the XIXth century was kept by the clergy.

The article attempts to create a collective portrait of the Chisinau diocesans during the period between the XIXth century and the beginning of the XX-th. The author has analyzed leading clergymen personnel. Their biograms has been distinguished by means of such criteria as: social and national origin, education, scientific inquiries, career way, outstanding service for the community, authority among the local population and church fraternity.

The conducted analysis of biographical information gives us generalized collective portrait of the Chisinau diocesans of the XIX-th and the beginning of the XX-th century. It was a clergyman from one of Russian provinces, who received an academic clerical education. Prior to the appointment to the department, the future bishop passed several levels of the church hierarchy, he was assigned to the department at the age of 56, the average length of stay in the diocese was 8 years. Traditionally, the Chisinau bishops paid serious attention to education, book printing, raising the level of education of the clergy, improving worship services, building and preserving church buildings. Each of them contributed to the development of the Chisinau diocese, most of the bishops had authority among the flock and the clergy. Biographies of some lords require clarification and further research.

*Keywords:* church, Chisinau diocese, bishop, clergy, collective portrait.

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An important conceptual direction of modern historical science is the study of the personality principles in historical and cultural phenomena and processes (“history in faces”), creation of collective portraits of various social or professional groups expanding the social and cultural information through the worldview and activities of individual representatives of the region.

A significant place in the social history and structure of the population of Bessarabia in the XIX-th century was kept by the clergy. After the annexation of South Bessarabia to the Russian Empire the Orthodox Church was the guide through the state ideology. By the middle of the XIX-th century “administrative russification” of Bessarabia, the purpose of which was the integration of this region into the general imperial system of government, was generally completed. The growth of Russian nationalism, repressive ethnopolitics of the Russian Empire, and formation of Romanian state contributed to the fact that the authorities, both secular and church, were looking for the ways of fast joining of Bessarabian population to all-Russian cultural space. Mediators between Russian authorities and the Bessarabian population were churches and schools. Church ministers performed not only specific religious functions, but also cultural, educational and moral. The main role in this policy was played by the ruling bishops of the Chisinau diocese of the 19th and early 20th century. Thus, the study of generalized biographies and the creation of collective portraits of outstanding historical figures which were considered to be the elite of society even during their lifetime became very topical.

With the purpose of creating a collective portrait of the leaders of the Chisinau diocese will be considered personal composition of the Chisinau bishops of the 19th – early 20th century, analyzed their biograms according to several criteria: social, ethnic, geographical origin, education, scientific research, career paths, merits before the society, authority among the spiritual brotherhood and the flock.

Historiography of the history of the church and historical portraits of prominent religious figures are represented primarily by the works of secular and church historians of the 19th century, the first ones were A. Skalkovsky, N. Murzakevich, Gabriel (Rozanov), F. Milianovsky, Feodosiy (Makarevsky) and S. Serafimov. Among modern researchers of the history of the Orthodox Church in the south of Ukraine an important place is taken by the works of A. Boyko, N. Dianova, I. Liman, A. Stepanenko, A. Trigub, O. Fedorchuk. Certain aspects of the status of the Orthodox clergy of the region, its role in society, biographies of individual

spiritual personalities, and the prosopography of certain categories of the Bessarabian population are studied by the historians V. Tserkovna<sup>1</sup>, L. Tsyganenko<sup>2</sup>.

The biographical literature is not numerous and rather fragmentary describes the biographies of the bishops of the Chisinau diocese. The most completely studied biography is the one of Metropolitan Gabriel (Banulescu-Bodoni). To the rest of Chisinau bishops are devoted only separate articles, dictionary articles and obituaries. Among the publications of the newest period should be mentioned thematic bibliographic index on the development of Orthodoxy in the South Ukraine in the late 18th and early 20th centuries, containing information about documents and literature on this issue<sup>3</sup>. The index contains a list of publications about archbishops and their scientific heritage. These are mainly essays, articles, notes and various materials to the “Chisinau Diocesan Registry”. A classic example of prosopographical research is a unique edition of the biographical dictionary of the Kiev Theological Academy containing articles about the bishops of the Chisinau diocese who have graduated this Academy<sup>4</sup>.

After joining Bessarabia to the Russian Empire, when was important to create church-administrative structures for complete control over these territories, Gabriel (Banulescu-Bodoni), a member of the Synod, cultivated a project which was transformed into the formation of a new diocese – Chisinau and Khotin with the title of metropolis and exarchy<sup>5</sup>. To organize the church life, Gabriel (Banulescu-Bodoni) moved from Iasi to Chisinau, where the bishop's house, the dikastery (consistory) and the seminary had to be operated. The head of the diocese was appointed Metropolitan Gabriel (Banulescu-Bodoni), previously the Exarch of

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<sup>1</sup> В. Церковная, *Православное духовенство Румынии второй половины XIX в. (по материалам «Кишиневских епархиальных ведомостей»)*, “Journal of Danubian Studies and Research”, Vol. 5, № 2, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Л. Циганенко, *Бессарабські дворяни в XIX ст. : матеріали до просопографічного портрету. Теоретичні, методичні та практичні проблеми історії, філософії, соціології, політології, правознавства // Збірник наукових праць за матеріалами науково-практичної конференції (20 січня 2017 р.)*, РВВ ІДГУ, Ізмаїл, 2017, pp.150-155.

<sup>3</sup> *Розвиток православ'я на Півдні України, кінець XVIII – початок XX ст. (на матеріалах Херсонської губернії та Південної Бессарабії): бібліографічний покажчик / авт.-упоряд.: В. В. Самодурова [та ін.] ; наук. ред. Н. М. Діанова; відп. ред. М. О. Подрезова; ОНУ ім. І. І. Мечникова, Одеса, 2010.*

<sup>4</sup> *Биографический словарь выпускников Киевской духовной академии: 1819–1920-е гг.: Материалы из собрания проф. протоиерея Ф. И. Титова и архива КДА : в 4 т. / [сост. В. И. Ульяновский]*, Киев, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> І. Лиман, *Російська православна церква на півдні України останньої чверті XVIII – середини XIX століття*, Available at: <http://www.i-lyman.name/RPCerkvaPivdUkr.html> (accessed 20 May 2017), p. 341.

Moldavia, Wallachia and Bessarabia. The newly formed diocese included Bessarabian parishes, as well as parishes of the Kherson province with the cities of Odessa, Tiraspol, Ananiev, Elisavetgrad. The total number of parishes was about 800 churches, more than 700 of which – in Bessarabia and at least – 100 on the left bank of Dniester<sup>6</sup>.

During the XIX – early XX century Chisinau's episcopal department was headed by 13 spiritual dignitaries: Metropolitan Gavriil (Banulesko-Bodoni Grigory Grigoryevich), exarch of the Holy Synod (1813-1821); Archbishop Dimitry (Sulima Daniil Ivanovich) (1821-1844); Bishop, Archbishop (1845) Irinarkh (Popov Yakov Dmitrievich) (1844 - 1858); Bishop, Archbishop (1861) Antony (Alexei Shokotov) (1858-1871); Bishop, Archbishop (1882) Pavel (Lebedev Peter Vasilyevich) (1871-1882); Archbishop Sergius (Lyapidevsky Nikolai Yakovlevich) (1882-1891); Bishop Isaac (Polozhensky Ioan Kalinnikovich) (1891-1892 gg.); Archbishop Neophyte (Nevodchikov Nikolai Vasilievich) (1892-1898 gg.); Bishop Iakov (Piyatnitsky Ivan Alekseevich) (1898-1904); Bishop Vladimir (Sinkovskii Filaret Alekseevich) (1904- 1908); Bishop Seraphim (Chichagov Leonid Mikhailovich) (1908-1914); Archbishop Platon (Christmas Porphyry Fedorovich) (1914-1915); Bishop Anastasiy (Alexander Gribanovsky) (1915-1919). Thus, the diocese was headed by 1 metropolitan, 7 archbishops and 5 bishops.

By origin most of the hierarchs of the Chisinau diocese came from families that belonged to the clergy, 9 out of 13 bishops (69%). Metropolitan Gabriel (Banulesko-Bodoni) and Archbishop Neofit (Nevodchikov) were originally from noble families. A peculiar exception in the cohort of the diocesan bishops became Bishop Seraphim (Chichagov). He came from an ancient aristocratic family: the great-grandson of the famous admiral V. Y. Chichagov, one of the first explorers of the Arctic Ocean; Grandson of P. V. Chichagov, Marine Minister of Russia, a prominent participant of the Patriotic War of 1812<sup>7</sup>. Archbishop Dimitry (Sulima), who was born in the famous family of the Ukrainian Cossack sergeant-major, was not associated with the church environment<sup>8</sup>. Of all the ruling bishops, three were from the Ukrainian lands – Dimitry (Sulima), was born in Kharkov province, Anthony (Shokotov) from Slobodsko-Ukrainian province,

<sup>6</sup> Игумен Ириной (Тафуня), *Митрополит Гавриил (Банулеско-Бодони) и основанная им Кишиневско – Хотинская епархия*, Available at: <http://www.bogoslov.ru/text/408560.html> (accessed 20 May 2017), p. 89.

<sup>7</sup> *Краткое жизнеописание Священномученика Митрополита Серафима (Чичагова)(составлено внучкой святителя игуменьей Серафимой (Черной-Чичаговой), настоятельницей московского Новодевичьего монастыря)*, Available at: <https://www.sedmitza.ru/text/395634.html> (accessed 20 May 2017).

<sup>8</sup> В. Гросул, *Димитрий*, Available at: <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/178175.html> (accessed 20 May 2017).

Vladimir (Sinkovsky) from Kakhovka of the Taurian province. Presumably, two more ministers – Irinarkh (Popov) and Platon (Rozhdestvensky) could have Ukrainian background as they were born in Kursk province. All the rest bishops were from Russian provinces: one from Kaluga, three from St. Petersburg, one from Tambov, one from Tver, and one from Tula. The future metropolitan Gabriel (Banulesko-Bodoni) was born in Moldovan family in Transylvania, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The bishops of the Chisinau diocese, as a rule, studied at the closest to the house spiritual collegium or seminary, and then received a higher special spiritual education: four of them graduated from the Kyiv one, four from the Moscow Academy, and three from the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. Hierarch Dimitry (Sulima) graduated only the Ekaterinoslav Theological Seminary, and Seraphim (Chichagov) had no spiritual education at all. Having finished education at the First Classical St. Petersburg Gymnasium he entered the Corps of Pages of His Imperial Majesty, after that he was sent to serve in the Preobrazhensky Regiment. He made an excellent military career: ensign, second lieutenant, lieutenant, adjutant of comrade of His Imperial Majesty, General Feldsehmeyster, staff captain, colonel<sup>9</sup>. He could count on further advancement along the steps of the military hierarchy, he was awarded more than 10 Russian and foreign orders, but he chose a spiritual ministry.

After the graduation from the spiritual academy, the scientific and theological attestation presupposed the awarding of theological degrees to the graduates: candidate – master – doctor<sup>10</sup>. The Chisinau hierarchy was occupied by three candidates, one senior candidate, five masters of theology, two hierarchs completed several courses as volunteers of the theological academy.

Three Chisinau ministers prepared and defended their master's theses: Pavel (Lebedev) – “On Posts and Institutions for Church Administration in the Ancient Eastern Church”, Sergius (Lyapidevsky) – “On Commemoration of the Dead” and Ioan (Pyatnitsky) – “The Origin of Christian Worship”. Some of the higher clergy of the Chisinau diocese successfully combined religious and educational work with literary and scientific activities. A huge amount of works were left by Sergius (Lyapidevsky), Pavel (Lebedev), Neofit (Nevodchikov), Platon (Rozhdestvensky), Anastasiy (Gribanovsky). Their articles, speeches, sermons, translations and

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<sup>9</sup> *Краткое жизнеописание Священномученика Митрополита Серафима (Чичагова) (составлено внучкой святителя игуменьей Серафимой (Черной-Чичаговой), настоятельницей московского Новодевичьего монастыря), Available at: <https://www.sedmitza.ru/text/395634.html> (accessed 20 May 2017).*

spiritual poems were published in “Pravoslavoe Obozreni”, “Strannik”, “Moskovskie Tserkovnie Vedomosti”, “Missioner”, “Kishinevskie Eparhialnie Vedomosti”, “Tomskie Eparhialnie Vedomosti”, “Khristianskoe Chtenie”, “Pravoslavniy Sobesednik”, “Pravoslavnoe Obozrenie”, “Tserkovnaya Gazeta”, “Odesskiy Voskresniy Listok”, “Odesskii Vestnik”, “Bibliograficheskie Zapiski”, “Russkii Arkhiv”. Ministers Dimitry (Sulima) and Anthony (Shokotov) were engaged in the translation of liturgical books, canons, akathists, catechisms and other books of religious content into the Moldovan language. The name of Metropolitan Gabriel is associated with the establishment of the Bessarabian branch of the Russian Bible Society and activities aimed into correction of the Moldovan Bible. Iakov (Pyatnitsky) was an honorary member of the Kiev, Moscow and Kazan Theological Academies.

Before placement to the Chisinau Department, the future bishop had to pass several levels of the church hierarchy. As a rule, before the tonsure, they were teachers or inspectors in secular or spiritual institutions of different levels, senior priests in the rural parish. After that, they could take the place of abbot, dean of the monastery, rector of the theological seminary with the subsequent elevation to the rank of archimandrite. Prior to the appointment as a bishop, in most cases, the bishop served as a vicar. For half of the hierarchs, the appointment to the Chisinau department was the first in their career and for another part – it was a transfer from another diocese.

The average age of the Chisinau bishops was 56 years. The youngest for the time of the appointment to the episcopal chair was Bishop Anastassy (Gribanovsky), who turned 42 years old, Archbishop Neofit (Nevodchikov) arrived to Chisinau in a respectable 73-year-old age. The average length of the archpastors' residence at the Chisinau and Khotin Departments was 8 years. The longest, 23 years, managed the Diocese of Chisinau, Dimitri (Sulima) – from 1821 to 1844, continuing the work of Metropolitan Gabriel. The shortest period of the archpastoral ministry – 1 year – was the government of bishop Isaacius (Polozhensky) and archbishop Platon (Rozdestvenskii).

In the diocese the bishop served as administrative, judicial and economic authority over the clergy. He raised the clergy to the rank, appointed to serve and imposed penalties for misdemeanors. An important direction of his activities was the preservation of faith and morality, reading of sermons and conducting of divine services. Also, the diocesan bishop was assigned to take control over the spiritual schools and teaching the Law of God in secular schools. The bishop was obliged to

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<sup>10</sup> Игум. Михаил (Крастелёв), игум. Серафим (Питерский), мон. Мелетия (Панкова), *Иринарх*, Available at: <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/673977.html> (accessed 20 May 2017), p. 101.

submit to the Synod reports on the state of the diocese, reports on important events and defend the interests of the church before local government bodies.

Traditionally Chisinau bishops paid much attention to education. The specificity of church policy in this question was determined by the domination of the Moldovan population on these lands, and it was directly related to the activities of the Metropolitan of Chisinau and Khotin Gabriel (Banulescu-Bodoni). He significantly strengthened the position of Orthodoxy, became famous as a bona fide archpastor, gifted preacher, theologian, linguist, publisher. However, historians do not have a well-defined assessment of his activity. Romanian researcher Diana Etsko calls him “patriarch of the russification of the province”, “the greatest agent of Russia”. One of the hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Ardial Anthony (Plamadéal) notes two most important achievements of Metropolitan Gabriel: the founding of the Chisinau theological seminary in 1813 and the printing house in 1814<sup>11</sup>. Before the opening of Kherson Theological Seminary in Odessa, Chisinau Seminary was the main spiritual educational institution in the southern region of the Russian Empire. In 1828, 45 out of 54 pupils came from the Kherson province, first of all, from the Tiraspol district<sup>12</sup>. In 1816 at the seminary was opened a boarding-school for Bessarabian noblemen that was functioning as a regional gymnasium<sup>13</sup>.

Among the graduates of the seminary and the nobling-school were not only spiritual persons, but also outstanding figures of the Moldovan national culture: A. Mateevitch, A. Plamadală, the brothers Hejeu, K. Negre, A. Russo, A. Donic, K. Stamati and many others. The importance of the opening of the printing house and its activities is hard to overestimate. In addition to books of liturgical content, various spiritual materials, school textbooks for seminarians, orders, and decrees of secular authorities were printed there. From 1814 to 1821 years in the printing house were published 19320 copies of various books for the needs of Bessarabia<sup>14</sup>.

The contribution of Metropolitan Gabriel Dimitri (Sulima) was the opening of schools in the Kursk, Dobruja and Hirzhava monasteries, as well as in the Chisinau, Bender and Akkerman districts and implementation of Lancaster schools in Bessarabia during the period of his administration. Special attention was paid to

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<sup>11</sup> Игумен Ириней (Тафуня), *Митрополит Гавриил (Банулеску-Бодони) и основанная им Кишиневско – Хотинская епархия*, Available at: <http://www.bogoslov.ru/text/408560.html> (accessed 20 May 2017), p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> А.Филипенко, *Просвітницька діяльність митрополита Кишинівського і Хотинського Гавриїл (Бенулеску-Бодоні) в Бессарабії та на Півдні України*, Одеса, 2011, p. 356.

<sup>13</sup> А.Филипенко, *Церква і освіта в Бессарабії у першій чверті ХІХ століття*, “Записки історичного факультету”, No 23, 2013, p. 320.

<sup>14</sup> В. Стати, *История Молдовы*, Ch.: S. n., 2005, p. 249.

general education among the local population, for example, the “Rules” (“Pravila”) of education originally intended for the Olonets province, he translated into the Moldovan language, and then began to distribute through the Bessarabian parishes, during the sermons he urged parents to send their children to study in parochial schools. Succeeded in studying the Moldovan language, he managed to compile a catechism in the Moldovan language, translating precepts, a hymnal, a service book, a Moldavian trebnik. Most of his literary heritage is published on the pages of the “Chisinau Diocesan Registry”.

At the temples bishop Anthony opened libraries, founded the publication of the diocesan organ “Chisinau Diocesan Registry” publishing articles in Russian and Moldavian. On his initiative a women's diocesan school was opened in Chisinau for the arrangement of which he donated personal funds and attracted philanthropists.

Schools for juvenile orphans of priests were founded at 15 monasteries by Bishop Paul, named for his spiritual and educational activity “Apostle of Bessarabia”<sup>15</sup>.

In Bessarabia significantly increased the number of parochial schools and literacy schools during the stay at the Chisinau department of bishop Isaacius (Posolozhensky): from 151 to 243, and the number of students from 5514 to 7979<sup>16</sup>.

The bishops paid special attention to raising the level of education of the parish clergy and improving worship services in rural churches. For example, Dimitri (Sulima) invited seminarians of Podol and Yekaterinoslav gymnasiums for the service. Bishop of Kishinev Irinarkh (Popov), arriving at a new place of service in 1844, described the state of affairs in the church sphere as “very depressing” and attempted to reform the church administration. He changed the work of the spiritual consistory, simplified the system of deaneries. He paid much attention to raising the level of education of the clergy, appointed two inspectors for verification, opened a class for the psalmists. In order for the clergy to learn how to preach he assigned 7 largest city churches as the places for practice. Low level of education of the clergy he was trying to raise by the activation of printing. With the blessing of the hierarch in 1853, 600 copies of the Triodion, 600 copies of the Gospel were published in the Moldovan language<sup>17</sup>.

Bishop Anthony (Shokotov) enforced the election of the archpriest and established archpriests councils in the diocese. To discuss various problems of spiritual life, soon after inauguration, bishop Isaac (Polozhensky) convened district

<sup>15</sup> Павел (Лебедев), Available at: <http://drevo-info.ru/articles/2227.html> (accessed 20 May 2017).

<sup>16</sup> А Горобец, *Исаакий*, Available at: <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/674782.html> (accessed 20 May 2017), p. 37.

<sup>17</sup> Игум. Михаил (Крастелёв), игум. Серафим (Питерский), мон. Мелетия (Панкова), *Иринарх*, Available at: <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/673977.html> (accessed 20 May 2017).



school congresses, as well as the diocesan congress of the clergy, initiated extra-service interviews with parishioners in the diocese<sup>18</sup>.

A special place in the history of the Chisinau and Khotin Diocese is taken by Bishop Seraphim (Chichagov), who constantly led a persistent struggle against the innocents, the largest unorthodox religious movement in Bessarabia<sup>19</sup>.

During the First World War, Bishop Anastassy (Gribanovsky) went to the front, performed prayers and requiems, patriotic sermons. For the fast integration of the population of Bessarabia into the all-Russian space, secular and public authorities pursued a Russification policy. The beginning of an explicit Russification policy in the Diocese of Chisinau was during the reign of archbishop Irinarh (Popov). During his government a significant part of the archpriests-Moldovans was replaced by the Russians. In the 40's and 50's of XIX century the number of books published was sharply reduced; in fact the printing house printed only the Psalter in Moldovan language<sup>20</sup>.

Under the successor to Irinarh, bishop Antonii (Shokotov), the need for Russification was declared, but no harsh measures were taken. "Chisinau Diocesan Registry" since 1867 had been printing with a parallel text in Russian and Moldovan.

With the inauguration of bishop Paul (Lebedev), a period of intensive Russification of church life was started: all church documentation was translated into Russian, the system of elections of abbots was abolished, monasteries at their own expense had to open Russian schools, were enforced Slavonic church choirs, Moldavian singing was also replaced by Slavonic<sup>21</sup>. "Chisinau Diocesan Registry" finally stopped to be translated into Moldovan.

To the end of the XIX century the policy of Bishop Paul (Lebedev) was continued by his successors, although not so actively. Under archbishop Sergii (Lyapidevsky), the Diocesan Printing House was finally closed down, and its property was sold<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> А Горобец, *Исаакий*, Available at: <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/674782.html> (accessed 20 May 2017), p. 38.

<sup>19</sup> О Гром, *Иннокентиевское движение и «молдавский вопрос» в Бессарабии в начале XX века*, Москва, 2014, pp. 86-106.

<sup>20</sup> О. Гром, *Церковная русификация в Бессарабии в середине XIX века*, Таганрог, 2013, p. 90.

<sup>21</sup> И. Пархомович, *Краткий очерк архипастырской деятельности в Бессарабии высокопреосвященного Павла, Архиепископа Кишиневского и Хотинского с 1871 по 1881 год*, Кишинев, 1882, p. 46.

<sup>22</sup> О. Гром, *Церковная русификация в Бессарабии в середине XIX века*, Таганрог, 2013, p. 93.

Another important point of attention for the bishops was church construction. Metropolitan Gabriel, arriving in Chisinau, initiated and strongly supported the erection of churches, the Metropolitan House and buildings for the seminaries.

In 1817, it was built the Chisinau metropolia. In 1818, the construction of the cathedral of the Nativity of Christ began and was completed in 1836. The reconstruction of the Kiprianov Monastery also began<sup>23</sup>. In general, if in 1816 there were 935 churches and 11 monasteries in the Bessarabian region, then in 1834 there were already 1 cathedral, 1,033 churches, 12 prayer houses, 16 male and 6 female monasteries and hermetages. The modern Ukrainian researcher of Orthodoxy in the South of Ukraine I. Liman notes that at the same time there were 22 cathedrals in the Ekaterinoslav, Kherson and Tavriya dioceses, 662 parochial schools, 14 churches with monasteries, 7 congregational churches, 1 prayer house and 4 monasteries<sup>24</sup>. Under Dimitri (Sulima) the number of churches throughout Bessarabia increased from 862 to 905. He headed the construction of the Odessa monastery, the Cathedral of the Nativity of Christ in Chisinau<sup>25</sup>.

Bishop Irinarkh (Popov) also worried about the preservation of church buildings, buildings in disrepair he allowed to close only if there were constructed new ones. In the year of his appointment, 1858, from 865 church buildings made of stone were 314<sup>26</sup>. During the years of Anthony's government about 300 churches were built and restored in Bessarabia, about 400 parish schools had been opened<sup>27</sup>.

The metropolitan and hierarchy tried in every possible way to raise the moral level of the clergy, fought against vagrancy, drunkenness and other vices that prevailed among the Bessarabian clergy and the population. Thus, in biographical notes and articles about the majority of the leaders of the diocese, we can see such characteristics: an exemplary christian, distinguished by simplicity and accessibility for all, disinterested, non-possessive, generous to the poor, demanding in business, strict to violators of his duties, always ready to help. But sometimes we can find other estimates, for example: has difficult character, has no sense of cordiality in the relationship, was eager for money. For their activities some bishops were awarded various religious and public awards. Metropolitan Gabriel (Banulesko-Bodoni)

<sup>23</sup> С. Суляк, *Ими гордится Молдавия*, Кишинев, 2006, р. 83.

<sup>24</sup> І. Лиман, *Державна церква і державна влада: Південна Україна (1775 – 1861)*, Запоріжжя, 2004, р. 57.

<sup>25</sup> В. Гросул, *Димитрий*, Available at: <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/178175.html> (accessed 20 May 2017), р. 100.

<sup>26</sup> Игум. Михаил (Крастелёв), игум. Серафим (Питерский), мон. Мелетия (Панкова), *Иринарх*, Available at: <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/673977.html> (accessed 20 May 2017).

<sup>27</sup> М. Воробьев, *Антоний*, Available at: <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/116032.html> (accessed 20 May 2017).

was awarded a number of awards, among which the Order of St. Andrew, Antony (Shokotov) was awarded the Order of Alexander Nevsky, Isaak (Polozhensky) – the Order of St. Vladimir II degree, Vladimir (Sinkovsky) – the Order of St. Anna I and III degrees, St. Vladimir II and III degrees, Sergius (Lyapidevsky) – a diamond cross for wearing on a hood and a diamond cross for wearing on the miter, Iacov (Pyatnitsky) – a diamond cross for wearing on a hood.

Thus, within the framework of the conducted analysis of biographical information, a generalized collective portrait of the Chisinau bishops of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century is clearly visible. It was a clergyman from one of Russian provinces, who received an academic spiritual education. Prior to the appointment to the department, the future bishop passed several levels of the church hierarchy, he was assigned to the department at the age of 56, the average length of stay in the diocese was 8 years. Traditionally, the Chisinau bishops paid serious attention to education, book printing, raising the level of education of the clergy, improving worship services, building and preserving church buildings. Each of them contributed to the development of the Chisinau diocese, most of the bishops had authority among the flock and the clergy. Biographies of some lords require clarification and further research.

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