

# Aspects of 1918 from the Journal of a Theologian

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## The Journal as a Historical Source

**T**HE GREAT Union of 1918 raised, throughout time, the interest of many researchers. Approached from various perspectives, the subject matter is always current, being constantly enriched with new sources. As part of the ample process of reconstructing in detail the event which marked the formation of Great Romania, the memories and journals of the participants constitute an important historiographic source. Unlike other sources, the journals offer a rather personal view, an individual one, on the event at hand. Because of the style in which they are written, with a clear vocabulary, they contrast with the official documents where as a rule a conceptualized language was used. This is why the information transmitted either comes to supplement the other sources, or deciphers some historical events from the details or the background actions revealed by the journals' authors. Despite the biased manner in which this type of literature portrays the truth, they describe real characters and events. And this is a good enough reason to accept them as a historical source<sup>1</sup>.

Starting from this premise, our research aims to highlight the manner in which the Union of 1918 was perceived, amid very high expectations, by the Greek Catholic Vicar Forane of Făgăraș, Iacob Popa (1872–1937). His perspective is even more interesting given that he took refuge in Iași during the autumn and early winter of 1918.

His notes follow the fashion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when keeping a journal became popular. By keeping a journal one would not just simply record the events and personal feelings, but would also analyze intellectual growth. The moment chosen for starting such notes is not accidental. It was noticed that many authors began to write their journals following a crucial event that marked their existence. The outbreak of World War I was the trigger for Iacob Popa's journal. Being aware that he is a witness to a major historical change, every day he dutifully filled in the information. Just like many other participants to the events, the vicar wrote down, in pencil, every day, about his activity or about the news he received. Like with many other authors, the daily news was more frequent in comparison to retrospective information<sup>2</sup>.

We should also note that the author never had any ulterior reasons for writing his journal, which make us think that it was not written for a wider audience. Consequently, we consider that the details offered can be deemed relevant.

The manner in which he filled in the journal day by day is not linear. Sometimes the information recorded was very succinct, being presented in a journalistic manner. Many a time the author opted for just recording a piece of news he had read in a newspaper, without formulating an opinion on it. And when he mentioned a discussion he took part in, in one context or another, he only briefly wrote about it, again without inserting any personal comments, as he would not even hint at his own point of view.

Generally, in his notes there were also topics on which he insisted, highlighting his point of view. In the journal as a whole, this type of intervention is, still, rather limited and presents the author's stance, obviously influenced by his professional training and status within the hierarchy of the Transylvanian Greek Catholic Church. Such topics were, usually, the ones regarding the ecclesiastical institution to which he belonged, as well as the ones pertaining to some actions of the political figures and to the situation of Transylvania. The enthusiasm brought about by a piece of news received or read was reflected in his writing, too. The entries were longer and included more details.

## Brief Portrait of a Vicar Forane

**B**ORN IN a family of peasant border guards on 11 December 1872, Iacob Popa studied Theology in Blaj (1892–1896). After that, he left for Budapest, where he enrolled at the Faculty of Law (1897–1900). After completing his studies, he was ordained celibate priest on 26 June 1904, by the Metropolitan Bishop Victor Mihályi of Apșa, becoming one of the trustworthy men of the hierarch and even his personal secretary. Actually, in this latter role, Iacob Popa was one of the main companions of the Greek Catholic hierarch on his trips to Budapest, Vienna and Rome<sup>3</sup>. After returning home, to Transylvania, he had various roles: a practitioner at the Archdiocese Office (1900-1901), vice-notary and consortial archivist (1901-1904), consortial prothonotary (1904-1910), metropolitan secretary and director of the metropolitan chancellery (1910-1912). On 17 December 1912, he was named Vicar Forane of Făgăraș and parish priest of Făgăraș. With a pause caused by his retreat to Moldavia, after Romania's entry into the Great War, Iacob Popa climbed step by step the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and on 30 June 1934 he was appointed Archbishopric General Vicar, a position he kept until his death on 10 December 1937<sup>4</sup>.

With the arrival of the Romanian troops in Transylvania, the life of the Vicar Forane of Făgăraș was to change radically. Just like many other Transylvanian priests, he had received the Romanian army on the Transylvanian territory with euphoria. However, the joy was not long-lasting, because on 2 October 1916 the Romanian military units received the order to withdraw, and the next day they put the order into effect. His attitude, considered treason by the Hungarian authorities, made him flee to Moldavia. If he had remained, he would have risked arrest. In fact, the reaction of the Hungarian authorities was quick, because in the following months over 60 priests were arrested. Among

the accusations brought against them were: welcoming the invading Romanian army, the commemoration of the King of Romania in prayers, the provision of information to the Romanian army<sup>5</sup>.

In the evening of 2 October 1916, Iacob Popa left Făgăraș only “with the bags he could carry in his hands”<sup>6</sup>. A few days later, on 12 October 1916, he arrived in Bucharest. His journey did not end there, however, because in the following year, more precisely in May 1917, he was appointed to the committee for the recruitment of the volunteers from among the Transylvanian prisoners captured by the Russian army. His mission to Russia lasted for one year (June 1917 - June 1918)<sup>7</sup>. He returned to Romania after the outbreak of the revolution, joining the Avram Iancu Volunteer Corps as a military priest.

In connection to his refugee status in Romania from 2 October 1916 to 30 December 1918, he wrote to Ștefan Cicio Pop in Bucharest on 1/13 February 1919, requesting financial support. During this time, for 2 years and 3 months, he had gone through Bucharest, Brăila, Iași and Independența, and had spent a year in Russia “as a member of the Commission that received volunteers for the Romanian army from among the Romanian Transylvanian prisoners in Russia<sup>8</sup>.”

## The Year 1918 in Iacob Popa’s Diary

**A**FTER RETURNING from Russia, Iacob Popa stopped in Iași, where he made numerous efforts to be appointed teacher in a preparatory school. On 13/26 September he was appointed headmaster of the School in Independența, Covurlui (today Galați) County<sup>9</sup>, where he lived until 1/13 November 1918, when he was appointed military priest of the First Battalion of Volunteers and moved to Iași.

## On Politics and Romanian Politicians

**T**HE INFORMATION he recorded in his journal for 1918 concerned his meetings with his circle of friends, very few at that time, because of his relatively long stay in Independența. He also wrote about his visits to Iași or Galați. In Iași he met the colonel and future General State Leonte, with whom he discussed the actions of the politicians. An honest man, the vicar did not hesitate to criticize the attitude of some politicians. For example, on 29 August/11 September 1918, he noted: “I expressed the joy that the liberals remain standing because it is enough for the conservatives to compromise themselves. The liberals, even if they are sinful, are at least good Romanians.”<sup>10</sup> Despite these views, the vicar was not a supporter of any political party. He praised and criticized to the same extent politicians of all political colors.

The uncertain situation on the battlefronts, the fear of the future, the perception that the dream of Transylvania’s union was becoming more and more distant, led Iacob Popa to express his desire to become a Romanian citizen even if the union had not yet been achieved, as early as 24 August / 6 September 1918. His entry in the journal was actually made when the bill concerning the granting of citizenship of Transylvanian refugees to the Kingdom was being discussed.<sup>11</sup>

The same uncertain future was the topic of several discussions he had in Iași with the journalist Marius Theodorian-Carada (1868-1949). In August / September 1918 the Romanian media in Iași were discussing various solutions for the future of Romania. Among these, Iacob Popa also mentioned that Greater Romania, led by King Ferdinand I, was envisaged to join an Austrian confederation as an independent kingdom<sup>12</sup>. The diary's author, however, ruled out this solution, considering it a dangerous one. He thus argued against Theodorian-Carada, an advocate of this theory, who believed that by having the same ruler as Austria, the Romanians in Transylvania could be more easily supported.<sup>13</sup>

He received the news of the Austro-Hungarian initiative to invite all belligerents to peace talks with unconcealed enthusiasm. Iacob Popa expressed his hope that the entire Romanian political class would become aware of the importance of the moment and act as such. "And what shall we do, Lord, to ensure the full success of our cause at this crucial moment. Let us have faith and hope in the help of God, who will enlighten our leading men, so that when the time comes they act as one. I think that the best thing for us would be to have, at the right time, a national government of all parties and to be strong, with the army ready."<sup>14</sup> He was convinced that favorable results could be achieved only through a concerted effort. To get God's support in this respect, he also celebrated on the next day, 3 /16 September 1918, a mass in Iași, "for the success of the Romanian people."

Paying attention to the movements on the Romanian political scene, Popa wrote about the changes in government and the attitude of the members of the royal family. The news that Alexandru Marghiloman was to be replaced from his position as leader of the government led him to express his confidence in the politician so criticized by some. For example, on 24 September / 7 October 1918, he commented on the invitation of the Prime Minister in Bucharest by the German High Command: "I have no fear that these people will not meet the high standards of their position."<sup>15</sup> Actually, even after he was replaced with General Constantin Coandă, the Greek Catholic cleric continued to support Marghiloman<sup>16</sup>, about whom he continued to record various pieces of news. In comparison, the other Prime Ministers are barely mentioned. The explanation probably resides in the fact that the conservative politician had opposed the removal of King Ferdinand I, adopting a reserved position, even towards the German authorities that had taken up residence in Bucharest.<sup>17</sup>

Among the Romanian politicians he met during this period of refuge we find Alexandru C. Cuza, with whom he shared the same ideas, as he himself said. Unhappy with the political class in Bucharest, in a discussion with him, Iacob Popa expressed his conviction that the historical parties would disappear because they were, in his opinion, a catastrophe. He was equally certain that the politicians of Transylvania would not join these political parties.<sup>18</sup> In fact, the vicar was convinced that after the union and after the adoption of the electoral and agrarian laws, a government would be formed with people who had not been members of the historical parties. His analysis and intuition were, however, totally wrong, as time and history have demonstrated.

## The Status of the Greek Catholic Church in the New Context

**A**S A member of the Greek Catholic hierarchy in Transylvania, Iacob Popa was always paying attention to the discussions about the church to which he belonged. In his journal he expressed at one point the discontent because he could not participate in the debates initiated by the National Liberal Party regarding the situation of the Greek Catholic confession in a possible Greater Romania. In that context, the vicar spoke of Ion Gheorghe Duca who wanted to discuss the matter with Father Ioan Bălan, Greek Catholic dean of Bucharest at that time.<sup>19</sup> For the author of the journal, the attention given by the politician to the history of the church union, as well as to the dogmatic differences between the two Romanian Churches in Transylvania, was a good sign. The Greek Catholic vicar hoped that the discussions would come to the conclusion that the church-inspired regeneration of the Romanians could only be achieved by joining the Catholic Church. It was an explainable solution, if we are to read it from the vantage point of the training and status of the author.

The mission of the priests was another topic that Iacob Popa touched upon in his diary. Through a pertinent analysis, the cleric reviewed the activities that a priest should insist on at the time. In a conversation with Father Bălan, on 26 November / 3 December 1918, when he told him that once he returned to Transylvania he would get into politics, the vicar answered sharply that the Uniate priests had no reason to get into politics, because there was no longer any need to support the national struggle. In his view, at that moment the duty of the clergy had to be primarily pastoral. Moreover, their activities were also to expand in social and cultural fields. Once these goals were met, the Greek Catholic Church, he considered, had only advantages.<sup>20</sup>

### Bessarabia and Bukovina

**H**E CAREFULLY and enthusiastically recorded the special events he witnessed during 1918, even if indirectly. He received the declarations of union of Bessarabia and Bukovina with joy, but also with melancholy. He considered them to be the precursor stages of the union with Transylvania. In his diary, on 4 / 17 September 1918, he inserted a letter addressed to Ion Pelivan, a deputy of Iași Second Constituency, known as the leader of the Romanian national movement in Bessarabia, which he claimed was not published because of the censorship. After the province joined Romania, on 27 March 1918, the Bessarabian politician, elected a deputy in the Great Romanian Parliament, continued to fight for the practical implementation of the Country Council's decisions and for consolidating the union.<sup>21</sup> With admiration, Iacob Popa expressed his appreciation for the one who had been elected deputy as a "son of Bessarabia". The entry is rich in symbols. The vicar believed that the presence of the Bessarabian MPs in the Romanian Legislature sealed the union of the province with the mother country<sup>22</sup> and, at the same time, represented an impetus for the Transylvanian Romanians.

Later on, Bukovina's declaration of union, read on 15 / 28 November 1918, would further sensitize the Greek Catholic cleric. Reading the news about the "joining of Bukovina to Romania, which took place in a great gathering of Romanians held in Cernăuți under the leadership of the knight of Flondor," made him think of the impending union of Transylvania. The enthusiasm brought about by the information received led him to want to be present at the center of the action, in Iași<sup>23</sup>. Eventually, he managed to head off to what was then the capital of both Moldavia and Romania.

## And Still, Transylvania

**T**HROUGHOUT HIS journey through Romania and Russia, his thoughts always stayed with Transylvania and its situation. He kept himself informed by reading every newspaper he found. He asked his colleagues who had remained in the province to send newspapers, allowing him to keep in touch at least in this manner with the developments in the area. Quite often, sadness or hopelessness overwhelmed him when reading the news. In September 1918, for example, he noted the rumor that Austria-Hungary was federalizing in the national sense, but he had no confidence in Hungary.<sup>24</sup> His information was not wrong, since on 3 / 16 October Emperor Charles I launched the manifesto proposing to federalize the Empire, without any mention of the rights of the Romanians.<sup>25</sup>

The leaders of the Transylvanian national movement are also present in the pages of the diary of the Greek Catholic Vicar. Thus, we learn that Ștefan Cicio Pop was summoned by the emperor to an audience<sup>26</sup>. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod was mentioned in the context of the reading of the declaration presented to the Parliament in Budapest. The news that reached him only three days later, on 8 / 21 October 1918, determined him to say: "I feel great satisfaction in this, because this act does not seem to me to be less than the declaration of war of Romania".<sup>27</sup> In fact, the same enthusiasm was expressed by many politicians in Romania. I.G. Duca considered, for example, that this statement was the signal of the liberation of the Transylvanian Romanians.<sup>28</sup>

A few days later, on 12 / 25 October 1918, in his diary the Transylvanian vicar masterfully outlined his creed, shared in fact by many Transylvanians:

the ideal of our political struggles has always been the unification of the entire Romanian nation in one kingdom. It would be the greatest absurdity to have two Romanian countries that could be but still are not one. Thus, D. Vaida's statement is the beginning of the achievement of our political program and aspirations, which since 1848 have been, after all, nothing but the unification of the nation. From this point of view, the declaration of the Romanian National Party made by Vaida is a political act as important as the declaration of war by Romania.<sup>29</sup>

The thirst to read news about the events in Transylvania increased as time passed. He hoped the Romanian army would be mobilized to enter once more in his native province and liberate it once and for all<sup>30</sup>. In the same manner, his optimism also evolved. At the end of October 1918, he was convinced that the day he would return to Transylvania

was approaching. That is why he began to take steps to be appointed military priest to a volunteer regiment with which to return to Făgăraș and to share the fulfillment of what had been the Romanians' dream for generations<sup>31</sup>.

The increasingly frequent contacts of the Transylvanian political leaders with the Romanian authorities in Iași in November 1918 were highlighted by Iacob Popa in his diary. The presence in Iași of Lieutenant Popovici, of lawyer, Ioan Boeriu and Laurențiu Oanea, sent by Alexandru Vaida-Voevod and Teodor Mihali, was not overlooked. The information received from the officer on 31 October / 13 November 1918 animated him. The description of the situation in Transylvania, where the Romanian flag was flown everywhere and where the people spoke with great happiness about the union and about Greater Romania, put him in a euphoric state<sup>32</sup>.

Another episode recorded in the diary was the encounter with Captain Victor Precup. The vicar had learned that he was the officer who had received the mission to fly to Blaj to take documents from the Iași government to the Central Romanian National Council. From the talks with him, Iacob Popa also found out that the Romanians in Transylvania had already organized themselves in national committees and guards<sup>33</sup>. A few days later the two met again. The Greek Catholic cleric visited the officer in Iași on 12 / 25 November 1918 and learned about the organization of a Great National Assembly in Alba Iulia, where the union of Transylvania with Romania was to be proclaimed. Moreover, the officer informed him that at the meeting it was estimated that several hundred thousand people were to participate, but also a squadron of 6 airplanes, which would take off from Iași.

## 1 December 1918 and the Romanian Delegation in Bucharest

**B** EING UNABLE to be present at the Great National Assembly in Alba Iulia that proclaimed the union of Transylvania with Romania, Vicar Iacob Popa wanted to be present at least at the reception of the Transylvanian Delegation bringing the act of union. Consequently, he departed from the town where he resided, Independența, towards Bucharest. Having arrived in Brăila, he boarded the train that was taking the Prime Minister, General Constantin Coandă, the members of the General Staff, but also of the French Mission, as well as a Bukovina delegation consisting of Iancu Flondor, Ion Nistor, the Metropolitan Bishop Vladimir Repta. From the discussions with his fellow travellers, the Greek Catholic vicar learned about the Cernăuți national assembly that had decided the union "without any condition of Bukovina with Romania."<sup>34</sup>

The participation at the Bucharest celebrations was presented in detail, as it was only natural. The whole ceremony held on 18 November / 1 December 1918 impressed him. In his own style, he noted: "the passing of the troops headed by the sovereigns was something magnificent, and the audience was excited, acclaiming and throwing flowers."<sup>35</sup> Speaking to various officers, he found out that his battalion would leave Bucharest only at the end of the month. However, he decided to visit the garrison on 21 November / 4 December 1918. He approached the soldiers, confessing his joy at being able to return with them to his native places<sup>36</sup>.

The gesture he made on the same day together with a group of officers once again highlighted the loyalty of Vicar Iacob Popa to the royal family of Romania. He decided that it was the right time to pay his respects at the tomb of Prince Mircea, the youngest son of King Ferdinand and of Queen Mary, who had died on 2 November 1916, overcome by typhoid fever. On the plate attached to the wreath placed on the tomb by the group of Transylvanian Romanians it was written: “To Prince Mircea, [from the] Transylvanian volunteers, First Battalion, Avram Iancu.” In his opinion, the little prince deserved this act of piety because he was part of a dynasty that had managed to free Transylvanians from “centuries-old subjugation.”<sup>37</sup>

He wanted to prolong his presence in Bucharest until the arrival of the Transylvanian delegation, which he intended to meet. That is why he inquired frequently about the exact date of its arrival. With some surprise he also found out the reason for the delay. The most frequently invoked one was that Alexandru Vaida-Voevod had become ill with the flu<sup>38</sup>. Finally, on 30 November / 13 December it was announced that the Transylvanian delegation was coming to the capital. Together with the colonel and the major of the Regiment, he went to the train station, where the authorities were gathering. Everything was prepared in a festive way: the flags of all the Allies were flown, fir branches were placed at the gate of the reception hall, and a carpet was laid down to the first platform. The ministers led by Prime Minister Ion I. C. Brătianu began to arrive.

In the entire diary, the description of the Transylvanian delegation’s reception occupied an important space. The emotion with which the episode was penned down also transpires from his writing. The Transylvanian officials had been welcomed by all those present at the train station. The Orthodox Bishop Miron Cristea, The Greek Catholic Bishop Iuliu Hossu, Vasile Goldiș and Alexandru Vaida-Voevod attracted everyone’s attention<sup>39</sup>. The Vicar, however, focused his attention on Bishop Hossu, about whom he noted: “He made a desolate impression on me, compared to Cristea.” The comparison of the two hierarchs explains the statement: the Orthodox bishop offered the typical image of the Romanian priest, having a long beard, his hair starting to turn grey. So he was the “true embodiment of a Romanian priest”. Unlike him, Bishop Hossu was young, clean shaven, so he presented the “image of a Catholic bishop, very far from that of a Romanian priest.” The author of the journal expressed the fear that this detail would influence the perception of the Romanian Uniate Church<sup>40</sup>.

This portrayal of Bishop Iuliu Hossu should not be surprising. Vicar Iacob Popa did not personally know the hierarchy, a fact that he admitted. Moreover, he knew, as a result of the discussions he had had with the Romanian intellectuals and politicians, how important was the first contact of the Greek Catholic ecclesiastical authorities with the political environment in Bucharest. Then we must not forget the personal experience of the vicar who, as a person extremely familiar with the realities beyond the Carpathians, knew how important the first impression was and how sensitively the issues concerning the Greek Catholic Church had to be addressed. At that time there was little debate about the status of this ecclesiastical institution. All these aspects, in conjunction, explain the vicar’s remark in the diary, for whom any gesture, any outfit that did not fit the canons or in customs of the Oriental church was a drawback.

## Conclusions

THE JOURNAL, defined as a window that gives one the opportunity to look at the past, is, in this case, the testimony of the way in which a member of the Romanian ecclesiastical elite in Transylvania, present at that time in Iași and Bucharest, perceived the year 1918, the end of the Great War, but also the unification of the Romanian provinces with the mother country. Therefore, his notes can be regarded as documents of high value, because they give details about the situation in Iași or Galați, about some political decisions, presented in terms of the relations he had in the military and political circles, but also about political actors. On the other hand, the reader is presented with a carousel of emotions. The author did not hesitate to express his emotions, joys and fears. Although subjective, stemming from the personal experience of the author, the diary of the Greek Catholic vicar, through its details, completes the fresco of this great event in the history of the Romanian nation.

By analyzing the journal of Vicar Iacob Popa, we wanted to contribute not with an individual example, but with an event that marked the society to which the author belonged. Thus, through these accounts, we become participants in the events of 1918 and, in particular, in those that marked the formation of Greater Romania. We can see both the perspective of a Transylvanian “wanderer” through his country, Iacob Popa, of Romanian nationality, but a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as the events that preceded or succeeded the 18 November / 1 December 1918 moment and which marked the fulfillment of the Romanian dream.



## Notes

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7. Ioana Elena Ignat, *Viața cotidiană în Făgăraș în anul 1916. Însemnările vicarului Iacob Popa*, Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2011, p.11.

8. Arhivele Naționale Serviciul Județean Cluj (hereafter ANSJ Cluj), *Fond personal Iacob Popa*, doc. 52/1919, f.1.
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11. ANSJ Cluj, coll. *Biblioteca Centrală Blaj*, doc. 292, f. 271 v.
12. ANSJ Cluj, coll. *Biblioteca Centrală Blaj*, doc. 292, f. 277v.
13. ANSJ Cluj, coll. *Biblioteca Centrală Blaj*, doc. 292, f. 278v.
14. ANSJ Cluj, coll. *Biblioteca Centrală Blaj*, doc. 292, f. 279v.
15. ANSJ Cluj, coll. *Biblioteca Centrală Blaj*, doc. 292, f. 300r.
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19. ANSJ Cluj, coll. *Biblioteca Centrală Blaj*, doc. 292, f. 302v.
20. ANSJ Cluj, coll. *Biblioteca Centrală Blaj*, doc. 292, f. 348v.
21. *Ion Pelivan: istoric al mișcării de eliberare națională din Basarabia*, eds. Ion Constantin, Ion Negrei and Gheorghe Negru, Bucharest: Editura Biblioteca Bucureștilor, 2012, p. 47. See <http://basarabia-bucovina.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Ioan-Pelivan-Istoric-al-Miscarii-de-Eliberare-Nationala-din-Basarabia.pdf>, accessed on 7.03.2018.
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37. ANSJ Cluj, coll. *Biblioteca Centrală Blaj*, doc. 292, f. 344v.
38. ANSJ Cluj, coll. *Biblioteca Centrală Blaj*, doc. 292, f. 351v.
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**Abstract**

## Aspects of 1918 from the Journal of a Theologian

The Great Union of 1918 has sparked over time the interest of many specialists. Approached from various perspectives, the topic is always current, and new sources are added to it. In the vast process of the exhaustive reconstruction of the event, which marked the establishment of Great Romania, the memoirs and journals of the participants constitute an important historiographical source. Starting from these premises, the present paper aims to highlight the manner in which was perceived, against the backdrop of a high expectations horizon, the Union of 1918 by the Făgăraș vicar forane, Iacob Popa (1872-1937). His testimonies are all the more interesting because, due to his favourable attitude towards the Romanian army, considered to be treason by the Hungarian authorities, the Greek-Catholic cleric had to flee to Romania on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1916. Aware that he is part in a major historical translation, he wrote daily rigorously in his diary. During his trip through the Romanian territory, and later through the Russian territory, as in May 1917 he left for Russia, having been appointed to the recruitment committee of the Transylvanian volunteers, Iacob Popa constantly paid attention to the events on the fronts and especially to the situation in Transylvania. Present in Iași when the Great Union of 1<sup>st</sup> December 1918 took place, he marked the episode in his accounts. Although subjectively, thanks to the author's personal experience, the diary of the Greek Catholic Vicar opens a new window through which we can look at the past from a unique perspective, designed to complete the fresco of the great event in the history of the Romanian nation.

**Keywords**

war journal, World War I, Transylvania, Great Union