

NICOLAE LUPU – TEACHER AND CONDUCTOR (1897-1981)

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SUMMARY. The present study approaches the history of Romanian education in the town of Sebeș – Alba during the first half of the 20th century. The paper considers Nicolae Lupu, a teacher of several schools in town, who contributed to the promotion of cultural and artistic values among the Romanian community in the area. The information referring to the teacher Nicolae Lupu comes mostly from documents found in the funds of the *Sebeș Orthodox Parish* and *Astra* from the Alba County Service of the Romanian National Archives. The material was organized chronologically, a process permeated with inherent difficulties due to the lack of information which would allow for the drawing of a complete professional trajectory.

Keywords: professor, conductor, choir, Orthodox, document, parish, archive.

Nicolae Lupu – Master of Ceremonies of the cultural and artistic life of Sebeș-Alba

According to a document comprising the members of the parish council of the Sebeș Orthodox Parish dated June 5, 1948, Nicolae Lupu was born on April 6, 1897 in Răhău, Alba County, as the son of Ioan and Maria². The mentioned document also states that he was a Conservatory graduate and that, at that moment, he was living in Sebeș, at 14 I. Paraschiv street³ (**annex 1**).

On September 26, 1922 the “state middle school in Sebeș-village” took the furniture of the “former Romanian Orthodox confessional school”.

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² From the testimony of Mr. Ioan Albu, one of the members of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* choir, we find that Nicolae Lupu had three siblings: Paraschiva, Vasile și Maria.

³ The Alba County Service of the Romanian National Archives, *Sebeș Orthodox Parish* fund, file 1/1948, page 206. Related to the teacher’s address, file 1/1943, page 118, from the *Astra* fund can also be consulted.

On this occasion, a minute was made to mention the furniture articles, signed by representatives both institutions involved. From the civil school, the document was signed by its principal, Silviu Cărpinișanu, and by the teacher Nicolae Lupu⁴.

On November 6, 1928, as the conductor of the church choir, Nicolae Lupu writes a note mentioning the expenses involved by the preparation of the choir scores for the blessing of the church⁵ (**annex 2**). The note divides the sums into two categories: “the paper for scores and for the lithograph” and “the writing of the notes for the liturgy score and the 25 copies”⁶. As a conductor, he also conducted, for a short period of time, the choir of the “Sfântul Gheorghe Society”⁷ (**annex 3**).

Nicolae Lupu was a member of the committee of the Sebeș *Division of Astra*, being mentioned as such in the summons of a meeting on September 17, 1936, 5 o'clock PM, at the *House of Romanian Intellectuals* in town⁸.

According to certain lists from 1936, 1937 and 1939 comprising members of the Sebeș Orthodox parish, Nicolae Lupu was living at 15 *Ioan*

⁴ Idem, *Sebeș Orthodox Parish* fund, file 2/1922-1938, page 2.

⁵ The blessing of the “Resurrection” Church in Sebeș (also known today as the “big church”, as it is the largest Orthodox church in town).

⁶ Ibidem, file 1/1928, page 236. The two activities cost 500 lei, 177 lei for the first one and 323 lei for the second. The sum was probably taken from the church treasury. We cannot be certain whether the 25 copies of the score imply an equal number of choir members.

⁷ We cannot state with precision whether the names – “church choir” and “choir of the Sf. Gheorghe Society” – refer to the same choral ensemble or not. What is certain is the fact that the choral ensemble which activated at the Resurrection church in Sebeș is known as the “Sfântul Gheorghe Choir”. An argument in favour of the fact that two choral ensembles were identical is that there are no documents attesting that the professor received, in the same year, distinct salaries for each ensemble. In exchange for his activity as a conductor, Nicolae Lupu received adequate payments. For conducting the church choir in 1930, the professor was handed, on December 30, the sum of 3.000 lei [*Ibidem*, file 1/1930, page 292]. The following year, on February 27, Nicolae Lupu received from father V. Popa the sum of 2.000 lei as payment for instructing the choir of the “Sfântului Gheorghe Society” [*Ibidem*, file 1/1931, not numbered]. According to practice, the sum probably repaid the activity of Nicolae Lupu in the year previous to the receipt. We highlight the fact that the two documents referring to the choral activity of Nicolae Lupu in 1930 express differently his contribution. The receipt for 3.000 lei refers to “conducting” the choir, while the other one refers to “instructing” it. Of course, the two activities are complementary and, probably, they were both part of the conductor’s attributions. A receipt dated May 3, 1932 attests that for conducting the choir of the Sfântul Gheorghe Society in 1931, Nicolae Lupu was given the sum of 3.000 lei [*Ibidem*, file 1/1932-1935, not numbered]. He is given the same sum of money for conducting the choir in 1932 [*Ibidem*, file 1/1933, not numbered. The receipt is dated June 26, 1933].

⁸ Idem, *Astra* fund, file 1/1936, not numbered. On the summons there is no confirmation signature besides his name, as in the case of other members (nevertheless, he is not the only one in this situation).

Paraschiv Street⁹. Similar documents dated 1940, 1942, 1944, 1945 and 1948 attest a change in his address – 14 *Ioan Paraschiv* Street¹⁰.

As a conductor, the teacher led several choral ensembles. Therefore, in the general report on 1938 of the Sebeş parish, Nicolae Lupu is mentioned as conductor of the *Sf. Gheorghe Choir* and of the *choir of the Romanian craftsmen*. Here is the fragment mentioning the above: “We mention the sacrifice made for the holly church by our choirs /The Sf. Gheorghe choir and, at funerals, the choir of the Romanian craftsmen/. We thank on this occasion the conductor of these choirs, Prof. Nicolae Lupu, and their members”¹¹.

The contribution of prof. Nicolae Lupu to the development of choral singing in the Sebeş area resides not only in the number of choral ensembles he conducted, but also in the impact of his personality on them. Documentary sources attest that his presence as a conductor was decisive in their involvement in artistic events. The argument for this is a letter dated August 3, 1943, where the arch-priest Vasile Oană was asking Professor Eugen Hulea to postpone one of his lectures to be held in Sebeş on Sunday, August 8, 1943. The reason of the postponement – “Nicolae Lupu, the music teacher, who is in charge of the artistic section, had to urgently leave town and will not be back until the end of August”¹².

That same year, on September 27, the arch-priest Vasile Oană, as president of the Sebeş division of *Astra*, draws up a certificate presenting the rich activity of Professor Nicolae Lupu. According to the mentioned document, the teacher “has performed, June through July of the present year, community work at the “Astra” Cultural Association, Sebeş division”. He has instructed the Sf. Gheorghe youth choir in Sebeş, preparing the musical program for the cultural meetings in July and August 1943 in the villages of the Sebeş division [...]. The choral works presented at the cultural meetings harmonised very well with the general program, stimulating the national pride of the audience”¹³ (**annex 4**). Due to this rich activity of the teacher, arch-priest Vasile Oană requested a postponement of his being called to serve in the army¹⁴.

⁹ Idem, *Sebeş Orthodox Parish* fund, file 1/1936, not numbered; file 1/1926, page 270; file 1/1939, page 569. The street has different names in the documents: Ioan Paraschiv, Ion Paraschiv or I. Paraschiv.

¹⁰ Ibidem, file 1/1940, not numbered; file 1/1936, not numbered; file 1/1944, page 316; file 1/1945, pages 320, 364 and 394; file 1/1948, page 481. Only the number of the house is modified in comparison to the previous address – 14 instead of 15.

¹¹ Ibidem, file 1/1939, page 100.

¹² Idem, *Astra* fund, file 1/1943, page 72. Lectures organized by *Astra* in order to promote and cultivate the values of the Romanian people. These lectures comprised an exposition on a previously given subject and an artistic program, most often a choral recital.

¹³ Ibidem, page 78.

¹⁴ We have no information on the result of this request.

Aside from the events he took part in as choir conductor, Nicolae Lupu also participated in cultural meetings as a lecturer. On June 27, 1943 he held, in Lancrăm, a lecture on „Soldierly education for young men”¹⁵. The date and theme of this lecture, as well as of other similar ones were established in a meeting of the members of the committee of the Sebeș *division* of *Astra* held on Thursday, May 27, 1943, at the Sebeș town hall. On the summons of this meeting Nicolae Lupu appears with the name and signature which confirms his participation¹⁶.

On October 11, 1942 in Lancrăm, was held the General Assembly of the Sebeș *Division* of *Astra*. The agenda also included elections for the members of the management committee of the *Division*, and Nicolae Lupu was mentioned among them as controller/inspector¹⁷. According to documents, the mandate of the committee was from 1942 until 1946. In a similar meeting, on July 4, 1943 in Răhău, Professor Nicolae Lupu was named as a delegate to the General Assembly of *Astra* which was to be held in Sibiu¹⁸.

Among *Astra*'s initiatives was the founding of a girls village school. As a member in the committee of this association and as a professor of the state middle school in Sebeș, Nicolae Lupu was named among the teachers of this school, handling, together with other teachers, the national and patriotic education of the students¹⁹. The completion of courses at this school was marked by festivities and a meal, on Sunday, February 27, 1944, 12,30 o'clock, at the primary school of State-Centre²⁰. Nine persons were invited to the meal, Nicolae Lupu among them, and he confirmed participation²¹.

On April 10, 1944 arch-priest Vasile Oană writes a letter requesting the commander of the Alba Territorial Circle to postpone the enlistment of Nicolae Lupu in the army²². In the case that would not be possible, the arch-priest asks that the teacher be given leave “so that during this remaining week until Easter he could come to Sebeș in order to hold his evening choir

¹⁵ *Idem*, *Astra* fund, file 1/1943, pages 115 and 119.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, page 177.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, page 174. We also identified a list with the names of the 21 members of the committee in file 1/1944, page 144, of the same fund.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, page 226 verso.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, file 1/1944, pages 72 and 74. Page 73 of the same file contains the mention “Mr. Nicolae Lupu should be asked to conduct the choir”. Considering that the page is a draft and that, before the mention quoted, it refers to a “meal for the guests” we cannot precisely state whether Nicolae Lupu was asked to conduct the girls' choir or to participate at the meal with one of his sold choral ensembles.

²⁰ *Idem*, *Astra* fund, file 1/1944, page 92. The festivity was mentioned on the summons of the committee of the Sebeș division of *Astra* on February 23, 1944.

²¹ *Ibidem*, page 55.

²² The teacher was enlisted on April 10, 1944, the same day the letter was written. Therefore, it might have been taken to the destination by its subject, Nicolae Lupu.

rehearsals for the feast of the Lord’s Resurrection”²³. To support his request, the author of the letter mentions that the Sebeș-Alba Orthodox Parish has managed to reorganize its choir with great efforts, after it had interrupted its activity due to the enlistment of its members. The choral ensemble was 22 years old, being supported by the “diligence of Mr. Nicolae Lupu, music teacher at the Sebeș middle school and conductor of this choir”²⁴.

The request is renewed by another letter, dated June 7, 1944, where arch-priest Vasile Oană asks for “Professor Nicolae Lupu, enlisted at the Alba Territorial Circle, to be let go on June 12 the present year, so that he could continue choir rehearsals and complete the repertoire now, before the holyday”²⁵.

The choral activity of Professor Nicolae Lupu is beautifully rendered in a certificate written at his request, on August 14, 1945, by arch-priest Vasile Oană²⁶. The document contains references to the accomplishments of the teacher as a conductor of the Sebeș parish choir (**annex 5**). According to the quoted source, Nicolae Lupu funded and has been conducting the church choir since 1920, participating with it “in all our religious and cultural events, in national festivities and in all festive occasions, raising the prestige of the church and of Romanian values”. At the same time, “as a director of the Sf. Gheorghe Society of Romanian youth in Sebeș, professor Nicolae Lupu has always kept in close contact with the people, guiding it to cultivate social harmony and working hard to destroy social barriers”. Finally, the document certifies that the teacher was not involved in any kind of politics, “but, according to his own confession, the politics which filled his soul as a peasant’s son, was to make all sacrifices necessary to raise the peasants and the workers, proven by the numerous cultural festivities, concerts and theatrical events organized with the help and for the peasants and the workers”.

A similar document was written by the priest Ioan Besoiu on February 26, 1947, for Nicolae Lupu to obtain a transfer as a teacher from the State High School in Sebeș. According to the source, Nicolae Lupu “has activated and continues to activate in the “Sf. Gheorghe Romanian youth society” in Sebeș as a president of the artistic section and as a conductor of the Sf. Gheorghe choir. The choir was funded by him in 1923”²⁷

²³ Idem, *Sebeș Orthodox Parish fund*, file 1/1944, page 95.

²⁴ Ibidem, page 95.

²⁵ Ibidem, page 148.

²⁶ Ibidem, file 1/1945, page 164.

²⁷ Apparently “the church choir” and “the Sf. Gheorghe choir” are different choral ensembles. The first one was funded in 1920 (see file 1/1945, page 164) and the latter, three years later (1923). The funding year is the only important argument opposing the thesis that they are one and the same choir, their repertoire and activity being approximately the same. What is interesting is that none of the documents attesting the choral activity of the teacher mention both choral ensembles.

and he has since been active, by giving answers in the Holy Liturgy on Sundays and holydays in the Holy Church, in the official Te-Deums and by organizing cultural religious concerts and festivities"²⁸ (**annexes 6 and 7**).

The last documentary mention of Professor Nicolae Lupu we identified is one of his letters where, together with Isidor Lupu, on February 19, 1957, he addresses the Orthodox parish office in Sebeș. The two, as nephews/grandsons of Ioan Oncescu's family, express their dissatisfaction related to the fact that the church council had discussed the selling of the Oncescu family crypt. In their opinion the gesture was totally inappropriate, being considered ingratitude to those who donated all their belongings to the church, „and therefore deserve to be left to rest in peace”²⁹.

As he was not married, Nicolae Lupu was cared for, in old age, by his nephew Gheorghe Popa and his wife Rodica from Sebeș, passing away on March 31, 1981³⁰.

Conclusions

The brief information that was given about Nicolae Lupu, attests his rich activity in the service of the Church, the school and the Romanian community in Sebeș and surrounding areas. As a music teacher and choir conductor, he inspired many generations. He tried to nourish their spiritual harmony in a period full of multiple and dramatic changes - the first half of the 20th century. He managed to achieve his noble goal only by letting the love for his people inspire his life and prevail over narrow self-interest. According to his own words, the policy that animated him - as the son of simple peasants, was to spare no sacrifice in order to raise the cultural and spiritual level of the peasantry and of the working classes.

Translated by Roxana Huza

²⁸ Ibidem, file 1/1947, page 56. According to the testimony of Ioan Albu, member of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* choir, aside from their choral activity, the members of the ensemble had also other activities such as theatre plays or dance school.

²⁹ Ibidem, file 1/1957, page 41.

³⁰ We obtained this information from the same Ioan Albu, who also mentioned the fact that Nicolae Lupu was buried in the cemetery of the church in his native village, Răhău. This fact was confirmed by the parish priest in Răhău, Nicolae Moga (now retired), and who also showed us the gravestone of the teacher. On this occasion we found that his name was not engraved on the gravestone.

ANNEXES

Annex 1

t a b l o u l

Nr. crt.	Numele și prenumele		Strada	Nr. casei	Data nașterii			Locul nașterii	Biserica	Numele părinților	Profesiunea	Funcția în cons.	Studii	Note
	Pre	Nume			Anul	Luna	Ziua							
1.	Pr. Ion Bășin	A. Șerban		11	1911	Junio	14	Băstășii	all. J. I. Ana Șerban	școl. paroh.	prezidiu		Facult. Teologie	
2.	Pr. Vasile Popa	I. Peraschiv		24	1889	Junio	29	Șerban	Tătaru-Vasile	școl. paroh.	prezidiu		Facult. Teologie	
3.	Pr. Ion Leștr	Mihnea C. Mure		80	1904	Sept.	12	Soboy	all. Gh. I. Elena	școl. paroh.				
4.	Pr. Iacob Bologă	Ștefan C. Mure		56	1904	Apr.	1	Mășpod	Sibiu	Ștefan	școl. paroh.		Facult. Teologie	
5.	Pr. Silviu Ghimțiuțan	Decobal		7	1897	Aug.	30	Mihău	all. Mănuș	Maria	școl. paroh.		Facult. de Litere	
6.	Păscu Virgil Bota	Mihai Viteaz		6	1920	mai	12	Sibiu	Sibiu	J. I. Teodora	școl. paroh.		Facult. Teologie	
7.	Ion Opincariu	I. Onoșcu		83	1894	Febr.	20	Soboy	all. Ștefan	Teodora	școl. paroh.			
8.	Dr. Ion Onișu	Mihai Viteaz		22	1893	april	2/3	Șerban		Ion	Teodora			
9.	Dr. Cornel Chitrea			14	1877	april	1	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
10.	Dr. Simeon Vulcan	Alexandri		14	1890	Febr.	5	Mășpod	Ștefan	Teodora				
11.	Ing. Gheorghe Suciu	Mihai Viteaz		76	1891	Sept.	15	Kărbant	Ștefan	Teodora				
12.	Ing. Nicolae Gărnășescu	Mășpod		2	1890	Sept.	14/1	Mășpod	Bogdan	Teodora				
13.	Dr. Ion Postescu	I. Peraschiv		19	1883	Aug.	31	Șerban	all. Ștefan	Teodora				
14.	Ieremia Frifan	Vasile Moga		54	1858	Febr.	16	Soboy	Ștefan	Teodora				
15.	Nicolae Lupa	I. Peraschiv		14	1892	April	6	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
16.	Ioan Soția	Gheorghe		7	1886	Sept.	1	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
17.	Ioan Muteș	Fotil		7	1911	April	28	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
18.	Petru Opincariu	Mășpod		27	1891	Sept.	15	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
19.	Gheorghe Mălinaria	Horea		28	1892	Sept.	27	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
20.	Ioan Vintilă	Chișreji		12	1892	Sept.	21	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
21.	Ioan Moșilă	Mihnea C. Mure		10	1892	Sept.	8	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
22.	Ioan Dumitresc Tlad	Mihnea C. Mure		10	1892	Sept.	15	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
23.	Ștefan Mășpod	Mihnea C. Mure		83	1890	Sept.	20	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
24.	Ștefan Macilă	Vasile Moga		16	1890	Sept.	20	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
25.	Petru Ticoș	A. Iancu		58	1890	Sept.	21	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
26.	Gheorghe Vintilă	Brănoșovan		7	1889	Sept.	21	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
27.	Ioan Dumitresc	Ștefan C. Mure		34	1890	Sept.	8	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
28.	Nicolae Mălinaria	Mihnea C. Mure		66	1891	Sept.	23	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
29.	Petru Moga	Sabarie Moga		76	1894	Sept.	12	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
30.	Simeon Opincariu	Andronic		28	1893	Sept.	13	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
31.	Ioan Popa	Vasile Moga		28	1895	Januar	1	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
32.	Simeon Brant	Mihnea C. Mure		42	1893	Sept.	22	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
33.	Ioan Mășpod	Fotil		56	1893	Sept.	20	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
34.	Ștefan Ștefan	Ștefan		37	1901	Sept.	22	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
35.	Ioan Ștefan	Ștefan C. Mure		82	1893	Sept.	20	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
36.	Ioan Mășpod	Legiștii		12	1893	Sept.	21	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
37.	Nicolae Șerban	Șerban		23	1893	Sept.	21	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
38.	Ilie Șerban	I. Onoșcu		18	1893	Sept.	20	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				
39.	Ștefan Mășpod	Căpâlnășu		11	1893	April	15	Șerban	Ștefan	Teodora				

8 0 6 0 9 - 4 3 0 1

5 Anul 1948 Parohia ortodoxă - română Sebeș, județ Sibiu
Past. Ion Mășpod

Table from 1948 with the members of the parish council in the Sebeș parish (Nicolae Lupa is mentioned at no. 15)

Annex 2

23/6

Nota,

Despre spesele avute cu partiturile corului la
sfântirea bisericii.

1) Hârtia de note și până litograf	177 Lei
2) Scrisul noilor până partitura de liturghie și lucrul la 25 exemplare	323 - 4 -
	500 Lei

Total

zis emise sunt Lei.

Sebes, la 6/11. 1928.

N. Lupu
prof.

Note where Professor Nicolae Lupu mentions the expenses for the choir scores

Annex 3

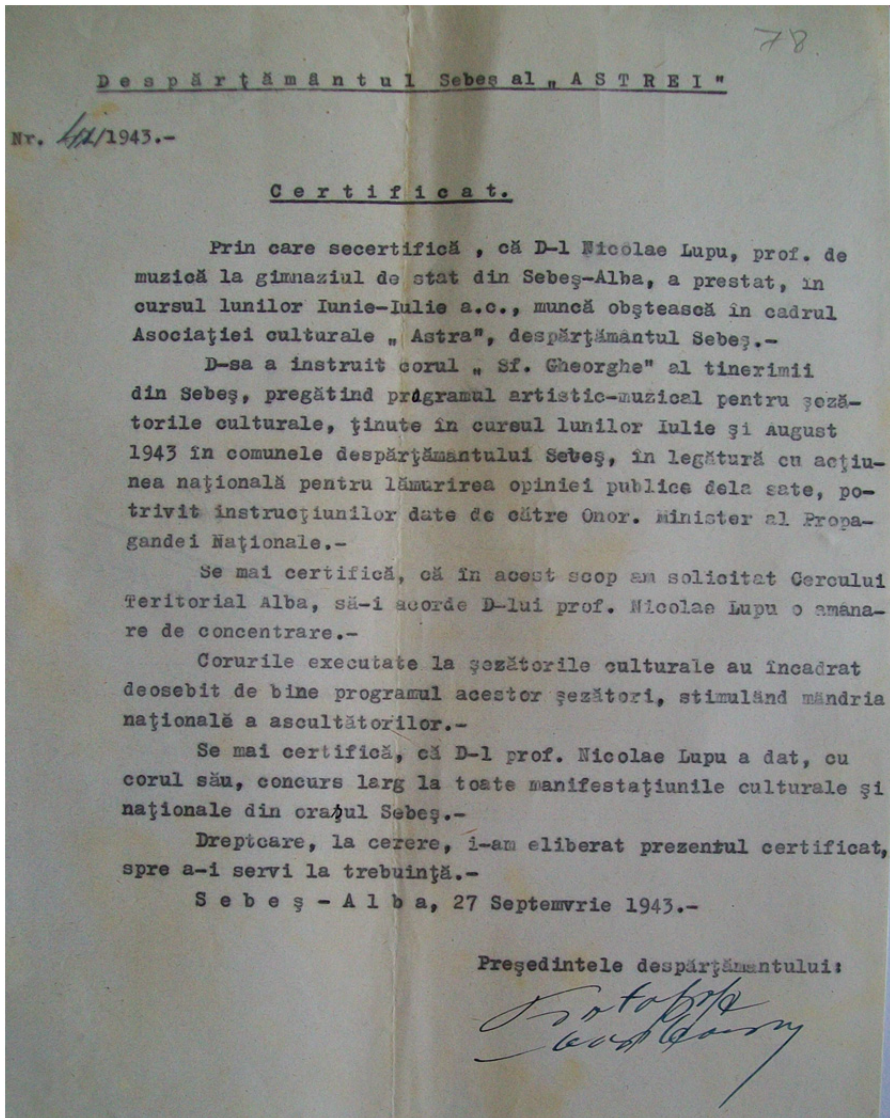
Chitanță

Despre 2000 L. zis Doacă mi lei, care sumă
subsemnatul am primit-o dela dl. părinte V. Popescu pentru
instruarea corului „Societatea Sfântului Gheorghe” ecc. ecc.
Chitoz.

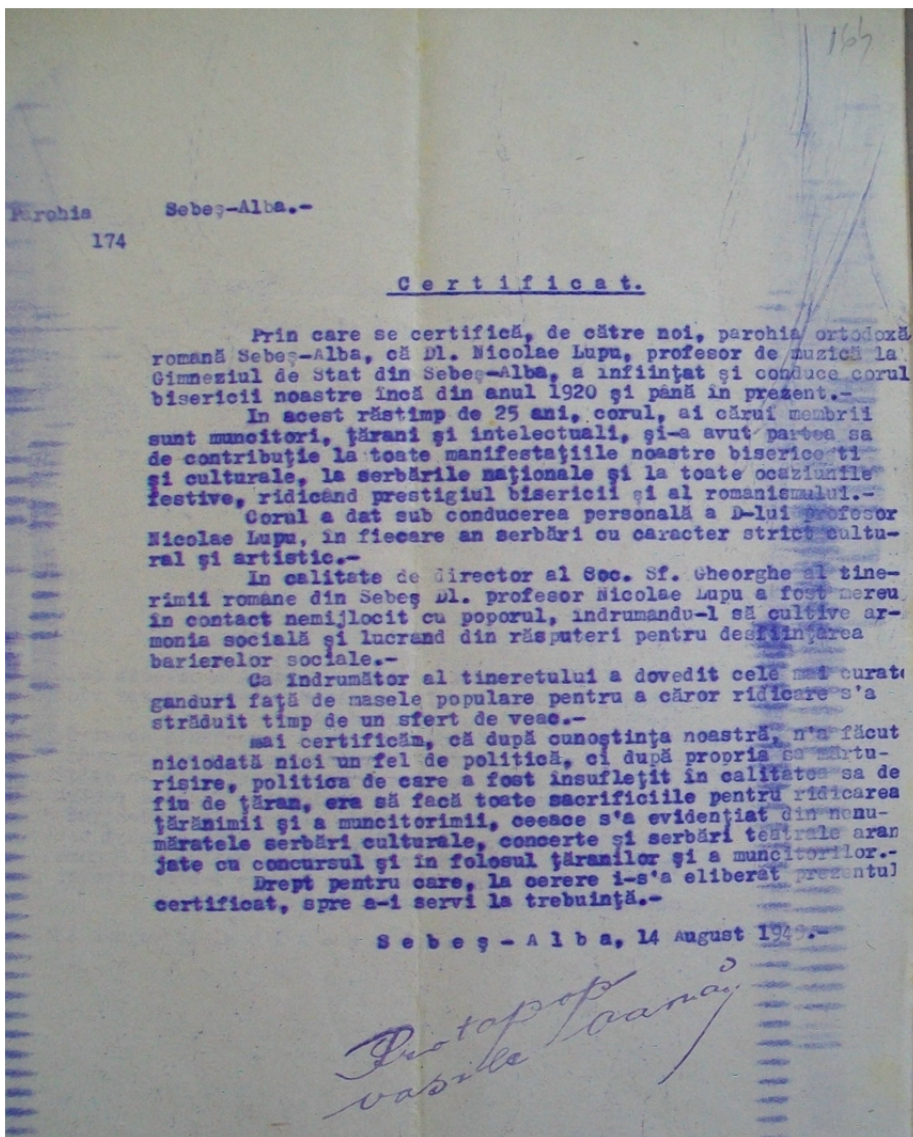
Sebes, la 27 Februarie 1931

Nicolae Lupu
profesor

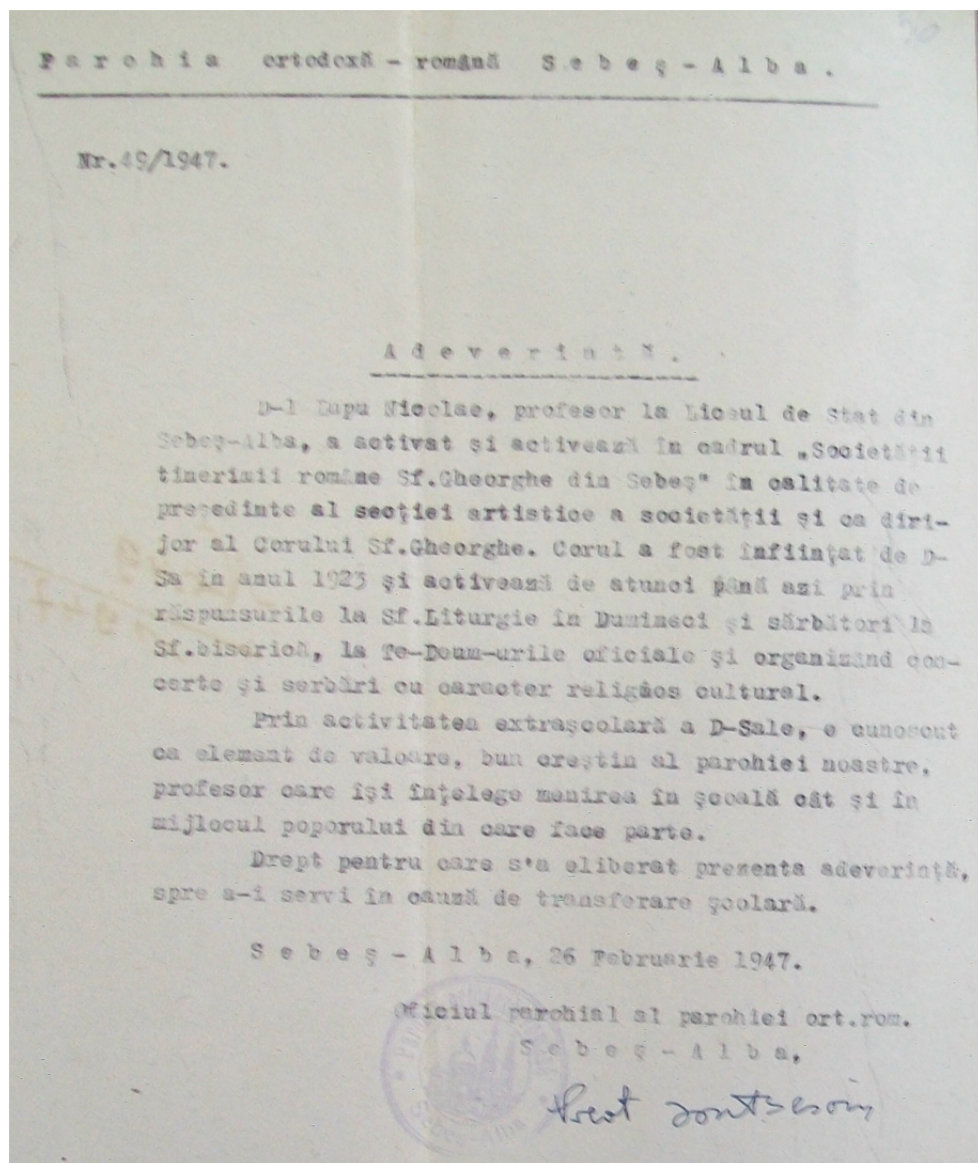
Nicolae Lupu paid for the instruction of the choir of the
Sfântul Gheorghe Society



Certificate attesting the choral activity of Nicolae Lupu



Certificate attesting the accomplishments of prof. Nicolae Lupu as a conductor of the church choir



The activity of prof. Nicolae Lupu as a conductor of the *Sf. Gheorghe* choir



Members of the theatre group in 1937 (the second from the left in the group of the 4 men in the centre is prof. Nicolae Lupu)³¹

REFERENCES

- ***, Alba County Service of the Romanian National Archives, *Sebeș Orthodox Parish* fund, files: 2/1922-1938, 1/1926, 1/1928, 1/1930, 1/1931, 1/1932-1935, 1/1933, 1/1936, 1/1939, 1/1944, 1/1945, 1/1947, 1/1948 and 1/1957.
- ***, Romanian National Archives, Alba County Service, *ASTRA* fund, files 1/1936, 1/1943 and 1/1944.

³¹ Photo taken from the personal archive of Mr. Ioan Albu, member of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* choir.