

BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
THE FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

THE GREEK-CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ALBA IULIA AND
FĂGĂRAȘ BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS (1918-1940)
DOCTORAL THESIS
(ABSTRACT)

SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR:
PHD. PROF. GEORGE CIPĂIANU

DOCTORAL STUDENT:
ANDREEA ROTCHE

CLUJ-NAPOCA
2013

Key words: Archbishopric, Archdiocese, the Greek-Roman Church, Vatican, parish, priests

Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction | 5 |
| Chapter 1: The cult regime after 1918 | 25 |
| 1.1.The situation of the Greek-Catholic Church regarding the state | 25 |
| 1.2.The discussions between Vatican and the Romanian state for closing and ratifying the Treaty (1919-1929)..... | 57 |
| 1.3.The pact from Rome | 97 |
| | |
| Chapter 2: The administrative-institutional organization of the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș during the inter-war period | 103 |
| 2.1.The constitution and evolution of the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș (1853-1918)..... | 103 |
| 2.2.The subordinate bishoprics | 123 |
| 2.3.The organization of the Greek-Catholic Church in the Old Wallachian Kingdom | 146 |
| 2.4.The Greek-Catholic Deaneries among the Seklar population | 150 |
| 2.5.The organization of the Rusyn population | 155 |
| 2.6.The Blaj Archbishopric and the Greek-Catholic Church from America..... | 156 |
| 2.7.The Greek-Catholic parishes from Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia | 163 |
| 2.8.The archdiocese and deans' synods and the administrative organization of the Archdiocese | 165 |
| 2.9. The institutions and the organizations of the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș..... | 181 |
| 2.9.1. The election of the archbishop. Election synods | 181 |
| 2.9.2.Archdiocese synods | 201 |
| 2.9.3.Deans' synods..... | 217 |
| 2.9.4.Bishops' conferences | 233 |
| 2.9.5.The metropolitan chapter | 251 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| 2.9.6.Archbishops' council..... | 252 |
| 2.9.7.Other institutions..... | 254 |
| 2.9.8.Mendicant orders..... | 260 |
| 2.9.9.Conclusions..... | 262 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Chapter 3: The priest and his parish in the Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș..... | 268 |
| 3.1.Settling in a parish..... | 275 |
| 3.2.The priest and the moral life of the parishioners | 285 |
| 3.3.The priest's obligations. The relationship with his parishioners | 305 |
| 3.4.Presbyteral associations | 331 |
| 3.5.The priests and the laymen's associations | 333 |
| 3.6.The priests and catechesis | 345 |
| 3.6.1.Catechesis..... | 345 |
| 3.6.2.The evolution of the religious system | 353 |
| 3.7.The priests and the authorities | 358 |
| 3.8.Canonical visitations. The information regarding the priests' moral and official conduct | 376 |
| 3.9.The archdiocese and deans' synods and the priest's obligations | 411 |
| 3.10.Conclusions..... | 415 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Chapter 4: Education of the priests from the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș during the inter-war period | 417 |
| 4.1. The Greek-Catholic Academy of Blaj | 421 |
| 4.1.1.Regulations..... | 421 |
| 4.1.2. The professors..... | 423 |
| 4.1.3. The conduct..... | 427 |
| 4.1.4. The financial status. Aids from the state | 427 |
| 4.1.5.The number of clergymen | 429 |
| 4.1.6. Enrolment conditions. Tuition | 435 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 4.1.7.Examinations..... | 441 |
| 4.1. 8Textbooks..... | 443 |
| 4.2.Studies abroad..... | 444 |
| 4.3.The preparatory course..... | 460 |
| 4.4.The evolution of the theological education | 461 |
| 4.5. Parochial churches | 471 |
| 4.6. Biographical drafts..... | 472 |
| 4.7.Conclusions..... | 475 |

Chapter 5:The Archdiocese of Blaj and the education

| | |
|---|-----|
| system | 477 |
| 5.1.The organization of education after The Great Union | 477 |
| 5.2.The education system and the Holy See | 490 |
| 5.3.The schools from Blaj..... | 493 |
| 5.4. Grants and aids | 514 |
| 5.5.Conclusions..... | 520 |

Chapter 6:The Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș: external and inter-confessional relations

| | |
|---|-----|
| 6.1.The relationships with the Holy See | 526 |
| 6.2.Inter-confessional relations | 553 |
| 6.2.1.The relationship with the Orthodox Church | 555 |
| 6.2.2.The relationship with the Roman-Catholic Church | 595 |
| Conclusions..... | 598 |
| Bibliography..... | 602 |

The papal bull *Ecclesiam Christi* from November 26, 1853, established the Archbishopric and metropolitan church of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș with three subsidiary bishoprics: the older Oradea bishopric (1777) and the newly formed Gherla and Lugoj bishoprics. The *Ad Apostolicam Sedem* bull, from November 26, 1853, established the

diocese of Gherla with 773 parishes and 358,850 parishioners, out of which 629 parishes from the diocese of Blaj and 144 parishes from the Rusyn bishopric of Muncaci¹. On the same day, the bishopric of Lugoj was founded through the *Ad Apostolicum Ministerium* bull.

The foundation of the metropolitan church was the result of a threefold aim according to the *Ecclesiam Christi* bull: “for the highest glory of God, The Almighty Father, for spreading the Catholic religion and for the spiritual encouragement of the Romanian people.” The previous metropolitan church of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș was thus revived and two new dioceses were established at Gherla and Lugoj, which, together with the diocese of Oradea Mare, became subsidiary to the metropolitan church. The Romanian Church United with Rome became a metropolitan province according to the Pope’s document, “a Greek-Catholic church province, united with Rome, in which Romanian language is used, autonomous and independent of the jurisdiction of any other church region, answering only to the apostolic Holy See of Rome”.²

The rights and the privileges of the Greek-Catholic metropolitan region of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș were stated in the decrees of the provincial councils from 1872 and 1882, approved by the Holy See, where its internal constitution was and where its relationships with the other churches of the Austro-Hungarian region were stated. The Prime Council declared the Greek-Catholic region of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș autonomous and independent of the jurisdiction of any church region, belonging on its own and directly to the Holy See of Rome, as it was stated in the Pope’s document in December 1853.

The relationships of the Greek-Catholic metropolitan region of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș as a private church with the other private churches was established in the bull issued by Pope Pius IX, *Ecclesiam Christi*, through which the metropolitan region with all its churches and parishes, and with all its followers was removed from the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Esztergom. There was no other ecclesiastic authority over the region, higher than the provincial synod that could be recognized besides the Holy See. It was

¹ Mircea. Păcurariu, *Istoria bisericii românești din Transilvania, Banat, Crișana și Maramureș*, Cluj-Napoca, 1992, p.323

² Jean Claude Perisset, , “Implicații canonice si ecumenice ale înființării sediului metropolitan de Făgăraș și Alba Iulia” in *Biserica Română Unită cu Roma greco-catolică. Istorie și spiritualitate*, Blaj, 2003, p. 48

not allowed that, regarding personal, parochial, church, school, functional, etc. circumstances, appeals, complaints to another ecclesiastical authority outside the region be made.³ The metropolitan region subsequently went through a change due to the dismembering of parishes given to the Hajdúdorogh diocese; the situation of these parishes was later regulated during the inter-war period.

The inter-war period registered important evolutions within the United Church and by default within the evolution of the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș, regarding both the administrative and the institutional organization.

After 1918, The United Church was integrated among the structures of the Romanian Kingdom. The Great Union of 1918 was followed by necessary measures for the achievement of the union on every level, one of the ideas of maximum importance for the evolution of the Romanian society and of the Romanian state was constituted by the settlement of the religious cult regime. The Romanian state had to clarify its relations with those cults from the united regions, which did not exist in the Old Wallachian Kingdom, and which were functioning based on the laws of the states they had belonged to before 1918. In the Old Wallachian Kingdom, there was no special law to establish the functioning of the cults. The 1866 Constitution guaranteed the freedom of the cults as long as they did not interfere with the public order and good conduct.⁴

The 1923 Constitution, the Law for the general regime of the cults and the Concord stated the principles based on which the Greek-Catholic Church would function between 1919 and 1940, principles to which the decisions of the provincial councils, the diocese conferences and the archdiocese synods were added. At first, the Greek-Catholic metropolitan church of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș had three subsidiary dioceses: the diocese of Oradea, the diocese of Gherla and the diocese of Lugoj. The territory of the church was organized in deaneries and parishes, the Concord with Vatican signed in 1927 changed the organization of the metropolitan region by founding a new diocese in the North and by moving the centre of the diocese of Gherla. Based on these stipulations of the Concord, the papal bull *Solemni Conventione* from June 5, 1930, implemented the last

³ *Conciliul Provincial al Treilea al Provinciei bisericești greco-catolice de Alba Iulia și Făgăraș ținut la anul 1900*, Tipografia Seminarului Arhidiecezan, Blaj, 1906,p. 74

⁴ Ioan Mateiu, *Dreptul bisericesc de stat în România întregită.Regimul general al cultelor*, Tipografia cărților bisericești, Bucharest, 1926, pp.24-25

reorganization of the metropolitan region of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș, founding the diocese of Maramureș. The reorganization of the metropolitan region also determined a new assignation of the deaneries from the Archdiocese, reorganized after passing 150 parishes from the Archdiocese to the diocese of Cluj-Gherla. The number of the deaneries from the Archdiocese varied between 35 deaneries in 1923, 29 deaneries in 1931 and 24 deaneries in 1937. In total, the deaneries had between 20 and 25 parishes which ensured a better administration, but there were also deaneries that exceed this number, such as the deaneries of Reghin, Târgu Mureș or Făgăraș. The number of parishes registered a rising evolution after 1918, of 740 in 1929, but after the reassignation from 1930 the parishes of the Archdiocese were reduced to 633, which contributed to a better organization and administration. The number of parishes in the Archdiocese varied between 645 parishes in 1923 and 410 in 1937. The Greek-Catholic archbishops and metropolitan priests were also preoccupied with the organization of the Greek-Catholic parishes in the Hungarian speaking regions, the Old Wallachian Kingdom and in the U.S.A. The Greek-Catholic Romanians from the Old Wallachian Kingdom were organized in the Deanery of Bucharest with 15 parishes, and an appeal was made in Rome on behalf of the Greek-Catholic Romanians from the U.S.A. regarding the foundation of an apostolic vicarage, fact that was not achieved during the researched period.

In the present paper, I have planned to accomplish a reconstitution of the history of the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș during the inter-war period and to present other aspects that were less approached: the spiritual education of priests, the relationship between the clergy and the Christian followers, the relationship with the Holy See and with the Romanian state, school policy, the administrative-institutional organization, the inter-confessional relationships.

The documentary sources used in the paper are new sources represented by archive documents, edited sources and the newspapers of that time.

The present thesis is firstly based on the archive documents, documents that came from the fund of the Romanian Metropolitan Church of Blaj United with Rome, fund kept at the Alba County Services of National Archives and the funds Nunziatura di Romania and Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari Romania, kept in the Secrete Archives of Vatican City. In addition to the archive documents, I also used other sources, among

which I can mention the metropolitan news bulletins and the published statistics of the metropolitan region. The research of the newspapers of that time was mainly based in the two press bodies which offer the most important and complete information regarding the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese during the studied period, namely *Unirea* (1918-1939) and *Cultura Creștină* (1918-1939).

The doctoral thesis has six chapters. After the introductory part in which the main works dedicated to the history of the Greek-Catholic Church during the inter-war period are mentioned and analysed, the first chapter presents the general regime of the cults after 1918. In this chapter, the relationship between the Greek-Catholic Church and the Romanian state is analysed, as well as the passing of the Law for the general regime of the cults, the signing and the ratifying of the Concord with the Holy See and the signing of the Treaty from Rome. The passing of the Law for the general regime of the cults and the signing of the Concord being topics approached in historiography, in this chapter we insisted on some information that came from documents preserved in the Secrete Archive in Vatican City, documents that emphasize the interest of the Holy See for regulating the situation of the Catholic Church in Romania.

The second chapter entitled *The administrative-institutional organization of the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș* is one of the most complex ones. This chapter is not based only on presenting the situation of the archdiocese, but also on placing the history of the Greek-Catholic archdiocese within a larger context, thus referring to the whole metropolitan region. Regarding the administrative-territorial organization of the metropolitan region of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș, the moment of the reconstitution of the archdiocese, a short history of the subsidiary dioceses, the foundation of the diocese of Maramureș are presented, which led to changes in the structure of the Archdiocese, the organization of the Greek-Catholic Church in the Old Wallachian Kingdom, the organization of Greek-Catholic deaneries in the Hungarian speaking regions and the connection with the Archdiocese of Blaj and the Greek-Catholic parishes from America. At the same time, the situation of the Greek-Catholic parishes from Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia after the Great Union was presented and also the way the administrative organization of the Archdiocese was approached in the archdiocese and deaneries' synods.

The main institutions and bodies of the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș are presented in a chapter regarding its institutional organization. The presentation of the metropolitan chapter was taken into account, as well as the Archdiocese Consistory, and issues discussed at the diocese conferences. An important place is given to the presentation of the archdiocese and deanery election synods.

The history of the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș is not limited to the administrative-institutional organization, but it also implies the role of the clergy in society. The third chapter is dedicated to the priest's activity in the parish, activity analysed from more perspectives: the priests' institution, the priests' obligations, their relationships with the Christians, the priest's role within the community, the relationships between the clergy and the authorities of the Romanian state. The priest's role in the parish was complex, as the priest was a spiritual model for the Christians, a counsellor and a mediator between the Christians' community and the authorities. After the Great Union, the Greek-Catholic priests had to deal with a special situation which opens new opportunities for their careers, but which also creates new challenges. The priests fulfilled their main duties regarding the divine mass and catechism of children and young people. The priests collaborated with the parishioners in order to improve the material situation of parishes, to build new churches and to administer the church's goods. The priests always laid emphasis on the Christians' soul and moral state, they were involved in the most important moments in the Christians' lives, and they contributed to the cultural and material rise of the communities to which they belonged.

The education of priests from the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș is presented in chapter four, taking into account both the clergy's studies in Romania, as well as the studies of the Greek-Catholic Church elite in Rome's colleges. The priests from the Archdiocese carried out their studies during the inter-war period both in the Theological Academy in Blaj and in education institutions from abroad. Emphasis was laid both on the scientific and on the moral and practical education, meant to prepare a clergy adjusted to the needs of the Romanian society and of the Church United with Rome. The Holy See was also involved in the training of a united clergy, facilitated the accomplishment of the studies in Rome by the most studious clergy of the Academy and had the Pio Romeno College built for Romanians.

The number of young people studying at the Academy from Blaj was pendulous due to the capacity of admission of the Seminar or to the number of priests needed. Following the evolution of the number of clergymen studying in Blaj, we conclude that it was connected to the number of vacant parishes; thus, if we were to take into consideration only the year 1920, out of 671 parishes, 123 were vacant, the completion of these parishes with qualified staff remains a constant preoccupation for the church authorities. According to the report elaborated for the archdiocese synod from 1927, on April 10, 1927 there were 146 vacant parishes.⁵ The young graduates had to cover the needs of the Archdiocese; thus a training course for priests was taught for a short period of time.

The priests from the Archdiocese benefited from training in a higher education and theological institution, having the possibility to get the graduation diploma at the Theological Academy in Blaj in 1933.

The efforts made for improving the priests' education are shown in the reports published by the general vicar on February 23, 1943, at the request of the National Education and Cult Ministry. According to this report, there were no more trainees, the trained priests for the last 10 years were fully qualified having the high school graduation diploma, very few having only the primary school teacher diploma and four years of theology studies. The number of priests with lower qualification was under 100, and the number of priests distinguished for their administrative, pastoral, cultural and literary activity was of 10%- 20% out of the total number.⁶

Chapter five, entitled *The Archdiocese of Blaj and the Education system*, is dedicated to the school policy of the Greek-Catholic archdiocese and metropolitan church, emphasizing its role in the intellectual training of the young Romanians. The metropolitan institutions generally preserved their structure before the war, but the education institutions were reorganized and expanded in order to respond to the needs of the Archdiocese and the demands of the Romanian society. The Greek-Catholic metropolitan church was very actively involved in a vital field for the functioning and modernization of the Romanian state, namely the educational field. During the researched

⁵ S. J.A.N. Alba, Fond Mitropolia Română Unită Blaj, Acte înregistrate, doc.nr.382/192, f. 315

⁶ S. J.A.N. Alba, Fond Mitropolia Română Unită Blaj. Acte înregistrate, doc.nr.5208/1946, f. 84 r-v

period, the expansion of the education institutes was achieved by expanding the Theological Academy, the High School for boys “St. Basil the Great”, the largest Romanian high school, the organization of the Normal School for primary school teachers with 8 grades and its own canteen and dormitory, the foundation of the Commercial High School for boys with 8 grades and its own canteen and dormitory, the foundation of the orphanage, the foundation of the Commercial High School for girls and of the Normal School for primary school teachers, both with 8 grades, the building of the Gratitude Institute due to the contribution of former students, of other donors, of members of the Government from 1925, of king Ferdinand and Pope Pius XI.⁷ Between 1920 and 1921 the Greek-Catholic Church lost the almost 600 primary confessional schools, with almost 500 primary school teachers; the confessional schools were nationalized, thus contributing to the development of the public school system.

The archdiocese education institutes and the education institutes had a special evolution between 1919 and 1940 through the expansion of the school network and the attention given to the material patrimony.

In chapter six, the relationships between the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș and the Holy See are presented, as well as the relationships with the Orthodox Church and the Roman-Catholic Church. The Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș collaborated with the Holy See, the situation of the Greek Catholic Church in Romania being known to Rome through the reports of the apostolic representatives and the reports given on different occasions to the Congregation for Oriental Churches. An important aspect of the history of the Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș is also the one regarding the inter-confessional relationships. The relationships with the Roman-Catholic Church were generally good, but regarding the relationships with the Orthodox Church there were some differences due to a complex of factors. All these matters are approached in the paper, followed by an explanation of the more tense moments and the collaboration moments.

⁷ S.J.A.N. Alba, Fond Mitropolia Română Unită Blaj. Acte înregistrate, doc.nr. 5208/1916, f. 80r-v

The main contribution of this research consists in the unitary approach of the history of the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș between the two world wars, based on new archive documents.

At the end of the researched period, December 31, 1939, the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese had 500,000 Christians, 660 married priests and widowers and 52 celibate priests. The number of parishes acknowledged by the state was of 615, 20 parishes were not acknowledged by the state, and the number of Catholic congregations was up to 380. During the inter-war period, due to the increase in admission places at the Theological Academy in Blaj and due to the training course; there were 586 priests and the number of vacant parishes was reduced to 49. The situation regarding the priests was as follows: 12 priests were central clerks, 5 priests were theology professors, 28 priests were teachers at the education institutes in Blaj, 11 priests were religion teachers in state schools, one priest was functioning as a military priest, 4 missionary priests were employed in America and 32 priests were employed in civil offices.

The Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș had 8 education institutes (boarding schools), 6 for boys and 2 for girls, with 110 students. The sisters' congregation "Virgin Mary" had 10 branches and 300 members, "The Lord's House" with 5 hiero-monks and 5 laymen had a boarding school for about 20 high school students. The territory of the Archdiocese was divided into 24 deaneries. The theology students were 65 and there were 750 religious associations functioning with 45,000 members in the Archdiocese.⁸

⁸ S.J.A.N. Alba, Fond Mitropolia Română Unită Blaj. Acte înregistrate, doc.nr. 5208/1916, f. 3 r-v