

BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

The Peripheral Dioceses
from the north part of the Orthodox Archbishopric of Transylvania
in the second part of the 19th century

PHD THESIS

Summary

Scientific advisor:

Univ. prof. dr. Nicolae Bocșan

PhD Student:

Dan Andrei Filip

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Key words: deanery, parishes, priests, teachers, denominational schools, interfaith relations, piety.

This paper aims to be a survey of church history at a time of great change for Transylvanian society. The thesis is a study on four deaneries in the northern part of the Transylvanian Orthodox Archdiocese, which grouped the orthodox parishes from this region: Cetatea de Piatră, Solnoc II, Bistrița, Românași (after the old name, Unguraș).

The purpose of this research is to emphasize the original sources. The study of archival documents revealed evidence about psychology and collective mentalities of villagers due to their specific interests or their social status, provides an overview, but also compartmentalized, of the life of village communities with their good and bad sides. At the same time, the documents contain detailed information on the status of churches, denominational schools, canonical portions where they exist, of the organization of local communities and inter-human relations.

In the first chapter we aim to capture the characteristics of the deanery as local church administrative body, as it was defined in official documents issued by Orthodox consistory in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, the intention was to draw historical coordinates of the four Orthodox deaneries studied and broadly to capture the geographical characteristics of the regions in which they were located and demographic developments localities.

In the second chapter, *Church and Community*, it is presented the organizational aspects of religious life, analyzing the relationship between community and church representatives on the one hand and between the community and the administrative authorities on the other. The role of this comparative disclosures in the first part of the chapter is to highlight the position of the priest in the community life during the second half of the 19th century. According to this objective it is analyzed the relations between the community and priest.

The third chapter includes data on the development of educational process in denominational schools, analyzing the factors that favored or those who prevented the learning process. Local information about religious education were integrated into different aspects more general religious education in the entire province of Transylvania.

In the fourth chapter we wanted to highlight some of the aspects of rural devotion as they emerged from the study of documents. Religious life is all beliefs, attitudes, events, feelings and experiences in relation to divinity and religious manifestations in the world. Relationship between man and divinity gives rise to emotions and feelings outwardly by piety or devotion. Religious feeling arises from divine revelation, feeling that determines actions, events, attitudes in relation to divinity expressed through devotion or piety. All these manifestations of popular piety and devotion lead to the field of lived religion, which does not always correspond with the heritage of faith and practice of the Church, what we call religion prescribed. According to the information we have analyzed the rural devotion from practicing some of the sacraments, conduct during the liturgy, observance of holidays, preference for certain holy worship, charity.

In the last chapter, *Interfaith Relations*, we paid attention to the directions of development of relations between the two largest religions in the region, and also in the entire Transylvania. Bringing local history information we analyzed interfaith relations in three directions: the crossings and religious unrest, mixed marriages and mixed denominational schools.

Correspondence between deaneries and the consistory of Sibiu had different themes, as we have seen throughout the chapters. This was the main way to make known all the problems faced by rural communities, and for the deans to receive valuable tips on managing their constituency. Connectors between the center archdiocese and parishes were deans and priests. Priests' role in the community was important, having their commission to help improve morale of the population. Therefore sought to establish some priests prepared to cope with this function, whose training Bishop Andrei Saguna handled even by creating educational and theological school in Sibiu. It is observed in the regions studied, a growing concern of priests, teachers and even singers to send their sons to theological or pedagogical training courses in Sibiu. This led to the existence, during the second half of the nineteenth century, the true dynasties of priests in all four deaneries, which gave stability to the parish organization. Of course not missed cases of misconduct on the part of representatives of the Church and tense moments between them and the community.

Romanian denominational primary education was the only organized framework that Romanian children were able to study in their mother tongue. Orthodox religious education raised somehow the literacy among the rural population, and helped the training of the children as good citizens and good Christians. Despite the obstacles posed by the Hungarian government in the second half of the nineteenth century, denominational schools existed because of the many efforts of rural communities, but also the administrative apparatus of the Orthodox Church, all of which can be seen in Chapter III. In the case of teachers, if at the beginning they were poorly trained and paid, things change from mid studied. Because of the occurrence of education laws, the impetus given by the consistorial towards developing parish schools, the emergence of more and better trained people, communities agreed to make efforts to support education: were established qualified teachers, ensured salaries according with the laws, developed school buildings or built new ones.

Following aspects devotion both to the individual and the collective, in Chapter II, there is a preference for residents of certain holy worship. Choosing names for newborns and establishing religious temples to worship betrays a religious sensibility for Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel, the Virgin Mary or St. John the Baptist. In other news, following marital behavior is observed relatively high presence of cohabitation.

In the second half of the nineteenth century Catholicism crossings were mostly halted due to good organization of the Orthodox Church. According to the data presented in Chapter V, there were recorded several attempts to pass orthodoxy, or temporal changes of denomination therefore, and a series of religious agitation or involvement of priests in communities of other faiths.

The analysis of the four deaneries archival funds from northern Transylvania provides a diversified image of what meant Romanian village community life in the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Further research sources to fund the rectory and church archives can bring to light important issues and concrete on different aspects of everyday existence in rural communities: socio-economic condition of their members, social events within the community, relations with the Church and religion, aspects of individual devotion etc. Also the using of information

extracted from the documents edited brought a major research, by supplementing certain gaps in local funds.