

Dynastic Loyalism, Morality and Family Values among Romanians in Transylvania during the First World War

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Abstract: *Dynastic Loyalism, Morality and Family Values among Romanians in Transylvania during the First World War.* It is known that the two Romanian Churches in Transylvania contributed over time to the loyalty of the Transylvanian Romanians to the House of Habsburg. Maintaining this high loyalty towards the Vienna Court was all the more necessary during the war when the Romanians, together with the other peoples of the Empire, had to prove their attachment to the homeland and to the Throne. The present study analyzes the attitude that the hierarchies of the two Romanian Churches in Transylvania had at the time of the outburst of the war and during its unfolding, with the emphasis on the messages transmitted to the pastors to maintain the enthusiasm of war. It shall not overlook the recommendations of the high prelates regarding the spouses' fidelity, social morality, the care for widows and war orphans, or the strategies concerning new wartime pastoral that amplified the religious sentiment, causing a rediscovery of perennial Christian values.

Keywords: messages, Church, Transylvania, loyalty, family, morality

Rezumat: *Loialism dinastic, moralitate și valori familiale la românii din Transilvania în timpul Primului Război Mondial.* Este cunoscut faptul că cele două Biserici românești din Transilvania au contribuit de-a lungul timpului la loializarea românilor ardeleni față de Casa de Habsburg. Menținerea la cote ridicate a acestei fidelizări față de Curtea de la Viena a fost cu atât mai necesară în timpul războiului, când românii, alături de celelalte popoare din Imperiu, au trebuit să dea dovada atașamentului față de patrie și Tron. Prezentul studiu analizează atitudinea pe care ierarhiile celor două Biserici românești din Transilvania au avut-o în momentul declanșării războiului și de-a lungul desfășurării lui, accentul fiind pus asupra mesajelor transmise păstoriților pentru a întreține entuziasmul de război. Nu vor fi trecute cu vederea recomandările înalților prelați în ceea ce privește fidelitatea soților, morala socială, grija față de văduve și orfanii de război sau strategiile privind noua pastorație adaptată contextului războiului, care a amplificat sentimentul religios, determinând o redescoperire a valorilor creștine perene.

Cuvinte-cheie: mesaje, Biserică, Transilvania, loialism, familie, morală

It has become a commonplace to assert that the First World War was the event of the beginning of the 20th century (or, according to some authors, the end of the long 19th century) which intensively and irreversibly marked the way of being, thinking, and behaving of the people and communities who have experienced it.¹ Nothing would be the same as before. La Belle Époque seemed to be a paradise definitively lost, a beautiful memory of those who had lived those decades of calm, prosperity and cultural development that followed the establishment of the Third French Republic.²

The war that began in the summer of 1914 would provide a reality that was opposite to the world that had existed until then. The silence and order specific to the earlier period would give way to the agitation and disorder caused by the order of mobilization or by the refuge of civilians from armed confrontations; the generalized demographic growth until then would be disturbed by millions of deaths from the war and by those who found their end in the aftermath of the war but also because of the suffering it had caused; the economic and technological advance so far would be directed towards supporting the construction of war machines, improving military equipment, or discovering new combat weapons; finally, the development of the arts and culture in general was also affected by the tumult of the war, according to the dictum *inter arma silent musae*. There was no longer time and even less predisposition for art, the performance played to exhaustion on the stage of the world of those years having suffering and death as main characters. Thus, the experience of the war, as actors or spectators, meant for the people of those times the separation from a European world which seemed tired of the more than four decades of peace that had passed since the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871.

Like the other European nations, the Romanians entered the whirlwind of the war. Some of them sooner, even from the beginning of the military confrontations (since they were either part of the state first affected by the attack from Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, either from the Empire of the Czars, who had decreed the general mobilization at the end of July of the same year, and thus calling under arms the

¹ Anne Rasmussen, "Mobilising minds", in *The Cambridge History of The First World War, volume III, Civil Society*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 390-395.

² Jean-Michel Gaillard, Anthony Rowley, *Istoria continentului european. De la 1850 până la sfârșitul secolului al XX-lea* [The History of the European Continent. From 1850 to the end of the twentieth century], (Chișinău: Editura Cartier, 2001), pp. 129-153, 175-192.

Bessarabian Romanians as well)³ and others later (those of the Old Kingdom, given the uncertainty among the political elite regarding the military camp to which Romania would join.⁴ On those who had the experience of the war on the first day of the hostilities, and until the last day of the conflict (meaning, the Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Transylvanians more precisely), I intend to stop in the following study.

When they called under arms, the Transylvanian Romanians represented an ethnically well-formed ethnic block, strongly individualized from an identity point of view in the constellation of the Transylvanian nations and even in the dualist monarchy. They had gathered an important political experience in the last decade since they had adopted the activism, although the results of the elections remained rather modest regarding the candidates of the Romanian National Party for the Diet in Budapest.⁵ Better results could display at that time the Romanian community in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in terms of its economic progress. It is emblematic in this sense the wide network of banks and banking institutions that supplied capital to the various social categories seeking additional resources for their development, the peasantry being one of the main beneficiaries of this financially favorable context.⁶ However, the most powerful and visible aspect of the Romanian community's personality in the dualist state was the cultural one. A number of societies, associations, publications, etc., established in the last decades, testified in this respect, which had a special contribution to the activation of the Romanian society, giving it a well individualized cultural profile.⁷ The best organized and active was ASTRA, a true

³ Liviu Maior, *Doi ani mai devreme. Ardeleni, bucovineni și basarabeni în război 1914-1916* [Two years earlier. Transylvanians, Bukovinians and Bessarabians in the War 1914-1916], (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Școala Ardeleană, 2016), pp. 10-11.

⁴ Glenn E. Torrey, *România în Primul Război Mondial* [Romania in the First World War], (Bucharest: Meteor Publishing, 2014), pp. 15-27.

⁵ Liviu Maior, *Mișcarea națională românească din Transilvania, 1900-1914* [The Romanian National Movement from Transylvania 1900-1914], (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1986), pp. 80-97.

⁶ Iosif Marin Balog, "The Clergy's Involvement in the Romanian Credit System from Transylvania during the Late Nineteenth and the Early Twentieth Centuries. Case Study: the Greek-Catholic Clergy", in *Recruitment and Promotion among the Romanian Greek-Catholic Ecclesiastical Elite in Transylvania (1853-1918)*. A Collection of Studies, coord. Mirela Popa-Andrei, eds. Diana Covaci, Mihaela Bedecean, Aurelia Dan, Iosif-Marin Balog (Cluj-Napoca: Mega Publishing House, 2014), pp. 165-169.

⁷ Ioan Bolovan, "Cultura românească" [The Romanian Culture], in *Istoria Transilvaniei, vol. III (de la 1711 până la 1918)* [The History of Transylvania, vol. III

academy of the Transylvanian Romanians, who assumed the role of a gendarme of their national identity.⁸ A more important role on the field of preserving the national identity of the Transylvanian Romanians had only two Romanian Churches in Transylvania: the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic Churches, together with their vast network of confessional schools that they owned.

But beyond these positive developments, the Romanian community in the Austro-Hungarian Empire felt, from the end of the dualism, as target of political pressures generated by the governors from Budapest, which sought to weaken its identity landmarks or even dissolve it in the single Hungarian nation project.⁹ This project, considered by the Hungarian leaders not only vital for the survival of their state, but also as a means of raising the non-Hungarian nations to the standards and values of civilization of the dominant ethnic group in the Transleithanian half of the Empire,¹⁰ urged a part of the Romanian community to question the formula of the dualist state itself, to put forward solutions for political recovery¹¹ or even to desire its separation from the Monarchy headed by the House of Habsburg. The failure of the political negotiations that started in the first decade of the 20th century between the Hungarian and the Romanian political elite¹² contributed to the consolidation of this latter opinion, a failure that made even stronger the voice of the Transylvanian emigrants in neighboring Romania, who

(from 1711 to 1918)], coords. Ioan-Aurel Pop, Thomas Năgler, Magyari András (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română/Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2008), pp. 553-569.

⁸ Pamfil Matei, "*Asociațiunea Transilvană pentru Literatura Română și Cultura Poporului Român*" (ASTRA) și rolul ei în cultura națională (1861-1950) ["The Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and Culture of the Romanian People" (ASTRA) and its Role in the National Culture (1861-1950)], (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1986), pp. 18-24.

⁹ Zenovie Păclișanu, *Hungary's struggle to annihilate its national minorities. Based on secret Hungarian documents* (Florida: Romanian Studies, 1985), pp. 14-125.

¹⁰ Melinda Mitu, Sorin Mitu, *Ungurii despre români. Nașterea unei imagini etnice* [Hungarians about Romanians. The Birth of a Ethnic Image], (Iași: Polirom, 2014), pp. 16-39.

¹¹ It is illustrative in this regard the work of Aurel C. Popovici, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Groß-Österreich: politische Studien zur Lösung der nationalen Fragen und staatsrechtlichen Krisen in Österreich-Ungarn* (Leipzig: Verlag von B. Elischer, 1906). Its author was part, among others, of the so-called "Belvedere Circle", a group of intellectuals with reformist visions, gathered around the heir to the Throne, Archduke Franz-Ferdinand. The goal of the whole reformist effort was to transform the Habsburg-led Empire into a federal state, made up of a number of semi-autonomous regions, based on the ethnic and linguistic criteria.

¹² Maior, *Mișcarea națională românească din Transilvania*, pp. 125-143.

condemned the injustices made to their fellow citizens, feeding with great passion the ideal of the Romanians' union under the same political scepter.¹³ The stronger were the arguments of the unionists that Romania was at that time a growing state, which provided the guarantee of stability due to the political ability of the wise King Carol I, while being a regional security provider whose diplomatic prestige had been unanimously recognized during the Balkan wars.¹⁴ This tempting attraction towards the Romanian state had to be firmly annihilated in the troubled times of the war, and to achieve this important goal, the Hungarian politicians would not hesitate to use the most effective means of persuasion (in other words propaganda), among which the Church was one of the more important instruments, if not the most important.

Of course, the Romanian Church, in its dual Transylvanian hypostasis (Orthodox and Greek-Catholic) had still enjoyed an important amount of prestige in the Romanian community, where the phenomenon of secularization was not as advanced as in the Western Europe, the great mass of Romanian population still expressing a strong attachment to the values professed by the Church and the Christian faith.¹⁵ Under these conditions, the two Churches had an extremely important role in shaping the behavior of their parishioners in the times of the war. Hence the increased attention given by the Hungarian governors to the two Transylvanian Romanian churches, and especially to the public messages they disseminated among their believers. These messages were meant to serve both the state in which they functioned and themselves, meaning the teachings of faith and religious pedagogy they were professing. A primary interest that served the Viennese authorities and Hungarian governors at the time was maintaining the Romanians' loyalty to the political leaders and to the state in which they lived.

Without insisting upon the phenomenon of loyalty present among the Transylvanian Romanians (like other peoples of the Austro-Hungarian

¹³ Valeriu Achim, Aurel Socolan, *Dr. Vasile Lucaciu, luptător pentru drepturile românilor și unirea Transilvaniei cu România* [Dr. Vasile Lucaciu, Fighter for the Romanians' Rights and the Union of Transylvania with Romania], (s.l.: Comitetul pentru cultură și artă al județului Maramureș, Muzeul județean Baia Mare, 1968), pp. 105-135.

¹⁴ Nicu Pohoăță, *Politica externă a României în timpul războaielor balcanice (1912-1913). România și grupările politico-militare ale Marilor Puteri* [Romania's foreign policy during the Balkan wars (1912-1913). Romania and the political-military groups of the Great Powers], (București: Pro Universitaria, 2010), pp. 293-294.

¹⁵ Doru Radosav, *Sentimentul religios la români. O perspectivă istorică (sec. XVII-XX)* [The Religious Feeling among Romanians. A Historical Perspective (17th-20th century)], (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1997), pp. 48-62.

Empire), it is worth noting that the two Romanian Churches had a major role during the two centuries of Habsburg reign in Transylvania in affiliating the Romanians to the Throne, serving as instruments of policy of loyalty.¹⁶ Since the second half of the eighteenth century, when the Habsburg religious policy in Transylvania stabilized in the sense of admitting bi-confessionalism among the Romanians, the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic Churches engaged in the process of feeding the dynastic loyalty among the Romanians. From the pulpits of worship centers, the believers learned the content of the new laws governing the country or new imperial rescripts; every time the religious ceremonies marked the most important events in the life of the members of the ruling House, and the priests prayed for the health and long reign of the monarch every Sunday and holiday.¹⁷ Considering the prestige of the Church and the priest in the Romanian society, rural in its great majority, immersed in illiteracy and orality, it is of no surprise that the word spoken in front of the altar was able to plant in the souls of the faithful feelings of devotion to the House of Habsburg and make Romanians loyal to the Throne. After 1867, the new pole of political power in the Empire tried to direct the Romanians' loyalism towards itself, but the results were rather modest.¹⁸ With the exception of the upper levels of the hierarchy of the Romanian Churches, the mass of the rural priests allowed itself to have a more relaxed attitude, channeling its efforts after the end of dualism towards the cultivation of pan-Romanian loyalty.

Ever since the assassination of the heir of the Throne of Vienna, the Romanian Churches have adopted a firm condemnation of the act, bemoaning the death of Franz Ferdinand and his wife, and supporting the justness of the claims made by the Empire towards the aggressor state.

Through circulars, pastorals, sermons and press articles, the hierarchies of the two Romanian Churches supported the call for partial and then general mobilization launched by the authorities.¹⁹ Moreover,

¹⁶ Liviu Maior, *In the Empire. Habsburgs and Romanians. From Dynastic Loyalty to National Identity* (Cluj-Napoca: Romanian Academy/Center of Transylvanian Studies, 2008), pp. 209-210.

¹⁷ Maior, *In the Empire*, p. 222.

¹⁸ Maior, *In the Empire*, pp. 217-218.

¹⁹ An analysis of the role of circulars from the Church during the war at Diana Covaci, "'By Word and Example'. Mobilizing People through the Circulars Issued by the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church in Transylvania (1915)", in *World War I. The Other Face of the War*, eds. Ioan Bolovan, Rudolf Gräf, Harald Happner, Oana Mihaela Tămaș (Cluj-Napoca: Romanian Academy/Center for Transylvanian Studies, Cluj University Press, 2016), pp. 346-348.

the Romanian priests from the North American continent were asked to urge their emigrant fellow citizens to return to their country of origin to fight for the Throne and homeland, ensuring that all of them having their travel expenses covered through the diplomatic representations of the dualist monarchy in the United States and Canada.²⁰ Likewise, all the fugitives, the deserters, the outlaws whose tracks had been lost, were called under arms in exchange for their amnesty. But the most important goal was maintaining the unity of the Empire around the figure of the old emperor Franz Joseph I and the Vienna Court. This is why the plea for the Romanians' fidelity and loyalty is omnipresent in the public messages of the hierarchies of the two Romanian Churches. Here are some examples: "For centuries our old church has been raising the Romanian people in the faith to the throne and homeland; and the way it responds to the call of mobilization is the natural consequence of this church growth and a new confession of our loyalty and faith so well proven during the most difficult days. His sons will do their duty, of course, on the battlefield, with the honor and bravery of their parents and ancestors, whose glorious deeds decorate the pages of history, that preserve the memory of the past. The forthright faith to the throne and the dynasty, the honor of the flag under which they have sworn, and sacrificing their life on the altar of the homeland, are the nourishment given by the Church and the well-doers of our people to the soldiers from the diocese, on the path to glory on which they have set out", says the Bishop of Caransebeș Miron Cristea, in a pastoral sent on the occasion of the holiday of the Saint Prophet Elijah in 1914.²¹ Or: "[...] we all have the duty to join His Majesty's throne inspired by the faith and devotion to the homeland and the dynasty. The Romanian people especially have this duty because the emperors and kings of the Habsburg dynasty, in their mercy, have always fulfilled their legitimate needs and demands. That is why we invite you to prove through your deeds the love, faith and devotion that you are inspired by to our supreme emperor and apostolic king", was the message contained in another pastoral exhortation transmitted in those days.²²

A turning point for the Transylvanian Romanians was represented by Romania's entry into war and the crossing of the Carpathians by the soldiers of the Romanian Army. In order to reduce the risk of the Romanians being removed from the status of loyal

²⁰ *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph], year LXII, no. 81/1914, p. 229.

²¹ *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph], year LXII, no. 81/1914, p. 230.

²² *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph], year LXII, no. 80/1914, p. 226.

subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the messages transmitted by the hierarchies of the two Romanian Churches had to be as convincing as possible in the gathering of the Romanian community in Transylvania around the principle of dynastic loyalism.²³ Just one day after Romania had declared war to Austria-Hungary, the Consistory of Sibiu addressed the Archdiocese priests a call, asking them to urge their pastors “to avoid any talk and any facts that might cast a shadow over their love for their homeland”.²⁴ On the same day, the same Bishop of Caransebeș, Miron Cristea, addressed a pastoral to the faithful in his diocese, a gesture followed two days apart by the Arad hierarch, Ioan I. Papp.²⁵ The new context generated by Romania's declaration of the state of war to Austria-Hungary contributed to catalyzing the process of establishing the new Metropolitan of the Orthodox Romanians in Transylvania. More specifically, at the suggestion of the Budapest government, the Emperor hastened to confirm Vasile Mangra's election as the head of the Church of the Orthodox Romanians in Hungary and Transylvania, which was confirmed by the publication of the aulic decision in the Official Gazette of Budapest on September 19th 1916.²⁶ Just two days after his confirmation, the new Orthodox Metropolitan, together with the two bishops, issued a common circular addressed to all the priests and believers from the Transylvanian Orthodox Metropolitan Church, in which Romania's reckless gesture was categorically condemned.²⁷ The Greek-Catholic hierarchy did not hold back from transmitting to their parishioners any messages that were as firm as possible about maintaining their dynastic loyalty. But, strictly referring to the Romanian Army's entry into Transylvania, except for a loyalty address that Metropolitan Victor Mihályi of Apșa sent to the government from Budapest, the Uniate bishops did not express public messages as

²³ See in detail at Lucian Turcu, “Intrarea României în *Marele Război*: reacții, atitudini și mesaje publice din partea celor două Biserici românești din Transilvania” [Romania's Entry in *The Great War*: reactions, attitudes and public messages from the two Romanian Churches from Transylvania], in *Primul Război Mondial. Perspectivă istorică și istoriografică/The First World War. A Historical and Historiographical Perspective*, coords. Ioan Bolovan, Gheorghe Cojocaru, Oana Mihaela Tămaș (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane/Presă Universitară Clujeană, 2015), pp. 431-441.

²⁴ *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph], year LXIV, no. 85/1916, p. 344.

²⁵ Their text in *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph], year LXIV, no. 86/1916, p. 348.

²⁶ *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph], year LXIV, no. 85/1916, p. 343.

²⁷ The entire text in *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph], year LXIV, no. 85/1916, pp. 343-344.

harsh as their Orthodox colleagues.²⁸ This difference in behavior can be explained in terms of the context of those days, but also in the identity profile assumed by each of the two Romanian denominations.²⁹

But beyond this duty to maintain the candle of the Romanians' loyalty lit towards the Vienna Court and the leaders of that time, the Church had to watch over the defense of the values that it preached, values that were threatened by all kinds of disturbances generated by the war.³⁰ A first value around which the Church has made a shield in the war years was the family. This was the first to be affected by the outbreak of war, by mobilizing all those capable of carrying a gun, which meant the departure of husbands, fathers and sons on the battlefields. Such a separation (which was supposed to be temporary) should not have harmed family life, which had to be based on mutual love, mutual respect among spouses, trusting one another, as it was deeply emphasized by the messages transmitted during this period to believers by the clergy of the two Romanian Churches. Of course, the emphasis of this discourse was on the virtue of the fidelity³¹ of the wives who were left at home as well as the husbands who went to war. The war had to be seen as a chance for every husband and wife to demonstrate the sincerity of the feelings they had for each other, and the temptation of being unfaithful to the life partner had to be sent away whenever it appeared. Analyzing the clergy's appeals that made tangential references to this theme, it clearly appears that women - as spouses - assumed a greater responsibility for the durability of their families, being obliged not to ruin their dignity to the spouses left on the front through the sin of adultery.³² Therefore, besides the fact that everywhere the war has put

²⁸ *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph], year LXIV, no. 85/1916, p. 345.

²⁹ Turcu, "Intrarea României în Marele Război", p. 443.

³⁰ Blaga Mihoc, "Instituția Eclezială în sprijinul Cetății (1914-1918)" [The Ecclesiastic Institution in help of the Citadel (1914-1918)], in *Biserica Română Unită cu Roma, Greco-Catolică: Istorie și Spiritualitate. 150 de ani de la înființarea Mitropoliei Române Unite cu Roma, Greco-Catolică, la Blaj* [The Romanian Greek-Catholic Uniate Church. History and Spirituality. 150 years from the Founding of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Uniate Metropolitan in Blaj], (Blaj: Buna Vestire, 2003), pp. 493-532.

³¹ Ioan Bolovan, Sorina Paula Bolovan, "Impactul Primului Război Mondial asupra familiei din Transilvania" [The Impact of World War I over the family in Transylvania], in *Studia varia in honorem Professoris Ștefan Ștefănescu octogenarii*, eds. Ionel Cădea, Cristian Luca (București - Brăila: Editura Academiei Române - Editura Istros, 2009), pp. 786 sqq.

³² The analysis of the moral behavior prescribed for women during war at Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (London-New York: Longman, 2002), pp. 62-64.

women in a position to assume some tasks in the family household and even in the economies of the states, tasks that they have not had previously, they also played the role of being actual agents of social morality; they had the duty to maintain the normality of the marital home in abnormal conditions.³³ The experience in social activism accumulated over many decades in the numerous women's reunions had to be fully exploited in the difficult times of war.³⁴ This was strongly emphasized by Metropolitan Ioan Mețianu at the Congress of the Romanian Women's Union in Hungary, an organization that had to surpass the objective of cultivating gender solidarity and to be involved in solving the urgent needs of society.³⁵

But perhaps the most insistent and touching messages sent by the Romanian Churches in the years of war had children and elders in their center. Children represented a social category exposed to many vulnerabilities, which the war had multiplied and amplified. The risk of being orphaned by a parent or both parents meant most of the time condemning minors to a miserable life, a future full of hardships, and the need to manage on their own. Seen as a guarantee of the future and survival of the Romanian nation, children had to be urgently helped to overcome the difficulties generated by the war. This explains the repeated appeals launched by the hierarchies of the two Churches to help children, for which collections were organized, subscription lists were opened, families with material possibilities were urged to offer a home to children in need, providing them with food and shelter. But the most important project that united the energies of the two Romanian Churches (up to a certain point) was the foundation of a great orphanage, where all the minors remaining on the streets because of the war were to be received and raised in the spirit of Christian values. Disagreements at the top of the two Romanian Churches and fear of the corruption of confessional

³³ Ana Victoria Sima, "Cu gândul la celălalt. Cuplurile românești din Transilvania în anii Primului Război Mondial" [Thinking about the Other. Romanian Couples in Transylvania in the Years of the First World War], in *Nicolae Bocșan. Istoria sub semnul Generozității și Umanității* [Nicolae Bocșan. History under the Mark of Generosity and Humanity], coords. Ioan-Aurel Pop, Ioan Bolovan, Mihaela Bedecan (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2018), pp. 113-120.

³⁴ Liviu Maior, "Modernizarea tradiției. Democratizarea confesiunilor" [The Modernization of Tradition. The Democratization of Confessions], in *Nicolae Bocșan. Istoria sub semnul Generozității și Umanității* [Nicolae Bocșan. History under the Mark of Generosity and Humanity], coords. Ioan-Aurel Pop, Ioan Bolovan, Mihaela Bedecan (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2018), pp. 254-263.

³⁵ *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph], year LXII, no. 65/1914, pp. 265-266.

identity made the idea of an orphanage that was patronized by both Romanian Churches to be abandoned, and each of them were to open at the end of the war such establishments so necessary at that time.³⁶ For example, through the care of vicar capitular Vasile Suciu, an orphanage, which provided protection and food for 70 children at first, began operating in Blaj in October 1918.³⁷ Planned by the former Metropolitan Victor Mihályi of Apsa, this “growth institute” founded within the Greek-Catholic Romanian Church was not singular at the time.³⁸ Bishop Iuliu Hossu as well made the decision to create a similar institution in his diocese, more precisely at the Bixad Monastery.³⁹

Another category on which it was necessary to direct attention and charity was represented by the elderly. Left without the help of their children or grandchildren who were on the front, the elderly had to be helped by all those who were able. Whether it was the harvest of crops in the summer and autumn of 1914 (meaning after the laborers had been called in the army), whether it was donations of money or food, all became deeds of mercy that were absolutely necessary in those times of hardships.⁴⁰

³⁶ See Daniela Mârza, “Demografie și asistență socială în Transilvania (1916-1918): înființarea orfelinelor destinate orfanilor de război” [Demography and Social Assistance in Transylvania (1916-1918): the Foundation of Orphanages Destined to War Orphans], in *Mișcări de populație și aspecte demografice în România în prima jumătate a secolului XX* [Population Movement and Demographic Aspects in Romania in the first half of the Twentieth Century], coords. Sorina Paula Bolovan, Ioan Bolovan, Rudolf Gráf, Corneliu Pădurean (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2007), pp. 93-100.

³⁷ *Unirea* [The Union], year XXIX, no. 8/1919, p. 1; no. 14/1919, p. 1. Later, the orphanage was transferred to Obreja, in the castle of Count Wesselényi Miklós, purchased by the Greek-Catholic Church along with an 84 acres land for the sum of 430,000 lei. The money came from a donation of Pope Benedict XV in the amount of 150,000 Italian lira granted in the spring of 1921 to Metropolitan Vasile Suciu, the sum having as specific purpose the helping of war orphans. See more at Lucian Turcu, *Între idealuri și realitate. Arhidieceza greco-catolică de Alba Iulia și Făgăraș în timpul păstoririi mitropolitului Vasile Suciu (1920-1935)* [Between Ideas and Reality. The Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Fagaras during the pastoral life of Metropolitan Vasile Suciu (1920-1935)], (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega, 2017), pp. 308-313.

³⁸ Octavian Bârlea, “Biserica română unită între cele două războaie mondiale” [The Romanian Uniate Church between the Two World Wars], in *Biserica Română Unită – două sute cincizeci de ani de istorie* [The Romanian Uniate Church – Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Tradition], (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Viața Creștină, 1998), p. 98.

³⁹ *Unirea* [The Union], year XXXI, no. 36/1921, p. 4.

⁴⁰ *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph], year LXII, no. 77/1914, p. 214: “[...] we have the duty, we who are closest to those left in misery, to give them the most urgent and necessary help, which can not suffer a delay, namely: not to leave in the

Finally, one of the redundant topics of the public messages sent by the Romanian high clergy concerned the fight against a scourge that was responsible for many dissensions between people and social tensions: alcoholism. “[...] keep away from taverns and all the places that have the power to heat up the heart, to darken the sound judgment of the mind, and thus to push man into sins” was just one of the many urges of this kind that the Romanians could hear from the priests during the war.⁴¹

Trying to draw a conclusion, we may say that the Churches of Transylvanian Romanians represented for the Romanian community in the dualist Empire both the support of its loyalty to the Court of Vienna and the defenders and propagators of fundamental Christian and social values in the troubled years of World War I. The messages insistently sent out by the hierarchies of the two Romanian Churches were meant to shape the behavior of their parishioners in the sense of preserving their attachment both to the state they were living in and to the Christian precepts they preached, whose implementation was so necessary in those times.

field, to destruction, the crops that they have, but to give them all the support and help, so that they can harvest them from the field“.

⁴¹ *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph], year LXII, no. 81/1914, p. 230.