

# The History of the Greek-Catholic Church as Reflected in the Post 1989 Romanian Historiography. Some Considerations

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**Abstract:** *The History of the Greek-Catholic Church as Reflected in the Post 1989 Romanian Historiography. Some Considerations.* The study aims to present several considerations concerning a scientific research topic which was almost non-existent prior to 1989: the history of Romanian Greek-Catholic Church. The liberalisation of the historical writing in post-communist Romania has created a favourable climate for restarting the research concerning the history of the Church and of religious life. It is in this context that the Romanian United Church became once more an important subject in the Romanian historiography. The research of the history of the Greek-Catholic Church meant, for that period, going to primary sources (archives in and outside the country), as well as identifying main research topics such as: the Union of the Transylvanian Romanians with the Church of Rome, personalities and institutions, relations between the Greek-Catholic Church with the Holy See and with the Latin Catholic Church from Austria-Hungary in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the outlawry of this Church in 1948, the period of the communist persecution etc. When surveying the topic, we are dealing with three ways of connecting with the history of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church: academic history, a result of studies and research conducted by specialists, the official, encomiastic history automatically assumed by the United elites and clergy and a disputed history generated by a difficult dialogue and the tensed relations with the Orthodox Church following the post-communist transition.

**Keywords:** historiography, Greek-Catholic Church, identity, confession, transition

**Rezumat:** *Istoria Bisericii greco-catolice în preocupările istoriografiei românești după 1989. Câteva considerații.* Studiul își propune să prezinte câteva considerații pe marginea unui sector al cercetării științifice aproape inexistent înainte de 1989, istoria Bisericii Greco-Catolice românești. Liberalizarea scrisului istoric în România post-comunistă a creat un climat favorabil pentru relansarea cercetărilor de istoria bisericii și a vieții religioase și în acest context Biserica Română Unită a revenit ca o temă importantă pe agenda istoriografiei românești. Cercetarea istoriei Bisericii Greco-Catolice a presupus, în această perioadă, apelul la izvoare primare (fonduri de arhivă din țară și străinătate), precum și identificarea unor priorități tematice, cum ar fi: Unirea românilor din Transilvania cu Biserica Romei, personalități și instituții, relațiile Bisericii Greco-Catolice cu Sfântul Scaun și cu Biserica catolică de rit latin din Austro-Ungaria în a doua jumătate a secolului al

XIX-lea și la începutul secolului XX, interzicerea acestei Biserici în 1948, anii prigoanei comuniste etc. La o privire de ansamblu asupra subiectului, se poate spune că avem de-a face cu trei tipuri de raportare la istoria Bisericii Greco-Catolice române: istoria academică, rezultat al studiilor și cercetărilor făcute de specialiști, istoria oficială, encomiastică, autoasumată de elite și de mediile clericale unite, o istorie polemică generată de un dialog dificil și de relațiile tensionate cu Biserica Ortodoxă, în anii tranziției post-comuniste.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** istoriografie, Biserica Greco-Catolică, identitate, confesiune, tranziție

The history of the Church and of religious life are among the fields of research that have enjoyed a renewed interest after the fall of the Romanian totalitarian communist regime. Due to the preoccupation which honored it in the past and provided it with consistency, the history of the Church also enjoys a respectable precedence. Its roots can be traced back to the period of the Transylvanian School (see for this Gheoghe Șincai, *Istoria Bisericei Românilor*<sup>1</sup>). During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, while the successive stages of Romanian historical writing developed, and especially during the romantic and positivist periods, the history of the Church matures into a separate segment of the Romanian national history. It will create its conceptual apparatus and its needed tools and will start having results scientifically proven. These results represent up to this day benchmarks for the Romanian historical writing. The research concerning the history of the Church has started based on the two Romanian ethnic confessions existing in Transylvania: the Orthodox one and respectively the Greek-Catholic Church. They had a double purpose from the onset: to reconstruct the past and last but not least to express and assert their own religious and spiritual identity. Thanks to Ioan Lupaș and Silviu Dragomir, respectively Augustin Bunea and Zenobie Pâclișanu, the two “choirs” of the Romanian nation from Transylvania have honored to the highest degree the fields of religious history and religious life. They have also established historiographic priorities such as the roots of Romanian Christianity, relations between Romanians and the Slav-Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the religious structures established by Romanians from Ardeal during the medieval period, the Union with Rome, the institutionalizing of the two Romanian confessions in Transylvania during the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries etc. When

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<sup>1</sup> Gheorghe Șincai, *Istoria Bisericei Românilor atât a cestor dincoace, precum și a celor dincolo de Dunăre*, University Publishing House, Buda, 1813.

viewing at a glance the Romanian historiography prior to 1918<sup>2</sup> and the one from the inter-war period, we can easily notice the professional approach towards religious history the militant and often contradictory character of this field of study and the creation of a research program which will be followed, up to a certain point, in between 1948-1989. This is especially true especially when viewing the research concerning the ecclesiastical historiography conducted by exiled Greek-Catholic elements.<sup>3</sup>

The totalitarian regimes have imposed their own historiographic agenda un Eastern Europe, they have subdued the historian and have largely instrumentalized the past. We know very well today that Romania's communist regime has had a most devastating effect on religious life and also on the historiography concerning this subject. The brutal cancellation of the dual system of religious life in Romanian society from Transylvania, due to the dissolution of the Romanian United Church in 1948, meant that the Greek-Catholic Romanians had to worship in secret. The history of this institution, this field of research, were disavowed and pushed aside by the ideological commandments and the propaganda of the communist regimes until it vanished from historiography entirely. The history of the Church could not represent in itself a field of study, in universities or the research institutes of the Romanian Academy in between 1958-1989. It was admitted as a field of study only in theological faculties. The themes and problems concerning the history of the Romanian Church from Transylvania could be included in historiography mostly only after 1965 and they had to be veiled in larger topics such as the history of the national movement or Romanian cultures in Transylvania. The two Churches greatly contributed to this topic. Typical for the manner in which official communist historiography imposed lies through omission is the textbook of Romanian history for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade published in the 1980s. The lesson entitled *Romanian culture in the 18<sup>th</sup> century* forgot to mention that the coryphaei of the Transylvanian School, Samuil Micu, Gheorghe Șincai and Petru Maior, belonged to the Greek-Catholic Church.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See for this Corina Teodor, *Coridoare istoriografice. O incursiune în universul scrisului ecleziastic românesc din Transilvania anilor 1850-1920*, Cluj University Press Printing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Another important work in view of the debated subject is the following (it was published by the Greek-Catholic exiles after World War II): Aloisie Ludovic Tăutu et al., *Biserica Român Unită: 250 de ani de istorie*, s.n., Madrid, 1952.

<sup>4</sup> See Hadrian Daicoviciu, Pompiliu Teodor, Ioan Câmpeanu, *Istoria antică și medie a României. Manual pentru clasa a VIII-a*, The Didactical and Pedagogical Publishing

The fall of the communist regime in December 1989 had a positive impact on the Romanian historiography and the cultural climate. It meant the disappearance of the ideological commandments and of the propaganda that impeded the study of the past and shadowed the role of the historian. This reconsideration was possible given the new conditions. Freedom of conscience and of religion were fundamental gains for the Romanian post-communist public life. It allowed for the re-establishment of the two traditional Romanian religious confessions in Transylvania. We must mention however that after World War II the religious identity of Romanian from this province, and from the rest as well, became multiplied, given the proliferation of neo protestant cults. The post 1989 climate of religious freedom and the re-establishment of the two Transylvanian traditional religious components, made possible the resumption of the identity values of the historical writing promoted by the two Churches, the Orthodox, respectively the Greek-Catholic one. The two and a half decades of post-communist transition offered the United Church an ally in history. History helped it in its attempt to reactivate its own identity and to find its place in a Romanian society that differed from the inter-war period in terms of social and cultural aspects and mentality.

We must note that in the decades of post-communist transition there was a revival, partial at least, of the old research program of the Greek-Catholic Church as stated by the pre-communist historians such as Augustin Benea and Zenobie Pâclișanu. For the post-war period this program was maintained thanks to the exceptional commitment of Monseigneur Octavian Bârlea, who resided in Munich.<sup>5</sup> The Union with Rome and the national and cultural importance of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church, alongside with obtaining its status as metropolis and the creation, in 1853, of the province of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș, are among the themes reiterated by the post 1989 Romanian historiography.

Thus, the Greek-Catholic Church can be found in the post 1989 Romanian historiography, given the obvious interest manifested by the Romanian historians of this period for themes and topics previously pushed aside, for example the history of the Church and of religious life. The focus of the historic research on this line of study can be reflected in

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House, Bucharest, 1984, p. 224. In the 1984 textbook, and the following series we have used (1986, 1986, 1987 textbooks) the historical and linguistic works of the three great scholars and their role in the creation of the movement for political and national emancipation, are briefly presented.

<sup>5</sup> Octavian Bârlea, *Metropolia Bisericii Române Unite proclamată în 1855 la Blaj*, în „Perspective”, 1987, nr. 37-38.

the historiography of the past 27 years as seen in the titles mentioned in the volumes VIII-XIII of the *Romanian Historical Bibliography* and in the work which follows in its path, *The Romanian Historiographical Yearbook*. They represent tools that provide a pertinent quantitative view for this topic in the above mentioned timeframe.<sup>6</sup> In another train of thoughts, by going through the books dedicated to this topic, we must note that we are dealing with a certain “territorialisation” concerning the post 1989 study of the history of the Greek-Catholic Church. This means that the largest number of such research, both in terms of quantity and scope, visibility and relevance were conducted in the academic center Cluj-Napoca,<sup>7</sup> although we can mention works published by authors from other university centers from Ardeal, Banat or Bucharest. The fact that the Romanian historiography which is interested in this topic after 1989 is mostly from Ardeal can be easily explained away by the Romanian United Church having an ecclesiastical structures generated by the complex evolutions of Transylvanian history from the start of the modern period and because it represented a mark of the identity of this province, just as it still does today. At the same time the fact that the largest number of research on the topic was conducted at Cluj-Napoca is due not only to the existence of a qualified human resource in the Faculty of History and Philosophy from Babeş-Bolyai University and in the Romanian Academy History Institute, renamed since 2004 “George Barițiu” but also because of earlier historians concerned with this topic. We refer to professor Pompiliu Teodor, an important name in the academic city located on the Someş. He was interested by those who illustrated the Transylvanian Enlightenment, such as Samuil Micu, who was favored by the academic from Cluj who touches,<sup>8</sup> from the point of

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<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note to this sense, the evolution of the number of titles and studies/articles discussing the history of the Church, which are numbered in the volumes 8-12 of the *Bibliografia Istorică a României (Romania's Historical Bibliography)* which counts the historiographic productions in between 1989-2010, followed for 2010-2012 by the work continuing the BIR series, *Anuarul Istoriografic al României (Romania's Historiographic Yearbook)*. The distribution of the titles concerning religious history, modern and contemporary history is as follows: 1989-1994 - 61 titles; 1994-1999 - 104 titles; 1999-2004 - 519 titles; 2004-2006 - 115 titles; 2007-2008 - 124 titles; 2009-2010 - 177 titles; 2011 - 143 titles; 2012 - 135 titles.

<sup>7</sup> For the general presentation of the post 1989 historiography from Cluj see Ovidiu Pecican, *Poarta leilor. Istoriografia tânără în Transilvania (1990-2005)*, I-II, Grinta Printing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Professor Pompiliu Teodor dealt with Samuil Micu in his doctoral thesis, publicly defended in 1969 at the Babeş-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca and returns to the

view of the history of culture and history of historiography, upon themes and topics of the history of the Greek-Catholic Church, lastly recommending them. Such topics are studied by young people even under the communist regime.

Last but not least we must note that the study of the Romanian Greek-Catholicism after 1989 did not become a “confessional” historiography. Thus it is not from inside the Greek-Catholic Church, which became legal once again after the revolution from December 1989, that the new research sites are created. They result from the academic environment which managed to generate a neutral historiography, separated from the religious partisanship and the polemical disputes. By rebuilding its institutional structures, the United Church created seminaries and faculties in Cluj-Napoca, Blaj, Oradea and Baia Mare and alongside them developed specialized magazines and personnel qualified and interested in studying the past. All of this prove interest and concern, visible as time goes by, for the historical aspect of their own spiritual and ecclesiastical identity. The consistent manner in which the history of the Greek-Catholic Church was discussed after 1989 – which is also important in terms of quantity and quality – , is due however to the academic environment, especially the topics developed in the Faculty of History from the Babeş-Bolyai University. This environment is not regimented nor confessionally involved. The fact that the academic environment from Cluj managed to generate a historical writing not attached to any confession, which is neutral and equally situated in discussing the topics of the history of the Greek-Catholic Church, is a positive sign. We do not hesitate in qualifying it as a sign of regaining normality and of modernization, a component of the undoubted positive evolution that the Romanian post-communist historiography enjoyed. A determining role in creating this climate in the University from Cluj must go to the late professor Nicolae Bocşan. He was the one who initiated and coordinated numerous researches into the modern history of the two Romanian Churches from Transylvania in a spirit of objectivity and confessional equidistance. The academic from Cluj offers such an example and is a model of best practice for many generations of young researchers interested in the history of Church and religious life.

Returning among the topics researched by historians this subject oriented the focus of the research unavoidably towards the primary sources meant to offer its needed base of information. Thus we must add

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topic in his book *Sub semnul luminilor. Samuil Micu*, published in 2000 at Cluj University Press Printing House.

the study of the Greek-Catholic Church included going towards archive documents, which was possible in the new post-communist climate. In the post-communist Romania access to public archives is no longer a problem. Thus we must say that the first level of discussing the history of the Romanian United Church involved identifying information in archives and in introducing them in the scientific circuit. The attempt at the documentary refund, mandatory for a theme avoided until exclusion by the ideological exigence of the old regime, is in fact in touch with the general atmosphere from the current Romanian historiography. The publishing of sources is seriously behind other powerful Western historiographies which completely consumed the positive stage in their evolution by publishing many primary sources. The discussion of the history of the Greek-Catholic Church in post-communist Romania thus meant first of all going to archives, alongside with re-discussing the subject and launching it again in the historical debate. As anticipated by the previous research conducted by Monseigneur Aloisie Tăutu, respectively Ion Dumitriu Snagov,<sup>9</sup> the return to the archives which took place after 1989 meant that the history of the Greek-Catholic Church appeared once more on the map of contemporary Romanian historiography. Thus, the historiography concerning the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church during the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries has identified and harnessed precious information discovered in archives located inside and outside the country. Some of these sources were quoted for the first time in Romania. Studies which resulted in doctoral thesis or were written in projects with national or European funding, identified and capitalized upon a rich unedited documentation. Such trove of information could be found in places such as: the Hungarian National Archives from Budapest, the Esztergom Primatial Archives, the Ujgorod Bishop Archives, in Ukraine, the Archives of the Imperial Court (Hausshoff und Staatarchiv) from Wien, archives of the Holy See, such as the Vatican Secret Archive, the Propaganda Fide Congregation Archive, the Congregation for Oriental Churches Archive, the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs Archive and many others. They serve to complete the information found in internal

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<sup>9</sup> Ion Dumitriu-Snagov, *România în arhivele Romei. Romeni în arhivele Romanis. Secolul XVIII*, Romanian Book Publishing House, Bucharest 1973, republished in 1999 at Clusium Publishing House from Cluj-Napoca; Idem, *România în diplomația Vaticanului 1939-1944*, Garamond Publishing House, Bucharest, 1991, republished in 1999 at Nova Printing House in Bucharest; Idem, *Le Saint-Siège et la Roumanie moderne 1850-1866*, Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma, 1982; Idem, *Le Saint-Siège et la Roumanie moderne 1866-1914*, Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma, 1989.

archives, most of them located in county archives and at the National Archives Department. We refer to archives created by central and local structures of the Romanian United Church: parishes, deaneries, episcopates, metropolises, religious seminaries and academies. Such archives were transferred in the care of the state after the Greek-Catholic Church was outlawed in 1948. They are up to this date in the care of the state. Many precious documents concerning the external relations of the Church were also found in diplomatic archives. Information concerning this confession during the communist regime can be found in the well-known archives of the former political police, the Securitate. Such archives are well-known to the Romanian historians.

Besides amassing unedited information in many studies focused in reconstruction, historical analysis and interpretation this direction of research resulted in publishing many volumes containing documents that touch upon aspects of the history of the Romanian United Church in the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Such documentary contributions are the result of efforts conducted by historians like Greta Monica Miron,<sup>10</sup> Ana Victoria Sima,<sup>11</sup> Nicolae Bocșan,<sup>12</sup> Simion Retegan,<sup>13</sup> Dumitru Suci, <sup>14</sup> Ion Cârja,<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Greta Monica Miron, *Biserica Greco-Catolică din comitatul Cluj în secolul al XVIII-lea*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Ana Victoria Sima, *Vizitele nunțiilor apostolici vienezi în Transilvania (1855-1868). Documente*, vol. II, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> *Memoriile unui ierarh uitat: Victor Mihályi de Apșa (1841-1918)*, edition, introductory study and notes by Nicolae Bocșan, Ion Cârja, Luminița Wallner-Bărbulescu, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2009; Ioan Boros, *Memorialistica*, edition, introductory study and notes by Valeriu Leu, Nicolae Bocșan, Ion Cârja, Costin Feneșan, Cristian Sabău, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Simion Retegan, *Parohii, biserici și preoți greco-catolici din Transilvania la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea: 1849-1875. Mărturii documentare*, Argonaut, Cluj-Napoca, 2006; Idem, *În umbra clopotnițelor. Școlile confesionale greco-catolice din dieceza Gherlei între 1875-1885. Mărturii documentare*, Argonaut Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Dumitru Suci, *Războiul național din Transilvania de la 1848-1849. Date, realități și fapte reflectate în documente bisericești greco-catolice 1848-1852*, Argonaut Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2014; Idem, *Soldați fără uniformă ai Lansturmului românesc și starea protopopiatelor greco-catolice din Transilvania după Războiul Național din 1848-1849*, Argonaut Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> *Episcopul Ioan Szabó și Sfântul Scaun. Corespondență (1874-1910)*, edition, introductory study and notes by Ion Cârja și Daniel Sularea, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2007; Ioan Vancea, *Corespondență cu Sfântul Scaun (1865-1890)*, edition, introductory study and notes by Ion Cârja și Daniel Sularea, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2007.



Daniela Deteșan,<sup>16</sup> Ioana Bonda,<sup>17</sup> Daniel Sularea,<sup>18</sup> Cecilia Cârja,<sup>19</sup> Petru Magdău,<sup>20</sup> Ioan Marius Bucur,<sup>21</sup> Cristian Vasile.<sup>22</sup>

The Union with Rome and the institutional organization of the Church created in Transylvania through adherence to Catholicism, which was signed by the metropolitan bishop Atanasie Anghel and his protopopes, represented the first major topic of study that fell under the microscope of the post 1989 historical research. The Union of a group of Romanians from Ardeal with the Rome Church and the new ecclesiastic structure thus created have been honored through studies and research conducted by Ovidiu Ghitta<sup>23</sup> and Greta Monica Miron<sup>24</sup> - their doctoral theses which discussed this topic have been published and thus became reference books for the historiography of the subject. Such works are highly relevant from the scientific point of view and also have potential when considering the identity of the United Church, once again legal after the fall of the communist regime. In order to properly tackle this subject, the researcher needs not just to fathom the unedited documents;

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<sup>16</sup> Daniela Deteșan, *Dosarul procesului lemenian*, vol. I-II, Napoca Star Publishing House, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2007-2012.

<sup>17</sup> Alexandru Șterca Șuluțiu, *Scrieri teologice*, edition by Ioana Mihaela Bonda, introductory study: Ioana Mihaela Bonda and Cristian Barta, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel Sularea, *Viața religioasă în dieceza greco-catolică de Gherla (1878-1891). Contribuții documentare*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> *Românii greco-catolici și Episcopia de Hajdúdorogh (1912). Contribuții documentare*, edition, introductory study and notes by Cecilia Cârja, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Victor Szmigelski, *Liturgica*, edition and introductory study by de Petru Magdău, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2008; *Tipografia de la Blaj (1850-1918). Contribuții documentare*, edition by Petru Magdău, Ioana Bonda, Cecilia Cârja, Ciprian Ghișa, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Ioan Marius Bucur, Lavinia Stan, *Persecuția Bisericii Catolice din România. Documente din arhiva Europei libere 1948-1960*, Napoca Star Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, second edition revised and updated, Galaxia Gutenberg Publishing House, Târgu Lăpuș, 2005; Ioan Marius Bucur et al., *România-Vatican. Relații diplomatice*, I, Enciclopedica Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Cristian Vasile, *Istoria Bisericii Greco-Catolice sub regimul comunist 1945-1989. Documente și mărturii*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Ovidiu Ghitta, *Nașterea unei biserici. Biserica Greco-Catolică din Sătmar în primul ei secol de existență (1667-1781)*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2001.

<sup>24</sup> Greta Monica Miron, „...poruncește, scoale-te, du-te, propoveduește...” *Biserica Greco-catolică din Transilvania. Cler și enoriași (1697-1782)*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2004; see also Idem, *Viață parohială și diversitate confesională în Transilvania secolului al XVIII-lea. Studiu de caz: uniți și ortodocși din comitatul Dăbâca*, Mega Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2016.

the subject – which represented an object of inter-confessional and historiographical polemics – needs to be revisited.<sup>25</sup> After approximately a decade since these books were published we note the study signed by Radu Nedici, a historian from Bucharest. His work touches upon the creation of the Greek-Catholic confessional identity in Transylvania in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>26</sup> The Union of the Romanians from Ardeal with the Church of Rome was considered in the recent historiography not only as a topic to be studied and historically reconstituted but also as a topic of historiographical analysis – this is due to the work published by Remus Câmpeanu in 2003.<sup>27</sup>

Among the subjects and themes connected with the history of the Romanian United Church tackled by the post-communist Romanian historiography a significant part is represented by those topics concerning the period between the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. We must also say that they have represented the expression of a research program initiated by professor Nicolea Bocșan at the Faculty of History and Philosophy from Cluj. They were institutionalized in the Institute of Ecclesiastic History in this university. An important theme of research concerning the ecclesiastic history of Greek-Catholic Church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is treated in monographs that discuss the role of certain figure heads from the upper clergy of the United Church, mostly hierarchs but also canonists and professors. Thus, there exist monographs concerning most of the bishops and metropolitan bishops who have led the Greek-Catholic Church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The monographs are the result of younger generations which initially started these studies in doctoral theses. We would thus like to mention the work of Daniel Dumitran concerning the work of bishop Ioan Bob,<sup>28</sup> the monograph concerning the bishop Ioan Lemeni, signed by Ciprian Ghișa,<sup>29</sup> the paper signed by Ioana Mihaela Bonda discussing the first

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<sup>25</sup> Silviu Dragomir, *Istoria desrobirei religioase a Românilor din Ardeal în secolul XVIII*, vol. I, Publishing and Printing Archidiocese House, Sibiu, 1920; vol. II, Publishing and Printing Archidiocese House, Sibiu, 1930.

<sup>26</sup> Radu Nedici, *Formarea identității confesionale în Transilvania veacului al XVIII-lea. Biserica și comunitate*, Bucharest University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Remus Câmpeanu, *Biserica Română Unită între istorie și istoriografie*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2003.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel Dumitran, *Un timp al reformelor. Biserica Greco-Catolică din Transilvania sub conducerea episcopului Ioan Bob (1782/1830)*, Argonaut Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Ciprian Ghișa, *Episcopia Greco-Catolică de Făgăraș în timpul păstoririi lui Ioan Lemeni 1832-1850*, vol. I-II, Argonaut Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2008.

metropolitan bishop of the Romanian United Church, Alexandru Sterca Șuluțiu,<sup>30</sup> the book written by Ion Cârja concerning the metropolitan bishop Ioan Vancea,<sup>31</sup> the works of Luminița Wallner Bărbulescu<sup>32</sup> and Diana Maria Covaci<sup>33</sup> about Victor Mihályi from Apșa, who served as bishop and metropolitan bishop, the doctoral research conducted by Lucian Turcu about the first Romanian metropolitan bishop of the United Church after Great Romania was formed, namely Vasile Suciu.<sup>34</sup> We can add to the above mentioned papers numerous studies, articles and conferences used by the historians to better understand the religious, political, national and cultural work conducted by these church leaders. The dictionary of personalities coordinated by Mirela Popa-Andrei, published in 2010, represents an excellent repertory of representative persons from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century from the Romanian Greek-Catholic elite.<sup>35</sup>

The organization and functioning of the different levels and institutional structures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Greek-Catholic Church can also be found as a separate subject in the historiography concerning that period. The first work to be mentioned was written by Iudita Călușer and generally discussed the Greek-Catholic Episcopate from Oradea during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>36</sup> More applied studies have been latter written about: Ana Victoria Sima, they concern the institution of the chapter in the history of the Greek-Catholic Church,<sup>37</sup> other studies were written by Mirela Popa Andrei<sup>38</sup> and Camelia Vulea<sup>39</sup> concerning the apostolic

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<sup>30</sup> Ioana Mihaela Bonda, *Mitropolia Română Unită în timpul păstoririi lui Alexandru Sterca Șuluțiu (1853-1867)*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Ion Cârja, *Biserica și societate în Transilvania în perioada păstoririi mitropolitului Ioan Vancea (1869-1892)*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Luminița Wallner Bărbulescu, *Zorile modernității. Episcopia Greco-Catolică de Lugoj în perioada ierarhului Victor Mihályi de Apșa*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2007.

<sup>33</sup> Diana Maria Covaci, *Mitropolitul Victor Mihályi de Apșa și epoca sa (1895-1918)*, doctoral thesis, Cluj-Napoca, 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Lucian-Dorel Turcu, *Arhidieceza greco-catolică de Alba-Iulia și Făgăraș în timpul păstoririi lui Vasile Suciu (1920-1935)*, doctoral thesis, Cluj-Napoca, 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Mirela Popa-Andrei et al., *Canonici, profesori și vicari foranei din Biserica Română Unită (1853-1918). Dicționar*, Mega Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Iudita Călușer, *Episcopia Greco-Catolică de Oradea. Contribuții monografice*, Logos '94 Publishing House, Oradea, 2000.

<sup>37</sup> Ana Victoria Sima, *L'istituzione sinodale nella Chiesa Greco-Cattolica romana nella seconda metà del XIX secolo*, in Francesco Guida (edited by), *Etnia e confessione in Transilvania (secoli XVI-XX)*, Lithos Editrice, Roma, 2000, pp. 75-86.

<sup>38</sup> Mirela Andrei (married Popa), *La granița Imperiului. Vicariatul Greco-Catolic al Rodnei în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea*, Argonaut Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2006.

vicariate, by Ciprian Rigman concerning the protopresbyterates, parishes and affiliates,<sup>40</sup> by Daniela Mârza concerning the schools from the Blaj archdioceses at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>41</sup> by Daniel Sularea concerning the confessional school from Gherla episcopate in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>42</sup> and by Silviu Sana concerning the confessional schools from the Oradea united eparchy in between 1850-1900.<sup>43</sup> The historian Simion Retegan published numerous volumes containing documents related to the Greek-Catholic religion in Ardeal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as a series of studies about the Greek-Catholic clergy from the second half of that century (intellectual training, financial endowment, appointment in the office etc.) and about the religious schools belonging to this Church.<sup>44</sup> Simion Retegan, who is a researcher at the “George Barițiu” Institute of History of the Romanian Academy from Cluj Napoca, stand out as a reference in the Romanian historiography interested in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly

<sup>39</sup> Camelia Elena Vulea, *Biserica Greco-Catolică din Vicariatul Hațegului (1850-1918)*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2009.

<sup>40</sup> Ciprian Rigman, *Parohii, filii și preoți în Episcopia Greco-Catolică de Gherla la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea (1856-1868)*, Argonaut Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2016.

<sup>41</sup> Daniela Mârza, *Învățământ românesc în Transilvania. Școlile Arhidiecezei de Alba Iulia și Făgăraș la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea și începutul secolului XX*, Romanian Academy/Center for Transylvanian Studies, Cluj-Napoca, 2011.

<sup>42</sup> Daniel Sularea, *Școală și societate. Învățământul elementar confesional în Episcopia Greco-Catolică de Gherla (1867-1918)*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2008.

<sup>43</sup> Silviu Sana, „...pentru sufletele credincioșilor săi...”. *Structuri bisericești și școlare în Eparhia Greco-Catolică de Oradea Mare (1850-1918)*, Oradea University Publishing House, Oradea, 2011.

<sup>44</sup> Redăm selectiv câteva titluri: Simion Retegan, *Aspecte ale biconfesionalității românilor din Transilvania la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea (1850-1867)*, in „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj-Napoca”, XXXV, 1996, pp. 177-183; Idem, *O tentativă din timpul absolutismului pentru întrunirea sinodului metropolitan la Blaj (1858)*, in Camil Mureșanu (edited by), *Transilvania între medieval și modern*, vol. I, Center for Transylvanian Studies, Cluj-Napoca, 1996, pp. 83-95; Idem, *Formation scolaire du clergé uniate de Transylvanie à la moitié du XIXe siècle (1850-1870)*, „Transylvanian Review”, VI, 1997, nr. 1, pp. 148-155; Idem, *Înzestrarea materială a clerului greco-catolic din Transilvania la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea (1850-1867)*, in Gheorghe Gorun, Ovidiu Horea Pop (edited by), *300 de ani de la Unirea Bisericii românești din Transilvania cu Biserica Romei*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2000, pp. 243-249; Idem, *Parohii și filii ale diecezei Blajului în timpul păstoririi lui Alexandru Sterca-Șuluțiu (1850-1867)*, in Pál Judit, Sipos Gábor (edited by), *Emlékkönyv Csetri Elek születésének nyolcvanadik évfordulójára*, Transylvanian Museum Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, pp. 401-406; Idem, *Parohiile protopopiatului Cluj în timpul păstoririi mitropolitului Alexandru Sterca Șuluțiu (1850-1867)*, in „Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Theologia Graeco-Catholica”, XLIX, 2004, nr. 1, pp. 137-144.

the area of Transylvania, the history of the Greek-Catholic Church being one of his favorite topics.

Another research topic which falls in the chronology of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and which was studied in the past 27 years concerns the external relations of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church. Ana Victoria Sima published documents from the archives concerning the relations with the Holy See; they were analyzed and referred to the visits of papal delegations in Transylvania in the 1850s, following the creation of the United Romanian Metropolis.<sup>45</sup> The same author furnished us with a doctoral thesis which is the most complete reenactment of the relations between the Romanian United Church and the Holy See in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The thesis was published in English at Milano in 2013<sup>46</sup> and is a reference work for this topic, alongside numerous studies published in or outside the country. Due to the find of an important document – the journal kept by the metropolitan bishop Ioan Vancea who participated in 1869-1870 at the First Vatican Council – Nicolae Bocșan and Ion Cârja published an important paper concerning the participation and representation of the Romania United Church at this Council, the first to take place in modern times.<sup>47</sup> Numerous studies and articles were also dedicated to this research topic. We would like to mention in this context the collection of studies brought together in a volume edited by Ion Cârja. The topic is represented by the relations between Romanians and the Holy See from the Middle Ages until the present day. The volume was published in 2004.<sup>48</sup> With regards to the relations between the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church and the Hungarian Latin Church during the Austrian-Hungarian dualism we can mention several studies signed by Nicolae Bocșan<sup>49</sup> and Ion Cârja<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ana Victoria Sima, *Vizitele nunțiilor apostolice vienezi în Transilvania (1855-1868)*, vol. II, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2003.

<sup>46</sup> Idem, *Affirming Identity. The Romanian Greek-Catholic Church at the Time of the First Vatican Council*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Nicolae Bocșan, Ion Cârja, *Biserica Română Unită la Conciliul Ecumenic Vatican I (1869-1870)*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, published in German by Peter Lang Publishing House, Frankfurt, 2013.

<sup>48</sup> Ion Cârja (edited by), *I Romeni e la Santa Sede. Miscellanea di studi di storia ecclesiastica*, Scriptorium Publishing House, Bucarest-Roma, 2004.

<sup>49</sup> Nicolae Bocșan, *Alterități în relațiile interconfesionale din Transilvania în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea (romano-catolic – greco-catolic)*, in Nicolae Bocșan, Valeriu Leu (edited by), *Identitate și alteritate. Studii de imagologie*, Reșița, 1996, pp. 96-110; Idem, *Imaginea bisericii romano-catolice la românii greco-catolici (Congresul autonomiei bisericii catolice din Ungaria)*, in „*Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Historia*”, 41, 1996, no. 1-2, pp. 49-68; Nicolae Bocșan, Ion Cârja, *Il metropolita Victor Mihályi de Apșa e i*

who have tackled a distinct topic in these relations: Catholic autonomy. The subject however has yet to be brought to its full potential. Following this train of thought we must mention the contributions signed by Cecilia Cârja which touched upon the relations between the Romanian Church and the Holy See and with the Hungarian governments of that time, given that, in 1912, the Hajdudorog episcopate for the Greek-Catholic Hungarians was created.<sup>51</sup>

A different research, which does not fall in the categories mentioned so far, is the one pursued by Lavinia Buda. She discussed in her doctoral thesis the cult of the Virgin Mary in the Greek-Catholic Church at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>52</sup> It is a study about the history of the Greek-Catholic life which was partially published by the author. Few such studies have been conducted in the recent historiography.<sup>53</sup>

The manner in which the past of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church was capitalized upon by the post 1989 historiography represents, directly and indirectly, a manner of proclaiming and expressing its ecclesiastic and spiritual identity. Among the studies and research focused on this topic, we can note contributions that wanted to analyze systematically the manner of building this confessional identity, its landmarks and its dynamics when related to the alterity with which Greek-Catholicism cohabitated until 1918 in the Danubian monarchy. Concerning this topic, we must mention the work of Ciprian Ghișa about the creation of the identity discourse in the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church from its creation and until the half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>54</sup> The collective volume *Identități confesionale în Europa Central-Orientală (secolele XVII-XXI)/Confessional Identities in Eastern and Central Europe (the 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries)* – published in 2009, contains a series of studies that put

*rapport tra la Chiesa Greco-Cattolica romana e l' "Autonomia Cattolica" ungherese*, in Ion Cârja (edited by), *I Romeni e la Santa Sede. Miscellanea di studi di storia ecclesiastica*, Scriptorium Publishing House, Bucarest-Roma, 2004. pp. 162-188.

<sup>50</sup> I. Cârja, *Biserică și societate în Transilvania în perioada păstoririi mitropolitului Ioan Vancea*, pp. 171-222.

<sup>51</sup> Cecilia Cârja, *Biserică și politică. Înființarea Episcopiei de Hajdúdorogh (1912)*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2012.

<sup>52</sup> Lavinia Buda, *Cultul Fecioarei Maria la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea și începutul secolului al XX-lea. Imagini și simboluri*, doctoral thesis, Cluj-Napoca, 2011.

<sup>53</sup> Idem, *Uniunea Mariană a Femeilor Române Unite din Eparhia Greco-Catolică de Cluj-Gherla*, in vol. Constantin Bărbulescu et al. (edited by), *Identitate și alteritate 5. Studii de istorie politică și culturală*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2010, pp. 130-139.

<sup>54</sup> Ciprian Ghișa, *Biserica Greco-Catolică din Transilvania (1700-1850). Elaborarea discursului identitar*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2006.

forward interesting analyses concerning the components of the Greek-Catholic confessional identity.<sup>55</sup> With regards to the confessional identity of the United Romanians in recent history we would like to point out Ciprian Ghișa's excellent analysis in his study: *Aspecte ale identității confesionale la începutul mileniului trei. Studiu de caz: Biserica greco-catolică din România*.<sup>56</sup>

The research concerning the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church from the interwar period is not so numerous compared to the historiography of this subject for the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Still we want to mention among the works dedicated to this period the one signed by Ioan Marius Bucur, published in 2003<sup>57</sup> and the monograph signed by the younger historian Lucian Turcu who discussed the period when Vasile Suciuc served as metropolitan bishop for Blaj.<sup>58</sup>

With regards to the history of the Romanian United Church in between 1948-1989, the subject was touched upon in the post-totalitarian historiography as a subject of Romania communist history. Contributions both relevant and important about this subject have been put forward, although the subject is far from depletion. We must mention here the valuable works signed by the historians Ovidiu Bozgan<sup>59</sup> and Cristian Vasile,<sup>60</sup> from Bucharest and the research signed by Ioan Marius Bucur and Lavinia Stan.<sup>61</sup> When one considers this historiographical landscape one must bring forward the contributions signed by professor George Cipăianu who brought into the scientific network information taken from the French diplomatic archives. They

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<sup>55</sup> Nicolae Bocșan, Ana Victoria Sima, Ion Cârja (edited by), *Identități confesionale în Europa Central-Orientală (secolele XVII-XXI)*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2010. With regards to the confessional identity of the United Romanians see especially: N. Bocșan, A. V. Sima, I. Cârja, *Modele constituționale în Biserica Greco-Catolică din Transilvania (a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea)*, pp. 393-404; Ciprian Ghișa, Ioana Bonda, Petru Magdău, *Coordonate ale discursului identitar greco-catolic în secolul al XIX-lea*, pp. 453-467.

<sup>56</sup> Published in Constantin Bărbulescu et al. (edited by), *Identitate și alteritate 5. Studii de istorie politică și culturală*, pp. 156-172.

<sup>57</sup> Ioan Marius Bucur, *Din istoria Bisericii Greco-Catolice Române (1918-1953)*, Accent Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2003.

<sup>58</sup> See note 34.

<sup>59</sup> Ovidiu Bozgan, *Cronica unui eșec previzibil. România și Sfântul Scaun în epoca pontificatului lui Paul a VI-lea (1963-1978)*, „Curtea Veche” Publishing House, București, 2004.

<sup>60</sup> Cristian Vasile, *Între Vatican și Kremlin. Biserica Greco-Catolică în timpul regimului comunist*, „Curtea Veche” Publishing House, București, 2003.

<sup>61</sup> See note 21.

were used to recreate the context in which the Romanian Greek-Catholic cult was abolished in 1948.<sup>62</sup> The study of the 1948-1989 period presents the researcher with two additional options when compared to the previous timeframes from the history of Romanian Greek-Catholic Church. These options allow the researcher to create ampler, more nuanced reenactments; these options are the oral investigation respectively the free access one now enjoys in the archives of the former Securitate. We would like to point out from the multitude of research conducted with the instruments specific for oral history the considerations presented by Doru Radosav in his study from 2016,<sup>63</sup> alongside the doctoral research conducted by Maria Rițiu.<sup>64</sup> The CNSAS (National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives) archive fascinates the historian interested in the communist period, thus also those working on subjects touching the history of the Greek-Catholic Church. This fascination explains the frequent usage of these types of documents in the last years. As a result of this interest we see volumes and editions which introduce in the scientific network documents of the highest importance for the situation of Greek-Catholic personalities which were monitored by the former Securitate. Several examples are the works published by Sergiu Soica,<sup>65</sup> Silviu Sana,<sup>66</sup> Ioan Marius Bucur.<sup>67</sup> A very important contribution is the collective volume concerning the clandestine period of the Greek-Catholic Church, published in 2009 and coordinated by Nicolae Gudea and Dan Ruscu.<sup>68</sup> The “catacombs”

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<sup>62</sup> George Cipăianu, *Catholicisme et comunisme en Roumanie 1946-1955. Une perspective diplomatique française*, EFES, Cluj-Napoca, 2014.

<sup>63</sup> Doru Radosav, *Istoria din memorie. Încercări de istorie orală*, Argonaut Publishing House, Symphologic Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, Gatineau, 2016, pp. 219-224 (chapter *Biserica Română Unită în anii comunismului între istorie și memorie. Câteva considerații*).

<sup>64</sup> Maria Rițiu, *Biserica Greco-Catolică din Nord-Vestul Transilvaniei în anii comunismului în memoria colectivă*, doctoral thesis, Cluj-Napoca, 2009.

<sup>65</sup> Sergiu Soica, Gabriel Buboii, *Episcopul Ioan Bălan în dosarele Securității*, Mega Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2015; Sergiu Soica, *Cardinalul Iuliu Hossu în dosarele Securității. Note informative*, Mega Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2016; Idem, *Nicolae Brânzeu și dosarul din arhiva CNSAS. Povestea unui eroism discret*, Galaxia Gutenberg Publishing House, Târgu Lăpuș, 2013.

<sup>66</sup> Silviu Sana, *Rezistentul. Episcopul dr. Iuliu Hirțea în documentele Securității (1947-1979)*, Oradea University Publishing House, Oradea, 2014.

<sup>67</sup> Ioan Marius Bucur, *Culpa de a fi greco-catolic. Procesul episcopului Alexandru Rusu (1957)*, Argonaut Publishing House & Mega Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2015.

<sup>68</sup> Nicolae Gudea, Dan Ruscu (edited by), *Biserica Română Unită (Greco-Catolică). 60 de ani de la desființare. Calvarul (1945-1948) / The Romanian Uniate (Greek-Catholic) Church. 60 years from the abolition. The way of the cross (1945-1948)*, Mega Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2009.



period, 1948-1989, from the life of this Church was also researched internationally: for example, the Italian translation of the memoirs of bishop Ioan Ploscariu,<sup>69</sup> respectively, more recently, those written by the cardinal Iuliu Hossu.<sup>70</sup> We would also note some studies which touch upon the topics and which were published internationally in revues covering religious history. This is an expression of the need to externalize the research offered by this subject to the Romanian historiography. Such examples include the studies signed by .... and published in the volume *Fede e martirio. Le Chiese cattoliche orientali nell'Europa del Novecento*.<sup>71</sup> We can add to this another volume, the result of an international colloquium, which took place in Rome on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2013, *Fede e martirio. Testimonianza di fede della Chiesa greco-cattolica romana durante la persecuzione comunista* and which was focused on the subject of the canonization of the Greek-Catholic bishops arrested in 1948, given the outlawing of the Romanian United Church.<sup>72</sup>

At the end of this short overview of the historiographical production dedicated to the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church, we believe we have to present several general considerations. Thus, it is obvious that the liberalization of historical writing, after the fall of the Romanian communist regime and the reactivation – in this context – of the Romanian United Church, naturally brought in the scope of historiography the Churches' past, be it recent or older. The historic writing concerning the Greek-Catholic confession presents itself today as a complex workshop, with multiple themes, with obvious progress which was meant to surpass the blockade imposed on it by the communist propaganda and ideology.

The research of the Greek-Catholic Church which falls in the timeframe of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has a specific trait, a profile which makes it particular in the post 1989 historiography that dealt with this Church.

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<sup>69</sup> Ioan Ploscaru, *Catene e terrore. Un vescovo clandestino greco-cattolico nella persecuzione comunista in Romania*, cura di Marco Dalla Torre, traduzione in lingua italiana di Mariana Ghergu e Giuseppe Munarini, Edizioni Dehoniane, Bologna, 2013.

<sup>70</sup> Iuliu Hossu, *La nostra fede è la nostra vita. Memorie*, a cura di Marco Dalla Torre, traduzione in lingua italiana di Giuseppe Munarini, Cristian Florin Sabău e Ioana Mărginean-Cociș, Edizioni Dehoniane, Bologna, 2016.

<sup>71</sup> Aleksander Rebernik, Gianpaolo Rigotti, Michel Van Parys (edited by), *Fede e martirio. Le Chiese cattoliche orientali nell'Europa del Novecento*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano, 2003, pp. 103-118, 119-130, 347-351.

<sup>72</sup> Vasile Man (edited by), *Fede e martirio. Testimonianza di fede della Chiesa greco-cattolica romana durante la persecuzione comunista. Presentazione degli Atti del convegno tenutosi a Roma il 23 novembre 2013 nella Basilica di San Bartolomeo Apostolo all'Isola Tiberina*, Editura Surorilor Lauretane, Baia Mare, 2015.

Thus it is obvious that the study of the “Greek-Catholic 19<sup>th</sup> century” along with the study of other confessions from Transylvania, became a research program, institutionalized in the Institute of Ecclesiastical History. The Institute was created by professor Nicolae Bocşan in 2005 in the Babeş-Bolyai University. In this research institute there took place a systematic demarche through the identification of priority themes and subjects and through the use of primary sources which could allow the bridging of the gap that was present in the 90s with regards to the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church. Besides recovering a territory of “forbidden” Romanian history, like the one generated by the Greek-Catholic structures, in a climate of equilibrium and objectivity, the Institute of Ecclesiastical History helped to create young researchers. The relation master-disciple has functioned in a manner rarely seen in the Romanian academic environment and has had positive consequences for the young students, masters and doctoral students interested in the history of the Church and religious life. The fundamental function served by professor Bocşan was to build an atmosphere of authentic academic study.

At the end of the 27 years since the Greek-Catholic workshop was recreated in the Romanian historiography we can note, in a short account, that we are dealing with several approaches to the history of this Church, with more than 3 centuries passed from its creation. More exactly, we are dealing with the 3 “histories” of the Romanian Greek-Catholicism from Ardeal and we can notice its contours upon an overall analysis. The first one would be the academic history, from afar the most visible and the most consistent, which recommends itself through finalized research, through the editorial projects, through numerous monographs, volumes of documents, studies and articles, periodicals and collective volumes that at some point touched upon the subject. It is a history written by professionals, academics or researchers employed in the institutes of the Romanian Academy, without any explicit confessional affiliation, or in any case by persons whose spirituals and religious options did not interfere and did not modify the balanced approach towards a past they chose to study. Secondly, we are dealing with a history serving as a manifest of identity, an “official” history – if we can call it thus -, created by the elites of the Church, by the clerics, a discourse meant to promote its own past, often operating with superlative categories and constantly bringing forward the exceptional role played by the structures and personalities of this confession, the role it played at the political, national and cultural level in the modern Romanian history or the traumatizing experience it endured in between

1948-1989. It is the type of laudatory history, typical for the public expression of the identity of a Church, present in the official discourse of the elites. Often it is also present in controversial contexts, especially when relating with the representatives and opinions coming from the Orthodox Church. We now consider that we can identify a third level when relating to the past, a partisan and polemic level, which is present in the disputes between the two traditional Romanian Churches from Ardeal: the Orthodox, respectively the Greek-Catholic one. It is a level that reactivates many of the multiple themes disputed between the two confessions, for example the Union from 1700. The "confessional" reading of this Union, as given by the two Churches, generated in the past and even now a polemic and different visions, often contrasting. There are aspects, fewer in number, over which the confessional historical speech agrees, such as the collaboration between the two Churches in decisive moments from national existence of the Romanians from the Habsburg/Austrian-Hungarian Empire (Andrei Şaguna present alongside Ioan Lemeni at the Great National Meeting from Câmpia Libertăţii, at Blaj, on the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> of May 1848; the presence of Miron Cristea alongside Iuliu Hossu in Alba Iulia at the Great Union, 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1918 - they are moments when the representatives of these two Churches knew how to go beyond the separate confessions in the name of the national interest). Another subject, which deals this time with contemporary history, which is treated from completely opposite angles by the two Churches in their official discourse is connected to the events from 1948. This moment represents for Greek-Catholics an outlawry and the beginning of a long martyrdom for the bishops, clergy, believers when they faced the communist universe. The Orthodox Church maintains even today that what happened in 1948 was the "religious re-unification", the return of the Greek-Catholics in the embrace of the "ancient Church".<sup>73</sup> The inter-confessional dispute based on subjects of common history, which are "delicate" as far as identity is concerned, fall on the rather general context of relation between the Greek-Catholic and the Orthodox Church. Disputes and litigations are present, particularly when the patrimony is concerned, and have often been taken in front of the judges.

The past of the Greek-Catholic Church can thus be found today in the writings of the historians, in the discourse of the clergy and the

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<sup>73</sup> For the Orthodox opinion on this matter see *Relațiile actuale dintre ortodocși și greco-catolici în România*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition revised and updated, Renașterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, pp. 12-14.

bishops, in the life experience of believers, especially those who consider clandestine the “totalitarian night”. For them their role as “members” of the Church of Rome has represented a fundamental landmark in their identity. This present article is not meant to completely analyze all the contributions that make up the post-communist historiography of the Romanian Greek-Catholicism which stands out through its richness and variety in terms of quantity and scientific relevance. Our intention is limited to only pointing out the main tendencies, directions and themes, more obvious when writing the history of the United Church after 1989, the contributors and the more visible works that have touched upon this topic.