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Aspects of Confessional Diversity within the Romanian Space



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FEW EUROPEAN countries today amass, within their territorial borders, such a vast array of ethnicities and confessions as Romania does. As the living testimony of its historical heritage, Romania's ethnical and confessional diversity may genuinely amount to a "representation," as Professor Cesare Alzati maintains, of the "European religious macrocosm."¹ The distinguished Italian professor's statement is all the more germane since the *old* European continent is nowadays experiencing a continuous re-establishment of borders, which also entails an expansion of its efforts towards *integrating* the new territories within a unity that is envisioned as the emblematic feature of the new Europe. Given that its realities are so diverse and diversified, this much-invoked *unity* may clearly only be understood and assumed as an extraordinary *diversity*, which demands that the respect for "otherness" should be the fundamental principle aiming to pave the way to mutual understanding and harmony.

From this vantage point, Romania, as a member state in the European Union since 2007, has brought forth the complex and exemplary legacy of its multi-ethnic and pluriconfessional space into the new Europe. Its exemplarity resides in the manner whereby its ethnic and confessional communities, incontestably marked by their own particularities and individualities, have nonetheless managed to live together within one and the same space for centuries. This has not always been a peaceful cohabitation; it has, rather frequently, been fraught with tension, animosity and conflict. However, beyond all this, their need and desire to dwell together within the same space have proved to be the most powerful incentives towards overcoming their differences and intolerance and allowing tolerance and mutual acceptance to prevail.

That is why, starting from the ecclesiastical past of the Romanian and, in particular, the Transylvanian space, this volume intends to be a plea for com-

5. "Our circumstances here can never compare to those over there, which have always been and still are more favourable in all respects," ALROMSS, Șaguna, Doc. 1117 (concept).
6. The Archives of the Romanian Orthodox Bishopric in Vâlcea, File 96/1857, f. 2.
7. ALROMSS, Șaguna, Doc. 941.
8. ALROMSS, Șaguna, Doc. 1001.
9. See the analysis of this debate, with all the previous contributions, in Iorgu D. Ivan, "Aspecte canonice în discuția a doi mari ierarhi ortodocși români," *Glasul bisericii* 34, 3-4 (1975): 278-290.
10. ALROMSS, Șaguna, Doc. 1067.
11. ALROMSS, Șaguna, Doc. 1079.
12. ALROMSS, Șaguna, Doc. 1098.
13. ALROMSS, Șaguna, Doc. 1099.
14. The Archives of the Romanian Orthodox Bishopric in Vâlcea, File 96/1857, f. 2; Ioan Lupăș, *Documente istorice transilvănene* I (Cluj, 1990), 461-464.
15. Aneta Nicalescu, "Legăturile dintre Andrei Șaguna, Mitropolitul Ardealului și Sfântul Calinic de la Cernica, episcopul Râmnicului," *Astra* 1861-1991. 130 de ani de la înființare (Sibiu, 1992), 156.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, 156-157.
18. ALROMSS, Șaguna, Doc. 1289, 19 February 1858.
19. ALROMSS, Șaguna, Doc. 1290, 13 March 1858.
20. ALROMSS, Șaguna, Doc. 1558, 19 October 1861.
21. ALROMSS, Șaguna, Doc. 1593, 3 November 1861.
22. ALROMSS, Șaguna, Doc. 2136, 20 June 1865.
23. Keith Hitchins, *Ortodoxie și naționalitate. Andrei Șaguna și românii din Transilvania 1846-1873* (Bucharest, 1995), 246, 249.

Abstract

Andrei Șaguna and Bishop Calinic of Râmnic

This study considers a relevant example of the co-operation between Andrei Șaguna and the Orthodox priests from the Danube countries, which reveals the ideas of the hierarchy seated in Blaj regarding the unity of Orthodox Romanians, canon law and liturgical books. It also valorises the body of correspondence between Bishops Andrei Șaguna and Calinic of Vâlcea, who held neighbouring dioceses and maintained a constant co-operation through the exchange of books, vestments and ecclesiastical views.

Keywords

Andrei Șaguna; Bishop Calinic; Bishopric of Transylvania; Bishopric of Vâlcea; church printing press; Orthodox canon law.

Ecclesiastical Elites and Structures

The Organisation and Functioning of the Metropolitan Institution in the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church under the Pastorate of Metropolitan Ioan Vancea (1869-1892)*

ION CÂRJA

IOAN VANCEA of Bureasa—Archbishop and Metropolitan of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș! The high priest residing in Blaj concurrently assumed both the position of Diocesan Bishop of the Metropolitan Diocese, having the same ecclesiastical duties and plenipotentiary powers as his suffragans, the Bishops of Oradea, Gherla and Lugoj, and the rank of head of the Metropolitan Ecclesiastical Province of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș, representing thus the highest authority in the hierarchy of the Greek-Catholic Church. As regards the demarcation line between his (Arch)Episcopal and Metropolitan dignities, the historical evidence is not always and entirely unequivocal and transparent. Although these two qualities are, in current ecclesiastical practice, coextensive, we consider that a delimitation should be made, or that we should, at least, highlight the particular characteristics of the Metropolitan and the Metropolitan See in comparison with the Arch(Diocesan) structure.

At the time the Metropolitan Province of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș was created, the idea of a Metropolitan See had a venerable history. Since the ecclesiastical union, the Greek-Catholic Bishops of Făgăraș had frequently used appellatives derived from the word "Mitropolie" (Metropolitan See) including variations such as "vlădică (Metropolitan) of the Romanians" or: "in Blaj, at the Metropolitan

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See," expressing thereby both a desideratum of continuance with the older Romanian Metropolitan See of Bălgrad (Alba Iulia) and, ultimately, an imperative of institutional and national advancement. The desideratum of setting up the Metropolitan See highlights the idea of an autonomous national church, with a national hierarchy, freed from the jurisdiction of the Primate of Hungary.¹

The idea of a Metropolitan See was taken over by the national political movement, being transferred from the ecclesiastical sphere proper to the priority area of the Romanian national objectives. In that sense, the Revolution of 1848 set forth the desideratum of a national Romanian Church and of an autonomous Metropolitan See, whereby confessional disputes and rifts could be overcome and national unity could be accomplished. After the Revolution, the project was resumed, along confessional lines, by the elites of the two Romanian Churches. Although waged on ever more divergent paths by the Orthodox and the Greek-Catholics in Transylvania, the struggle for re-activating the Metropolitan See claimed as its foundational legitimating benchmark a symbolic continuity with the same Romanian Metropolitan See of Bălgrad, from before the Union with Rome. For both confessions, the efforts undertaken towards re-activating the Metropolitan See signified, essentially and fundamentally, a struggle for an autonomous church, liberated from the interference of neighboring—Serbian Orthodox and Hungarian Roman Catholic—hierarchies.² The establishment of the Metropolitan Province of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș in 1853 entailed, besides the preoccupation of pontifical authorities to organize this new ecclesiastical province, that Romanians from Transylvania had to undertake an exercise of "readjustment" to a "new" institution: the Metropolitan See, which, up to that point, had only existed at an ideational level of projects, petitions and vindictive memorials, rather than at the level of concrete ecclesiastical structures. In this sense, the pastorate of the first Metropolitan, Alexandru Sterea Șulțiu, may be valorized as the period in which the Metropolitan institution underwent a process of "acclimation" to the actual ecclesiastical practice of Greek-Catholic Romanians.

Ascertaining the specificity or the very identity of the metropolitan institution and its functionality presupposes understanding several reference systems for the period in question: first, the system of canonical regulations which set forth its competences; second, the jurisdiction of the metropolitan province and of its primate, as well as the state's legal basis that "enacted" it as a distinct ecclesiastical entity; and, third, the level of actual ecclesiastical practice, where it functioned as a court with superior jurisdiction to the archdiocese and the suffragan bishoprics.

The Pontifical Bull *Ecclesiarum Christi ad omni lingua*, promulgated by Pope Pius IX on 26 November 1853, is, above all, the founding document of the highest

importance in defining the metropolitan institution. The document provides for the establishment of an ecclesiastical province of metropolitan rank, comprising: on the one hand, the territories of the Dioceses of Făgăraș and Oradea Mare, which are to be removed, once and for all, from the jurisdiction and metropolitan authority of the Archbishopric and Metropolitan See of Esztergom, and, on the other hand, the two new Bishoprics of Lugoj and Gherla. We must emphasize the significance of the terminological choice in the papal document: an ecclesiastical province of metropolitan rank, concurrent with the establishment of a distinct Archiepiscopal and Metropolitan See: "its own Greek-Catholic, Uniata, Romanian-speaking ecclesiastical province and, at the same time, in an Archiepiscopal and Metropolitan See of Făgăraș of the Greek-Catholic Romanians United with Rome [...]"³

The canonical grounds which thereafter developed the founding principles in the papal bull were the decrees of the Provincial Synod of 1872, which explicitly stipulated the position of the Metropolitan within the church hierarchy, as well as his duties and competences. The 1872 resolutions significantly focused on the Metropolitan, on his rights and plenipotentiary powers in ecclesiastical government, rather than on the metropolitan institution. This demonstrates that the synod decree operated with ecclesiological and juridical categories derived from Latin canon law, where the episcopal hierarchical rank and authority are, second to those of the pope, the creative principle of ecclesiastical life, and not from Eastern canon law, where it is the community that ecclesiolegically represents the foundation for the existence of the Church. The Metropolitan dignity is thus, under the abovementioned synod decrees (chapter III part II), "a middle rank of the highest importance, in between the head of the Church and the bishops," dating back to the apostolic times (the decrees cite canon 34 of the Apostles and canon 9 of the Synod of Antioch to support this statement). The decrees then enumerate seven categories of the Metropolitan's "rights" in the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church. The Metropolitan is thus entitled to demand that the Bishops in his province acknowledge him as their head and co-operate with him in the province's general interest; the Metropolitan is the protector of all churches in the province, hence his pre-eminence over his co-provincial bishops, as well as the right to be mentioned in the Liturgy and in other public prayers by the bishops and the clergy.

Nothing of general importance and interest for the entire province can happen without the Metropolitan's knowledge and cooperation. As head of that ecclesiastical province, the Metropolitan is entitled to summon provincial synods, to preside over the election of bishops, in accordance with the various usages in force, to verify the candidates' degrees of competence and merit, to ordain the elected bishop, after the Pope has granted the latter canonical investiture.

When a vacancy of the Metropolitan See occurs, the senior bishop, together with the Metropolitan Ordinariate and the other bishops, has the duty to start the entire procedure, which consists of the election process, the examination of the candidates and the submission of the ternary to the emperor for appointment.

The Metropolitan also has the right to function as an appeal authority for the suffragan episcopal courts concerning all ecclesiastical matters, which is a right of utmost importance for the autonomy of the Romanian Metropolitan Province. He has the right to demand the suffragan bishops that they do not absent themselves from their residence without well-founded canonical reasons, that they tend to the vacant episcopal churches and demand that a chapter vicarage be constituted. As head of the entire province, he has the right to oversee the integrity of faith and morals, adherence to the canons, and the uniform observance of the divine cult. In order to eliminate abuses in these areas, he is entitled to make canonical visitations. The Metropolitan also has, above all the other bishops, the right of *praesentia* in Ecumenical Synods, as well as the right to wear the *pallium* as a sign of the archiepiscopal jurisdiction. The synod asserts that all these rights belong to the Greek-Catholic Metropolitan See of Alba-Iulia and Făgăraș and rules that they shall be upheld by all parishioners in the province. The chapter devoted to the Metropolitan's competences ends with a corollary that shifts the emphasis from the high priest onto the ecclesiastical province, which is declared "autonomous and independent of the jurisdiction of any other ecclesiastical province," depending solely and exclusively on the Apostolic See of Rome, in accordance with the provisions of the Founding Papal Bull.⁴

An examination of the founding canonical regulations governing the Metropolitan authority of the Greek-Catholic Church categorically disavows any superficial misconception whereby in relation to the suffragan bishops, the Metropolitan might represent just a *primus inter pares*, or the bearer of a mere honorary title. A fuller understanding of the functionality of the Metropolitan institution would, of course, require seeing how the synod canonical regulations worked in the actual practice of ecclesiastical life and whether the decrees were effectively enforced in reality or remained mere declarations, dead letters on a page; however, in canonical-judicial terms, we may accept, at this point, that the Metropolitan authority incorporates and prevails upon the episcopal authority. As regards plenipotentiary powers, the Metropolitan's jurisdiction over the suffragan bishoprics is comparable to the jurisdiction of diocesan bishops over archpriests and archpresbyteres. The Metropolitan authority neither supplants nor marginalizes the episcopal authority. Nor even in cases of a vacancy occurring in a suffragan bishopric does the Metropolitan become interim bishop of that diocese; he is just entitled to enjoin the election of a chapter vicar, who

shall administer the bishopric until the arrival of the bishop's successor. Greek-Catholic canon law provides thus for an exercise of authority on various hierarchical tiers without overlaps and duplications, so much so that the Metropolitan exerts a twofold jurisdiction power: as an archbishop, he is the bishop of the Metropolitan diocese, while as a Metropolitan, he has jurisdiction over the entire Metropolitan Province.

From the perspective of their relations with the other Catholic Churches in Austria-Hungary and the state, the Metropolitan and the Metropolitan institution ensures a fundamental prerogative for the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church: ecclesiastical *autonomy*. Grounded in the stipulations of the Papal Bull and the provisions of the 1872 decrees, the Metropolitan authority and the autonomy of the Romanian ecclesiastical province are also recognized under state law. The Greek-Catholic Metropolitan See and the Orthodox See of the Romanians from Transylvania were both "enacted" under the laws of the dualist state: the former under Law XXXIX/1868 and the latter under Law IX/1868.⁵

The complete delineation from the Latin rite hierarchy in Hungary and the entailment of a suffragan relationship solely with the Holy See define, in terms of the Catholic canon law, a Metropolitan Church *sui iuris*; the Metropolitan institution ensuring the autonomy of the Greek-Catholic Romanian Church. Whereas for one century and a half, the Bishoprics of Făgăraș and Oradea Mare had belonged to the Metropolitan Province of Esztergom, entertaining such relations of utter independence against the political-ecclesiastical background of Hungary became a genuine leitmotif of identity, more specifically, of the new ecclesiastical identity that the Greek-Catholic Church in Transylvania assumed after 1853. Throughout the pastorate of Ioan Vancea, the ecclesiastical factor that threatened to undermine the autonomy of the Romanian Church was, at least from the perspective of Romanian identity discourse, the project of Hungarian Catholic autonomy—an aspect that will be dealt with in a separate chapter. There is another delicate aspect regarding the autonomy of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Province, which Vancea would dedicate his unflinching attention to during the first years of his mandate: its status as a court of appeal in the third instance for matrimonial cases, which the Archbishop of Esztergom had continued to hold for the Romanian Church even after the secession of the Romanian dioceses from the Hungarian Metropolitan Province.

The Latin rite Hungarian Archbishopric of Esztergom continued even 1853 to serve as an appellate court in the third instance for first-instance and second-instance ecclesiastical cases heard in the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church. From a canonical point of view, the perpetuation of this prerogative of the Archbishopric of Esztergom over the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church was an anomaly, given that the latter had been defined by the founding documents

as fully autonomous. For several years after the elevation of the Metropolitan See in Transylvania, the regulation of this matter was of utmost concern for the Romanian Greek-Catholic hierarchy, for the two delegacies sent to Transylvania under the leadership of the Viennese Nuncios Viale Prela and de Luca, in 1855 and, respectively, in 1858, for the Viennese Nunciature itself and for various Roman Dicasteries.⁶

A first step towards the resolution of the matter came through the Papal Brief of 23 December 1859, which was issued by the Holy See also as an answer to the requests of Primate Archbishop Scitowski of Hungary to receive appeals as a third-instance authority from the Metropolitan Province of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș. Under this Brief, the Primate Archbishop was delegated for one decade with the prerogative of reviewing third-instance cases that had been adjudicated in the second instance by the Romanian Metropolitan.⁷ The mandate granted the Hungarian prelate expired in 1869 and Vancea, resuming the oppositional approach of his predecessor, undertook consistent steps with the Nunciature and the Holy See in order to liquidate this final "souvenir" of the older dependence upon the Hungarian Metropolitan See of Latin rite. Vancea turned down Nuncio Falcinelli's offer to extend the mandate granted to the Primate Archbishop in 1859. In a long and elaborate letter he sent Nuncio Falcinelli on 2 July 1869, the Metropolitan made a detailed exposure of the abuses introduced in the ecclesiastical trial courts during the last vacancy of the Archiepiscopal See of Făgăraș and Alba Iulia, showing then that according to the older usages from the Romanian Church, which had also been approved by the pope on other occasions, it had been the archpriest who, assisted by four other priests, had acted as the authority presiding over first-instance cases in the archdiocese. He pleaded for the necessity of restoring this trial court of first instance, which had been dismantled in the wake of the abusive enforcement of the Rauscher Matrimonial Instruction with the Greek-Catholics as well. He then spoke about the inconveniences that were entailed by the fact that cases from the Romanian dioceses were referred for a third-instance hearing to the Primates of Hungary or to any other tribunal where Romanian was not spoken: the long distances and the difficulties involved in traveling that far, the inability to speak that foreign language, the drafting in Romanian of the acts pertaining to the cases from the previous trial courts, etc. as regards the solution advanced by Vancea in his letter, this was a genuine "reform project" for the trial courts from the Romanian dioceses, as an alternative to the impending expiry of the mandate granted the Primate Archbishop, namely on 23 December 1869. The alternative project advocated by the Metropolitan set forth that for the cases heard in the archdiocese, the court of first instance would be the Archbishopry Tribunal, whenever the Holy See approved, the second-instance court would be the Archbishopric

Tribunal, and the third-instance court by the Bishop of Lugoj. For the trial cases in the Bishopric of Oradea, he suggested that the Diocesan Tribunal should be the court of first instance, the Archbishop of Alba Iulia the court of second instance, and the Bishop of Lugoj or Gherla the court of third instance. As regards the Diocese of Lugoj, the Diocesan Tribunal was proposed as a first instance, the second instance was to be provided by the Archbishop of Alba Iulia, and the third instance by the Bishop of Oradea or Gherla. Vancea's reform project met with Nuncio Falcinelli's approval, the latter remanded it, together with his own letter, to Cardinal Barnabò, the Prefect of Propaganda, on 1 August 1869. Moreover, the Nuncio was of the opinion that if the Holy See approved of that project, the mandates demanded by Vancea ought to be sent in the shortest time possible, to avoid the danger of the Hungarian Government dismantling the ecclesiastical tribunals, as had already been the case in Cisleithania.⁸

During his stay in Rome, as a participant in the Ecumenical Council, Vancea took the opportunity of attempting to obtain a favorable solution to the question of the trial courts in his Church, which had been postponed for a long time. On 25 January 1870 he submitted to Cardinal Barnabò an account of the state of his archdiocese, in which he requested that the Roman See be instituted as a court of third instance for the Romanian Greek-Catholic Province. In his request to Barnabò, he reiterated in broad lines the argumentation from the letter he had sent the Nuncio from Vienna on 2 July 1869, suggesting a similar distribution of the Romanian dioceses on competence tiers, as courts of trial.⁹ The Metropolitan renewed his request on 26 January, when he asked Cesare Roncetti, a member of the section for Affairs of the Oriental Rites of the *De Propaganda* Congregation, to solve as quickly as possible the requests he had addressed to Cardinal Barnabò.¹⁰ On 3 March 1870, Vancea met with Marino Marini, secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, regarding the problem of appeal courts.¹¹ After this meeting, he filed a petition to the Pope, dated 5 March 1870, in which he argued the necessity to delegate the Holy See as the third instance for the Romanian Greek-Catholic bishops, and he resumed the argument about the drawbacks inherent in appealing to the Archiepiscopal See of Esztergom.¹² Having received no answer to his demands, the Metropolitan submitted a new petition to secretary Marino Marini, on 13 June 1870, whom he reminded of the letter of 5 March that he had sent to the Pope through the same Marini, in which he had requested that "the ecclesiastical province of Alba Iulia should, in the sense of my previous petitions, have the competence to hear ecclesiastical cases in the third instance, on behalf of the Holy See."¹³

Metropolitan Vancea's efforts during the Council's proceedings were not met with the expected results. On 5 August, the Nuncio answered the Romanian

high priest's requests, stating that there was no argument against delegating to the Greek-Catholic bishop the mandate of hearing in the third instance the ecclesiastical and matrimonial cases that had been investigated by the Metropolitan in the second instance. The Viennese Nuncio also said that the Pope had been unable to provide a positive answer to the demands of the hierarchy from Blaj and that he had decided, under a Brief promulgated on the same day (5 August), that the mandate of the Bishop of Esztergom to hear the above-mentioned cases in the third instance should be extended.¹⁴ Vancea replied to the Nuncio's letter on 17 August, but the contents of this letter is not known. Nonetheless, the Nuncio answered this letter of the Romanian hierarchy with another, dated 22 August, in which he specified that under the Apostolic Briefs issued on 15 December 1866 for the prelates in Austria-Hungary, the Sovereign Pontiff extended by another decade the special rights that had bestowed upon various hierarchs and episcopal sees the second and third jurisdiction rights. Under the recent Brief of 5 August, the Pope had extended these rights under the conditions shown in the previous letter.¹⁵

Given that the complete correspondence between the Transylvanian Metropolitan and the Pontifical authorities on this topic is unknown to us, we have summed up so far the information from the letters we had access to. The synod enactment of 1872 prescribes in its Chapter III (*On the Authority of the Courts*) from Part 10 (*On Ecclesiastical Counties*) the implementation of the entire procedure along the lines of the requests from the previous period. According to the synod resolutions, archpresbyterates shall be delegated, with the Bishop's written mandate, as courts of first instance in ecclesiastical, civil, criminal and matrimonial cases. From these, appeals may be made to the Episcopal See, and from here, appeals may be referred to the Metropolitan See as a court of third instance. From the Metropolitan Court, appellate action shall be remitted directly to the Apostolic See, which, under Canon 5 of the Council of Serdica, authorizes one of the bishops of the Province of Alba Iulia și Făgăraș to preside over fourth-instance court trials on behalf of the Holy See, for all the appeals.¹⁶ The decrees, however, would only be enforceable after their revision in Rome and their dispatch back to Blaj in 1881. That very same year, the *de Propaganda Fide* Congregation, the section for Affairs of the Oriental Rites, issued an instruction specially dedicated to this matter (30 April 1881), whereby the Nuncio of Vienna was granted the right to vest one of the suffragan bishops of the Metropolitan See of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș with the prerogative of hearing cases in the third instance. This ordinance, together with the decrees that started being effective in the Romanian Church, having been officially proclaimed thus in the Second Archdiocesan Synod (1882), would bring to an end this situation of a legislative void, which had lasted for almost a decade in the Transylvanian Metropolitan Province.¹⁷

This entire effort had been nothing but an attempt to align the ecclesiastical jurisprudence in the Province of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș to the fundamental canonical statute, the *Eclesiasticam Christi* Papal Bull, which had enacted its full jurisdictional independence from the Latin rite Archbishopric of Esztergom, and, at the same time, to enforce the autonomous status of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church.

In terms of the relations with the Holy See and the Catholic world, the Metropolitan Institution performed an extremely important function for the Greek-Catholic Church: that of representation. The Metropolitan's participation in the Vatican Ecumenical Council,¹⁸ from November 1869 to July 1870, together with Suffragan Bishop Iosif Papp-Szilágyi, ensured maximum visibility and exposure for the Romanian Church, given the Metropolitan's outstanding theological contribution to the debates. Besides advancing his theological viewpoints in the Council debates, Vancea also promoted an image of the identity of the Transylvanian Greek-Catholic Church, attached to its Eastern specific and traditions; suffice to mention, in this sense, the discourse of 2 June 1870, given in the 63rd General Congregation, which was extolled by numerous participants, including the erudite Cardinal Pitra, who dedicated a polemical rejoinder to Vancea.¹⁹ The celebration of the Liturgy in Romanian in St. Peter's Cathedral and the presentation of the Transylvanian ecclesiastical province in the text demanded by the American Bishop Gibbons are two more sequences that brought to attention the Metropolitan and of the Metropolitan Church he pastored. His pilgrimages to Rome also endorsed this line of representation in the relations with the Holy See. His first pilgrimage to the capital of Catholic Christianity, undertaken in 1886 as head of his suffragan episcopate, gathered a series of significant appraisals for the image of the Romanian Church, such as that of Cardinal Simeoni, the Prefect of the Propaganda Fide: "Your Church is distinguished amongst all the Churches of Oriental rite."²⁰ In the following year, 1887, led by the Metropolitan, the Romanian Episcopate embarked on a second pilgrimage to Rome, occasioned by the Jubilee celebrating Pope Leo XIII's 50 years of priesthood. This time, Vancea received an altogether special treatment, being invited by the Pope to take the floor before everyone else: "Let us hear the Archbishop of the Romanians from Hungary!"²¹ The talk the Romanian high priest gave was called by the Pope, who also requested the manuscript at the end, "your noble speech". Vancea took part then in an imposing Papal Liturgy, organized to celebrate the event, together with other approximately 300 bishops and 50000 believers.²² All these symbolical gestures had more than a mere formal significance; they managed to impose the image of an autonomous Romanian Greek-Catholic Church, with its new Metropolitan status, both before the Holy See, which until recently had had a minimal awareness of the Greek-Catholic reali-

ties in Transylvania, and before other representatives of the Catholic world, who were also not familiar with it.

In the inter-ecclesiastical relations in Hungary and in the relation with the Viennese Nunciature, the Holy See and the Hungarian State, the Metropolitan status of the Romanian Church stood out in broad relief thanks to the very nature of the “external” policies deployed by the Metropolitan and the members of the Metropolitan Curia. On an internal level, the Metropolitan jurisdiction was exercised through the promotion of a common policy and through the undertaking, by the high priest from Blaj, of efforts converging towards the representation of the interests of all the suffragan bishoprics and their parishioners. One of the first instances evincing the Metropolitan’s effective, rather than formal, pastorate over the entire ecclesiastical province was that of Vancea’s intercessions with the Roman officials and his discussions with Bishop Pankovici on the separation of the Romanian Parish of Sigheti Marmagei from the Ruthenian Diocese of Munkács and its incorporation within the jurisdiction area of the Bishop of Gherla—a problem that overstepped, thus, the area of “archiepiscopal” jurisdiction.

There were two areas in which the initiatives promoted in Blaj validated the Metropolitan status in a consistent manner: the political-national and the educational field. As regards the former category, worth mentioning are the Metropolitan’s interventions with the Government for the hiring of Romanian Greek-Catholic public servants in the central and local structures of the state administration. Thus, in the context of the re-organization of tribunals in Hungary and Transylvania, Vancea demanded, in a letter dated 18 April 1870 that the Minister of Justice in Budapest, Baltazar Horváth, should also appoint Greek-Catholic Romanians to various positions, providing him with a list of 55 persons capable of serving as: Supreme Court justices, assessors and secretaries with the Royal Tables of Budapest and Târgu Mureș, presidents and assessors in the county and regional courts.²² He resumed this endeavor in 6-10 July 1870, when, on his return journey from Rome to Transylvania, he stopped in Budapest and had a meeting with Minister Horváth.²³ In the wake of Prime Minister Lónyai Menyhért’s demand that he should submit a memorial with the Romanians’ grievances, Vancea summoned and presided over two conferences in Blaj, on 29 June and 3 July 1872, included other elite members of the national movement, such as George Baritiu, Ilie Macelariu, and Ioan Raiju. Drafted by Baritiu as secretary-referent, and also bearing the signature of Metropolitan Vancea, the memorial would be published in issues 3 and 4/1874 of the Sibiu newspaper *Observatorul*.²⁴ The efforts undertaken towards safeguarding Romanian education and the confessional schools correspond to a general interest area, aimed at both the Greek-Catholic Church in its entirety and the Romanian national community, for whose support Vancea dedicated himself from his position of authority as Archbishop

and Metropolitan. He intervened thus in the Diet debate on the law of primary education, promulgated by the Hungarian Government in 1879, and then in that on the law of secondary education, from 1883.²⁵ An undertaking of wide scope initiated by Vancea in the name of the episcopate from the entire province was the memorial addressed on 18 October 1885 to the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Instruction, against the latter’s circular letter from 13 July of the same year, which had interfered with the competence of diocesan consistories to hear the disciplinary and ecclesiastical cases of the canon-teachers. For the first time, the memorial was signed by Metropolitan Vancea together with all the other suffragan bishops: Mihail Pavel (Oradea), Victor Mihályi (Lugoj) și Ioan Szabó (Gherla).²⁶ The Metropolitan also pronounced himself on the law of 1891 providing for kindergartens or child asylums.²⁷ The presence of the Greek-Catholic Metropolitan in debates on political and educational themes meant, first and foremost, that he could endorse the interests of the institution he represented from the supreme position of ecclesiastical authority and representativeness; at the same time, however, the hierarch also implicitly assumed the quality of a “national leader.” Despite the voices of lay *intelligentsia*, ever more distinctly heard in the political debate launched by the Romanian community of the time, which militated for the marginalization or exclusion of the high priests’ role in national emancipation movement, the heads of the two Churches also took advantage of their positions as members of the Senate (the House of Magnates) in Budapest and took on the role of spokesmen of the nation.

The institutional identity of the Metropolitan See of Blaj underwent continuous development at the practical level of ecclesiastical life. The 16 years in which the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church had been a Metropolitan Province meant only the canonical delineation of an institutional framework and the beginning of an organization process, carried over and enlarged during Vancea’s pastorate. The “fitting together” of the four bishoprics, on whose territories functioned such different traditions, customs, or legal norms as regards the relations with the Holy See and the other Churches in Austria-Hungary; with the state and society, into such a complex institutional construction entailed a difficult and meandering progress which had not had sufficient time to reach its destination in a period of only a decade and a half, the timespan between the setting up of the Metropolitan See and the onset of Metropolitan Vancea’s pastorate. As regards the high priest, we may say that the manner in which he assumed his role contributed quite substantially to providing an identity to the institution he pastored. Both in the relations we might call “external”—with the Holy See, with the Hungarian Catholic Church, or with the State—and in the internal life of the Church, Vancea was the advocate of the Metropolitan idea, which he attempted to make most visible, prestigious and authoritative. His personal

involvement in canonical visitations, in ordaining two of his suffragan bishops, Mihail Pavel, in Oradea (26 January 1873) and Victor Mihályi, in Lugoj (14 February 1875), in the consecration of churches and in school exams amounted to promoting a strategy with a tremendous impact upon a society with traditional mentality structures. The collective sensibility of the parishioners from the Metropolitan Province of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș, extremely permissive as regards both the “appearance of the high priest” and the “appearance of the emperor,” would have recorded the presence of political or ecclesiastical authority “in the field” as an exceptional fact. Vancea succeeded thus in imposing the image of an institution not only from the pulpit or at the head of synod reunions, but also from amidst his flock. There is information suggesting that he was pleasant and charismatic; the Ruthenian Metropolitan of Lemberg, Iosif Sembratowicz, says, for instance, that during his Viennese studies the future Metropolitan of Blaj was appreciated and loved by his fellow students.²⁸ These were qualities that his Suffragan of Gherla, Ioan Szabó, apparently lacked, and Vancea also positively compares with his predecessor, Sterea Șubitu, if we are to give credit to some a “malicious” comment insinuated by a memoir of that time.²⁹

Finally, what ought to be mentioned is the fact that the identity of the Metropolitan institution is presented both by contemporary and by later sources under the sign of an oftentimes indirect and involuntary confusion or overlap with the archbishopric. Naturally, the Archbishop’s position determines and is foundational for the position of a Metropolitan, according to canonical rules; Vancea introduced himself and signed acts pertaining both to the Metropolitan Diocese and to the ecclesiastical province at large as “Archbishop and Metropolitan.” The degree of imprecision or the overlap between these institutional identities is due, however, to the formulations to be found in certain sources, most of which came from outside the ecclesiastical structures, such as the press or ordinary language, where expressions like “Metropolitan Ordinariate,” “Metropolitan Consistory,” or “Metropolitan Chancellery” could be found. All these phrasings and denominations are plausible, at the most, in an honorific or symbolic sense; as regards the functionality and the area covered by the above-mentioned institutions, the appellations formulated on their account have no concrete meaning, since all the expressions above are institutions of the Archdiocese and not of the Metropolitan Province. In official papers, that is, in documents entitled to render the exact identity of the function and of the institution, Vancea always places his signature by putting the title “Archbishop” before that of “Metropolitan.” Moreover, correspondence documents, amongst others, issued by Latin rite Catholic bishops or by Roman Dicasteries refer to Vancea only as “Archbishop of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș,” or, more simply, “Archbishop of Făgăraș.”

In reality, the only “institution” that may be accurately identified as being metropolitan, in the sense that it is entitled to issue resolutions of ecclesiastical authority that are valid for the entire province, is the provincial council. We may also add as of 1881, along juridical lines, the ecclesiastical tribunal, after Vancea managed to “repatriate” the third-instance appellate court, to the extent to which in Blaj were appealed in the third instance cases that had been tried in the first two instances in the suffragan dioceses.

Another clue of the effective functioning of the Metropolitan jurisdiction along hierarchical lines is the manner in which suffragan bishops were subordinated to the Metropolitan in ecclesiastical practice, since they were bound to do so under the synod decrees of 1872. In reality, such subordination and, moreover, the assumption of a certain solidarity with the Metropolitan’s position and efforts was rather a multi-faceted phenomenon, because suffragan bishops exhibited varying degrees of obedience or independence in relation to the Archbishop-Metropolitan. Their various positions regarding the Hungarian Catholic autonomy towards which Blaj manifested vacillating attitudes, ranging from caution to participation refusal, while the Bishopric of Oradea sent its representatives to the autonomy congresses in Budapest, clearly suggest that the diocesan bishop’s political-ecclesiastical option could generate gestures and attitudes that were in stark contrast with the policy officially endorsed by the Metropolitan. A relation of real co-operation, in the most authentic ecclesiastical spirit, was, after 1875, that between Vancea and his suffragan of Lugoj, Victor Mihályi; this was also possible because of the long-standing and well-consolidated relations between them, which also held true for the situation between the Metropolitan and Mihail Pavel, whose appointment as head of the Diocese of Oradea appears to have benefited from Vancea’s approval and recommendation. The latter’s relations with Papp-Szilágyi were somewhat different, since the two had rather divergent opinions on the primate and infallibility at the ecumenical council, and, it seems, they were even colder with Ioan Szabo, whom “Gazeta Transilvaniei” accused of having been in the Armenopolitan Episcopal See for two years without having yet visited the Metropolitan. □

Notes

1. For the Romanian Greek-Catholics’ ideal of a Metropolitan See throughout the eighteenth century, see Greta Monica Miron, *Biserica greco-catolică din Transilvania. Clăușeni (1697–1782)* (Cluj-Napoca, 2004), 65–72.
2. For a more extensive presentation of this issue, see Nicolae Boșgan, “Nașune și confesiune în Transilvania în secolul al XIX-lea: cazul mitropoliei române,” in Nicolae

- Bocșan, Ioan Lumperdean, Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Etnie și confesiune în Transilvania: secolul XIII–XX* (Oradea, 1994), 97–188.
3. See a fragment of the bull's text in Augustin Bunea, *Discursuri. Autonomia bisericilor. Diverse* (Blaj, 1903), 391–392; see the Romanian version of the passage quoted in Bogdan Murgescu (ed.), *Istoria României în texte: de la începuturi până în zilele noastre* (Bucharest, 1999), 252–253.
 4. For more extensive information on the Metropolitan in the synod decrees, see: *Concilium provinciale primum Alba-Iulienae et Fogarasiense 1872 anni* 5–14, in Ioannes Dominicus Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, tom 42. Synodi Orientalis 1865–1874*, edited by Ludovico Petit and Ioanne Baptistia Martin (Paris, 1910), 511–515; Ion Cârja, *Biserica și societate în Transilvania în perioada păstoririi mitropolitului Ioan Vancea (1869–1892)* (Cluj-Napoca, 2007), 120–130.
 5. Apud Bunea, 373.
 6. For the evolution of the debates regarding the functioning of trial courts in the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church of the sixth decade, see Ana Victoria Sima, *Veziște mureșilor apostolici vienezii în Transilvania (1855–1868)*, vol. I (Cluj-Napoca, 2003), 47–52, 216–219, 277–280.
 7. *Ibid.*, 278.
 8. Archives of Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *Scrittura riferite nei congressi Romeni 1865–1875*, busta no. 1, ff. 341 r–347 r (Vancea's letter to Falcinelli), 340 r–v, 348 r–v (Falcinelli's letter to Barnabò).
 9. For the text of the petition submitted to Barnabò, dated 19 January 1870, see Nicolae Bocșan, Ion Cârja, *Biserica Română Unită la Conciliul Ecumenic Vatican I (1869–1870)* (Cluj-Napoca, 2001), 610–611.
 10. *Ibid.*, 334–335.
 11. *Ibid.*, 363.
 12. Published in *ibid.*, 615–617.
 13. Published in *ibid.*, 627–628.
 14. Published in *ibid.*, 631–632.
 15. Published in *ibid.*, 633–634.
 16. *Concilium provinciale primum Alba-Iulienae et Fogarasiense 1872 anni* 5–14, in Mansi, 42, 609.
 17. Sima, 280.
 18. On the First Vatican Ecumenical Council, see: Yves Congar, "L'écclésiologie de la Révolution française au concile du Vatican, sous le signe de l'affirmation de l'autorité," *l'Écclésiologie au XIX^e siècle* (Paris, 1960), 77–114; Roger Aubert, *Vatican I* (Paris, 1964); Giacomo Martina, *Pius IX e il Vaticano I*, in "Archivum Historicum Pontificiae," 16 (1978): 341–369; Klaus Schatz, *Vaticanium I, 1869–1870* (Paderborn, 1992–1994).
 19. Bocșan, Cârja, 436–447.
 20. Ioan Georgescu, *Mitropolitul Ioan Vancea. La 50 ani de la moartea lui* (Oradea, 1942), 41.
 21. *Ibid.*, 42.
 22. Information taken from the Romanian Episcopate's attendance log at the Ecumenical Council, see Bocșan, Cârja, 435.

23. *Ibid.*, 482–483.
24. Georgescu, 58.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Vatican Secret Archives, *Arch. Nunc. Vienna*, busta no. 587. *Carta. Vanutelli*, vol. XXXII, ff. 420 r–428 r.
27. Georgescu, 58.
28. Augustin Bunea, *Mitropolitul Dr. Ioan Vancea de Buteasa. Schiță biografică* (Blaj, 1890), 6.
29. In his youth diary, ViCTOR Mihălyi relates a visit made to Blaj, on 28 July 1869, by Alexie Zákosi of Turda, a retiring provincial commissar, who said the following about Șulțiu on that occasion: "About Metropolitan Șulțiu he said that since he had first been an archpriest, he needed ten years to learn how to play bishop, and that in that while he had committed countless mistakes, after ten years he had been left without working power" (see *Memoriile unui ierarh uitat: ViCTOR Mihălyi de Apsa (1841–1918)*, eds. Nicolae Bocșan, Ion Cârja, and Luminița Wallner-Bărbulescu (Cluj-Napoca, 2009), 180).

Abstract

Ecclesiastical Elites and Structures: The Organisation and Functioning of the Metropolitan Institution in the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church under the Pastorate of Metropolitan Ioan Vancea (1869–1892)

The institutional identity of the Metropolitan See in the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church underwent a continuous development after 1853, both at the level of institutional organisation and at the practical level of ecclesiastical life. Once the Metropolitan Province had been set up, a vast organisation process was under way, being carried on and augmented during the pastorate of the second Metropolitan, Ioan Vancea (1869–1892). The "fitting together" of the four bishoprics, on whose territories functioned such different traditions, customs, or legal norms as regards the relations with the Holy See and the other churches in Austria-Hungary, with state and society, into such a complex institutional construction entailed a difficult and meandering progress which had not had sufficient time to reach its destination in a period of only a decade and a half, the time-span between the setting up of the Metropolitan See and the beginning of Metropolitan Vancea's pastorate. As regards the high priest, we may say that the manner in which he assumed his role contributed quite substantially to providing an identity to the institution he pastored. Both in or with the State—and in the internal life of the Church, Vancea was the advocate of the Metropolitan idea, which he attempted to make most visible, prestigious and authoritative.

Keywords

Greek-Catholic Church, Metropolitan bishop, Ioan Vancea, ecclesiastical elites, jurisdiction