

**THE REVIVAL OF ORTHODOXY IN GREATER ROMANIA.  
CASE STUDY: THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ORTHODOX  
BISHOPRICS OF ORADEA AND CLUJ (1920 – 1921)**

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**Abstract.** Orthodox Bihor was subjected to the process of Catholicization by the Hungarian Kingdom (during the Middle Ages), followed by the Habsburg Empire at the beginning of the modern era, and then, by the Austrian-Hungarian Empire after the year 1867. This was the means for the denationalization of the Romanians.

For a significant amount of time, Orthodox Arad was under the rule of Serbian Orthodox bishops who made every attempt for the Serbianization of the Romanians.

However, the Magyarization and the Serbianization of Romanians in Crișana region failed to succeed. The initially clandestine secular priests, vicars, and Orthodox bishops who were eventually officially accepted by the authorities in Vienna managed to keep the Orthodox faith, as well as the Romanian language and nationality still very much alive.

The Orthodox Church of Bihor and Arad alongside the church organisations in Maramureș, Banat, and historic Transylvania played a significant role in the accomplishment of the Union between Transylvania and the Kingdom of Romania on 1 December 1918.

The Orthodox Bishoprics of Oradea (1920) and Cluj (1921) would be re-established by the Romanian bishops Roman Ciorogariu and Nicolae Ivan as another jewel to the crown of Romanian Orthodoxy, thus paving the way for the proclamation of an independent Patriarchate of Romania.

**Keywords:** *Bihor, Bishop Roman Ciorogariu, Cluj, Bishop Nicolae Ivan, 1920 -1921.*

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The Romanian people and nation of our times have evolved and survived through language and religion, as an island-like community in a sea of Slavs and Catholic peoples. Our Latin origin has saved us from Slavicization and Magyarization and our Orthodox religion from Catholicization.

The Romanians, who, unlike their Slavic and Hungarian neighbours, who had been subjected to a top-down Christianization process, from Kings/countries to the common people - more often than not with a great deal of resistance from the subjects who were still following the old pagan beliefs<sup>1</sup>, had been born Orthodox

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<sup>1</sup> University Professor, Priest Mircea Păcurariu, Ph.D. *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. Compendiu*, Ediția a II-a, revăzută și întregită, Ed. Andreiană, Sibiu, 2009, p. 58.

Christians, under the influence of Byzantine Constantinople and its Greek culture and were subjected to the process of Catholicization both by the Hungarian Kingdom, and by the Habsburg Empire. The religious reform, embraced at a certain point by part of the German and Hungarian political elite and their subjects, manifested at the same time with existing Catholic pressures. Romanian Orthodoxy managed to successfully fend off such threats, with minor overall loss of followers, while some of the threats only superficially affected the form and the content of church services (particularly in the case of Greek-Catholics), religious celebrations, and the Orthodox traditions. Moreover, the Greek-Catholic Church<sup>2</sup> cooperated with the Orthodox Church in order to ensure the survival and the evolution of the Romania nation, as well as the pursuit of ideals such as independence and Romanian political unity.

The forced appointment of some Serbian hierarchs<sup>3</sup> as heads of the Orthodox Bishoprics in Transylvania and Banat as a result of the pressure exerted by Calvinist Princes, as well by Greek hierarchs in the Romanian Principalities failed to lead to the Calvinization, Serbianization, or Hellenization<sup>4</sup> of the Romanians, as wished by the representatives of the governing political powers in Vienna and Budapest, and Ottoman Istanbul, respectively.

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were two important steps in the revival of Romanian Orthodoxy, following the formation and the consolidation of modern Romanian nation. The process involved the nurturing of tradition alongside the fostering of modernization.

We consider the first step to be the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when, under the rule of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the core of a modern state was developed, while, under the rule of King Carol I, the not-yet Greater Romania achieved political independence, thus becoming a genuine force of attraction for the Romanians who were still outside the country's borders, namely the people of Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bucovina.

Through the Law on the impropriation of monastery wealth (1863), Cuza Vodă tried to make Romania less dependent on "the holy places", while at the same time guiding the Church towards the principle of national interest. Besides slowing down the outflow of property and money to other countries, the law geared the same towards national budgets and investments in the modernization of the Romanian state, while at the same time fostering the Romanianization of church leaders, from

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<sup>2</sup> See the national spirit manifested by Bishop Inochentie Micu-Klein (1732 - 1799) and his descendants between 1728 - 1918. Cf. *Ibidem*, pp. 272 - 274.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 201 - 204, 212

<sup>4</sup> See the depiction of the phenomenon of Hellenization in many church hierarchical structures in Wallachia in the novel by Gheorghe Vornicu, *Umbra lui Horea*, Ed. Eminescu, București, 1973, p. 222.

secular, to monastery priests.<sup>5</sup> Carol I would continue on this path and achieve the independence of the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1885.<sup>6</sup> Romania's "Orthodox Revolution" would go hand-in-hand with the strengthening of brotherly ties with the town of Sibiu which had been reformed by Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna (1864 - 1873) and his descendants. "The Statutes" (1868), drafted and implemented by Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna and his close associates, provided for a modern and democratic church structure, combining the decisions of church leaders with those of the secular leaders of the Romanian nation's highest-ranking elites.<sup>7</sup>

The formation of Greater Romania in the years 1918 and 1919, followed by its international recognition through the Treaty of Versailles (1920), would open up the next stage in the consolidation of the national Orthodox and Greek-Catholic churches. It was not by chance that the first primus of Romania was a Transylvanian, Miron Cristea (XII 1919/ I 1920), the Bishop of Caransebeș, and then, the first Patriarch of Romania (1925).<sup>8</sup>

In the excitement generated by the making of Greater Romania, the Orthodox Bishoprics of Oradea and Cluj are re-established.

The Habsburg Empire's political advancement towards Eastern Europe at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century went hand-in-hand with the revival of Catholicism, severely affected by the Religious Reform of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> The first targets were the territories located in the Western part of Romania (Banat, Crișana, and Maramureș), followed by historic Transylvania. Thus, in 1692, the Roman-Catholic Bishop Palace of Oradea – which had been closed down in 1556<sup>10</sup> - would be re-established, followed by the Greek-Catholic Bishop Palaces of Oradea (1777), Gherla/ Cluj (1853), and Lugoj (1853).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu, *Viața și opera lui Cuza Vodă*, Ed. Științifică, București, 1966, pp. 143 - 159.

<sup>6</sup> Academia Română, *Istoria Românilor*, vol. VII, tome II, Ed. Enciclopedică, București, 2003, p. 50.

<sup>7</sup> University Professor, Priest Mircea Păcurariu, Ph.D., *op. cit.*, p. 350 - 358.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 406 - 407.

<sup>9</sup> The religious reform in Transylvania manifested as: *Lutheranism within the Transylvanian Saxon community* (1550 – The Torda meeting of the Transylvanian Diet) spread by Johannes Honterus, a humanist scholar from Brașov (1498 - 1549), *Calvinism* (1564), and *Unitarianism* (1568) *within the Hungarian and Szekely communities*, spread by Gaspar Heltai, Francisc David, and Georgio Blandiata, respectively.

<sup>10</sup> University Professor, Priest Mircea Păcurariu, Ph.D., *op. cit.*, p. 215. The center of Transylvanian Catholicism would be again the Metropolitan Church of Alba Iulia which had been closed down by the Reform movement in 1556. Cf. *Ibidem*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 360. The center of Transylvanian Greek-Catholicism would become the Metropolitan Church of Blaj (1701).

Bihor, the geographic center of the Crișana region, was first inhabited by proto-Romanians and then, by Christianized Romanians, as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. In 787, at the height of Gepid domination, a person named Ursus is referred to as the Bishop of the Romanians who attended the ecumenical council of Nicaea.<sup>12</sup> Menumorut's Voivodeship/Dukedom, inhabited by a Slavic-Romanian population, having as its capital the earth citadel of Biharea, from where the entire area between the Someș, Mureș, and Tisza Rivers and the Apuseni Mountains was controlled, was the vassal of the Byzantine Emperor Leo VI the Wise (886 - 912). When the messengers sent by Arpad requested that Menumorut should become the former's subject, the Orthodox population was led by a bishop,<sup>13</sup> as was the custom at the time. Biharia's conquest by the Hungarians would facilitate the establishment of the Roman-Catholic Bishop Palace, as the spearhead of the Romanians' Catholicization process. The Saint King Ladislaus (1077 - 1096) would be the one to relocate the Bishop Palace to Oradea (1091), while the first bishop of Latin origin in Oradea would become Coloman the Learned, the future King of Hungary (1095 - 1116).<sup>14</sup>

The Roman-Catholic/Latin Diocese of Oradea would make an attempt at convincing the Romanian Orthodox population in Bihor to join its ranks by way of various tax exemptions in exchange for allegiance and conversion to Catholicism. Moreover, in 1204, Pope Innocent III (1198 - 1216) asked the Latin Bishop of Oradea to establish a (Orthodox, *our note*) Bishopric for the Greek monasteries located within its diocese.<sup>15</sup> The few written documents that still exist show that the Orthodox Church survived in Bihor through secular priests in rural areas and their followers.

In the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Calvinist Princes of Transylvania insisted on convincing Romanian Orthodox priests to join the religious Reform,<sup>16</sup> while closing down Catholic Parishes at the same time.

The historical milestone of the year 1600, of the Union carried out under the rule of Michael the Brave, would revitalize the organisation of the Orthodox Church in Transylvania. Besides the establishment of the Metropolitan Church of Alba Iulia, the Orthodox inhabitants in Bihor, and the Bistrița and Gurghiu counties, would become the members of the Vadului (Cluj-Feleac) Bishopric which had been established as early as 1476 by Stephen the Great of Moldavia. The Bishops Teofil of Prislop, Augustin, and Eftimie, referred to themselves in 1623 as "Bishops of Vadu and Oradia", while in 1628, Ghenadie II, the Metropolitan Bishop of

<sup>12</sup> Florian Dudaș, Constantin Butișcă, Pr. Cosmin Pinte, *Vechea Catedrală Ortodoxă a Bihorului. Biserica din Velența Orăzii*, Ed. Brevis, Oradea, 2004, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> Dumitru Noane, Augustin Țărău, *Oradea-Nagyvárad- Grosswerdein. Momente inedite din istoria așezării*, Ed. Muzeului Țării Crișurilor, Oradea, 2023, p. 16-17.

<sup>15</sup> Florian Dudaș, Constantin Butișcă, Pr. Cosmin Pinte, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 16.

Transylvania referred to himself as “Archbishop of Bălgrad, Vadu, Oradia, and Sătmar, and of the entire country of Transylvania and others”<sup>17</sup>

The period of time when the Ottoman Pashalik of Oradea (1660 - 1692) existed offers new information regarding the Romanian Orthodox in Oradea and Bihor county. Known for his tolerance with respect to the lives of his subjects in the period of “Pax Ottomana”<sup>18</sup>, the Patriarch of Constantinople would send an Orthodox Bishop to the Oradea citadel immediately after its conquest.<sup>19</sup>

The conquest of Oradia by the Habsburg troops in 1692 and the expansion of the Habsburg Empire to Crișana, Banat, Maramureș, and historic Transylvania (1718)<sup>20</sup> would result in a strenuous effort for the re-Catholicization of the region of Romania lying to the east and the north of the Eastern and Southern Carpathian Mountains.

When entering Oradea, the Habsburg Army would encounter in Velența, a district of Oradia, Romanians and Greek merchants led by the schismatic, i.e. Orthodox, priest, Efrem Beniamin. Persecuted by the Catholics, in 1706, he took refuge in the Rîmnicea Bishopric, in Wallachia and then, with the Turks,<sup>21</sup> in the Ottoman Empire. In 1708, the Rîmnicea Bishop, Antim Ivireanu, would send as replacement the Macedo-Romanian ethnic Petru Hristofor. He would occupy the position only until 1712.<sup>22</sup> The Velența district was a true fiefdom for Orthodox believers and was inhabited by Romanians, Greeks, Macedo-Romanians, and Serbs. They built a number of churches: in 1667, a wooden church burned to the ground by the Turks in 1693, in 1695, another church which was also burned to the ground by the Tatars in 1717 and rebuilt in wood later on. The currently existing stone church was built in the period between 1769 and 1777 to later become the first Orthodox Cathedral of Oradia<sup>23</sup> until the time of the construction of the Moon Church in the town center (1784 - 1790).<sup>24</sup>

The constant opposition by the Roman-Catholic Diocese to the appointment of an Orthodox Bishop in Oradea led to the inclusion of Orthodox Bihor in the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Bishopric of Arad (1730)<sup>25</sup> until 1920. At the

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> See Mihai D. Drecin, *Administrație și civilizație turcă în Pașalâcul de Oradea (1660 - 1692)*, vol. 80. *Sever Dumitrașcu in honorem*, coordinators: Ioan Crișan, Aurel Chiriac, Gabriel Moisa, Ed. Muzeului Țării Crișurilor, Oradea, 2017, pp. 143 - 147.

<sup>19</sup> Florian Dudaș, Constantin Butișcă, Pr. Cosmin Pintea, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>20</sup> For a short period of time, Oltenia would also be occupied (1718 - 1739), following the Russo-Austrian-Turkish war (1736 - 1739). The province would return to Wallachia after the Belgrade Peace (18 IX 1739).

<sup>21</sup> He is referred to in connection with Oradea as early as 1695.

<sup>22</sup> Florian Dudaș, ..., *op. cit.*, p. 19; University Professor, Priest Mircea Păcurariu, Ph.D., *op. cit.*, p. 286.

<sup>23</sup> Florian Dudaș, ..., *op. cit.*, p. 23, 267.

<sup>24</sup> Dumitru Noane, Augustin Țărău, *op. cit.*, p. 129-131.

<sup>25</sup> Florin Dudaș, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

beginning, the first ten bishops of Arad were Serbians (from 1706), and then, Romanians, as of 1829.<sup>26</sup>

However, Orthodox Bihor held a different position within the Bishopric of Arad. A vicar, most frequently a native of Bihor, would lead Orthodox Bihor on behalf of the Bishop of Arad. Moreover, in 1792, the Romanian Orthodox Consistory was established in Oradea, under the authority of the bishops of Arad. The Consistory's role in the management of Orthodox parishes in Bihor would rely on its right to ordain priests and consecrate churches in Bihor, duties that were usually assigned to bishops.<sup>27</sup>

The opposition manifested by the Orthodox Christians in Bihor to Catholicization and Greek-Catholicization (1777), supported by the Orthodox bishops of Arad during both Serbian and Romanian rulings, persuaded the Imperial House in Vienna to accept the activity of an Orthodox Vicar in Bihor, under the control of the Bishopric of Arad. The Imperial Statistical Commission surveys conducted in 1727, 1737, and 1754 - 1756 showed that the entire congregation of Bihor was Orthodox.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, the Imperial Court in Vienna would take action in order to convert some of the Orthodox Christians – and sometimes even Orthodox parishes – to the Greek-Catholic faith. Thus, in 1748, a unitarian bishop was ordained as vicar of the Roman-Catholic/Latin Bishop of Oradea, while in 1777, the Roman/Greek-Catholic Romanian Diocese would be established in Oradea. At the beginning, the newly-established unitarian Diocese was subordinated to the Hungarian Roman-Catholic/Latin Archdiocese of Esztergom. King Joseph II (1780 - 1790) offered the Diocese as a gift a 136,000-yoke feudal estate comprising forests and villages, particularly in the region of Beiuș, all taken from the Roman-Catholic/Latin Diocese of Oradea (1781).<sup>29</sup> The Greek-Catholic Romanian Diocese had great economic power, which allowed it to establish village schools and the high school in Beiuș, while at the same time providing support to Romanian culture. It also acted as a competitor for Orthodoxy in the region, while also being able to find manners of cooperation in order to serve the national interest (in 1918 as well).

Of the seven Romanian Orthodox bishops of Arad, four were from Bihor, namely Gherasim Raț (1835 - 1850), born in 1793, in Roit commune; Miron Romanul (1873 - 1874), born in 1829, in Mezieș/Beiuș commune, Iosif Goldiș (1899 - 1907), born in 1836, in Socodor/southern Crișana, Ion Ignatie Papp (1903 - 1928), born in 1848, in Pociovești commune.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, Orthodoxy was

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<sup>26</sup> Priest Pavel Vesa Ph.D., *Episcopii Aradului 1706 - 2006*, Ed. Gutenberg Univers, Arad, 2007, pp. 24 - 82 (Serbian bishops), pp. 83 - 360 (Romanian bishops).

<sup>27</sup> University Professor, Priest Mircea Păcurariu, Ph.D., *op. cit.*, p. 287.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 286.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 286 - 287; Florian Dudaș, ..., *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>30</sup> Priest Pavel Vesa Ph.D., *op. cit.*, p. 92, 146, 166, 194.

represented in the region by very high profile figures. Other clergymen from Bihor also rose to prominence within the Bishopric of Arad, both in the bishop's chancery, and in the town's Romanian schools, and the cultural and political environment of Arad.

Of all these prominent figures, an important one is Roman Ciorogariu, a native of Pecica Română commune, a place near the town of Arad, where wealthy Romanian peasants lived. His scholarly and intellectual evolution, as well as his advancement to positions held in the cultural field in Oradea and the Romanian political scene, culminating with his appointment as Vicar of Oradea and Chair of the Orthodox Consistory of Bihor on 3 October 1917,<sup>31</sup> make Roman Ciorogariu a key figure in the complicated, but heroic process of including Bihor county in Greater Romania (the autumn of 1918 – the spring of 1919), as well as in the re-establishment of the Orthodox Bishopric of Oradea and its inclusion in the unitary structure of the Orthodox Church in Greater Romania. Appointed as Bishop of Oradea on 3/16 October 1920, he would be officially enthroned on 19 September/2 October 1921. After 210 years, Orthodox Oradea and Bihor had a newly-appointed Bishop with a Romanian name, who was legally nominated and confirmed by the country's political leader, King Ferdinand.<sup>32</sup>

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While Oradea and Bihor were both from a geographic and a demographic perspective at the center of the Romanian Western world, under constant military attacks by the Hungarian Kings as early as the 9<sup>th</sup> century and then subjected to the process of Magyarization through Catholicization and Calvinization, only to be later on also attacked by Habsburg Vienna in connivance with Budapest during the dualist era, the town of Cluj would become another important center for the Catholicization and denationalization of the Romanians.

With Cluj considered the Hungarian political and cultural center of historic Transylvania, the Hungarian administrative and church authorities, be they Roman-Catholic or Reformed, made significant efforts to wipe out the political tradition of Romanian Gelu's Voivodeship, alongside the memory of the latter's main capital, Dăbâca. At the same time, they tried to bring at a standstill the activities conducted by secular priests in rural parishes as well as by Orthodox hierarchs – protopopes and bishops. Besides the Romanian knezi and voivodes from Cluj, Turda, Sălaj,

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<sup>31</sup> See the ascending path followed by Roman Ciorogariu in culture, politics, and clergy: Elisaveta Roșu, *Roman R. Ciorogariu (1852 - 1936). Repere istorice*, Ed. Arca, Oradea, 2007, pp. 18-90.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 96 - 158. The first "rehabilitation" of the political and religious endeavours of Roman Ciorogariu would take place with the publication of the volume *Roman R. Ciorogariu (1852 - 1936). Studii și documente*, Ed. Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române a Oradiei, 1981.

Lăpuș, Năsăud, and Bistrița, who supported the establishment and functioning of the monasteries of (Orthodox) “schismatics”, the first rulers of Moldavia who came from Maramureș did the same in the Maramureș region (for example, Baliță and Drag, Dragoș’s grandsons). The King of Hungary, Matthias Corvinus, who apparently did not forget his partial Romanian origins, would exempt the Romanian priests in Maramureș from paying taxes to the state, as they were recognised as subordinates of the Romanian Metropolitan Ioanichie.<sup>33</sup>

The establishment of the Vadului and Feleacului Bishopric in 1476 by Stephen the Great of Moldavia in the context of the anti-Ottoman coalition with Matthias Corvinus would strengthen the position of Orthodoxy in central Transylvania. For more than half a century, the Bishopric would be the seat of Romanian Orthodox Metropolitans.<sup>34</sup> The same beneficial effects for Romanian Orthodoxy had been experienced a century before, in 1399, when King Sigismund of Luxembourg donated the feudal estates of Bologa,<sup>35</sup> Vad-Feleac, Ciceu, and others in the context of the anti-Ottoman alliance formed by Hungary, Wallachia, and Poland.

The penetration of Greek-Catholicism in the Cluj region in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries with the help of the Habsburg Army which, through the agency of the famous General Adolf von Buccow burned Orthodox churches to the ground,<sup>36</sup> while also limiting the right of establishing Orthodox churches within town limits - specifically within the limits of the walled medieval town of Cluj - could not “eradicate” the Orthodox belief and its Romanian followers.

While the Greek-Catholics in Cluj were allowed to establish a church – “Bob Church” - within town limits, the Romanian Orthodox would only establish a church – “The Church on the Hill” - outside town walls. In this latter church, between 1831 and 1851, the Protopope Gregoriu Gallu,<sup>37</sup> the son of the cantor of Buteni/Mărgău near Huedin, would perform his services.

The establishment of the Greek-Catholic Diocese of Gherla (1853), which would be later on relocated to Cluj, also failed to weaken the strength of Orthodox believers.

In 1921, with the newly-established political context of Greater Romania, the Orthodox bishopric tradition would experience a period of revival in Cluj under Bishop Nicolae Ivan (1921 - 1936). Having evolved in Sibiu during the times of Andrei Șaguna, Nicolae Ivan had served for a number of years as Sibiu Archdiocese advisor, Theological Institute teacher, and catechist with the Boarding School for Girls in Sibiu.<sup>38</sup> A refined intellectual, highly experienced in both secular and

<sup>33</sup> University Professor, Priest Mircea Păcurariu, Ph.D., *op. cit.*, pp. 117 - 118.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 118.

<sup>35</sup> Priest Ștefăniță Ionel Potra, *Monografia parohiei ortodoxe Săcuieu*, 2004, mss, p. 31.

<sup>36</sup> University Professor, Priest Mircea Păcurariu, Ph.D., *op. cit.*, pp. 278 - 279.

<sup>37</sup> See the dates on the churchyard cross.

<sup>38</sup> *Amintirile Mariei V. Onișor. Caiet I (1881 - 1900)*, mss., p. 10.

religious education, he would become an excellent organiser of the newly-established bishopric. He would later on establish the new Cathedral in the center of Cluj across the Romanian Theater and Opera House, purchase a majestic building as Bishopric seat, establish the Theological Academy and the Eparchy's Printing House, and print *Renașterea Newspaper*.<sup>39</sup>

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The Orthodox Bishoprics of Oradea and Cluj would become a part of the newly-established, extended structure of the Patriarchate of Romania, alongside other older or newer bishoprics of the Romanian Kingdom, i.e. the bishoprics of Moldavia, Wallachia, Oltenia, Dobrogea, Bessarabia, Bucovina, Banat, and Maramureș, alongside the Military Bishopric and the newly-established bishoprics from abroad, where sizeable groups of Romanian migrants used to live as early as the year 1914.<sup>40</sup>

Due to the new administrative organisation and the new laws voted after 1920, with their mix of tradition and modernity, the Romanian Orthodox Church would manage to fend off the attacks of the communist regime, with painful sacrifices from among the ranks of hierarchs, teachers, secular priests, monks and nuns, and the parishioners alike, to presently become once again a fundamental institution of our society.

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<sup>39</sup> University Professor, Priest Mircea Păcurariu, Ph.D., *op. cit.*, p. 414.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 405 - 428.