

# The Activism of the Middle Clergy in Support of the National Desideratum

## Romanian Archpriests at the Great National Assembly in Alba Iulia

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*As vectors of mobilization, archpriests not only welcomed the national scenario underway in November and December 1918, but also translated the new era to their communities of devotion, continuing to guide them spiritually and temporally.*

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**I**N ETHNICALLY and confessionally-heterogeneous regions, such as Transylvania, the arch- and parish priests not only shepherded their communities in a spiritual sense, but also took on the mantle of de-facto guides in the tangled web of nationalist movements and political affirmation.

In the case of the Orthodox and Greek Catholic denominations, dominant from a quantitative perspective during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Transylvania, but whose adherents were politically marginalized and controlled few mechanisms of influencing state policy, the middle clergy saw itself placed between the often competing interests and necessities of their respective churches, their (sometimes ethnically-mixed) communities, and the succeeding configurations of state power in Transylvania. The ways in which they responded to the challeng-

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es posed by these ambivalent settings should be regarded as a function of their upbringing, family and social-economic background, education, and individual or group strategies.

By making use of various types of sources—such as schematisms, credential letters, ecclesiastical circulars, archives, memoirs, and press—we have conducted an analysis of the group of Orthodox and Greek Catholic archpriests who attended the Great National Assembly in Alba Iulia in December 1918, from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. We opted for a prosopographic approach, defined by Lawrence Stone as the investigation of “the common characteristics of a group of historical actors by means of a collective study of their lives.”<sup>1</sup> By applying this method, we have identified certain key variables characteristic for the entire group,<sup>2</sup> such as their geographical provenance, their ages and careers, family backgrounds, education, and the types of rapports they had cultivated with the metropolitan and episcopal ecclesiastical centers. We also focused on their extra-ecclesiastical preoccupations, both during and after the war (their involvement in cultural and political projects, etc.).

This study therefore offers a group portrait of this Transylvanian social-professional category, who had assumed the position of de-facto community representatives during the entire modern period in Transylvania. Having sketched this portrait, we will be able to explore the nature of their involvement, mobilization, and activism in support of the Romanian nation.

## The Archpriests—Typological Definitions and Professional Prerogatives

**B**EFORE PROCEEDING to the data to be discussed, a general presentation of the prerogatives held by this category of clergymen is necessary.

The deanery (Ro. *protopopiat*) is an ecclesiastical administrative unit containing several parishes from a certain geographic region, from the same eparchy, and headed and managed by an archpriest. In the Organic Statute of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania (1868), which served as the constitutional document for this institution during the Austro-Hungarian dualism, the archpriest was characterized as “the authority in ecclesiastical, educational, and foundational affairs,” who also served as an ecclesiastical forum of first instance.<sup>3</sup> The election of the archpriest was the responsibility of the proto-presbyterial synod, a structure comprising one third clerical and two thirds lay members.<sup>4</sup>

The vote during these elections was given privately, in writing. The names of the three candidates who received the most votes were then forwarded to the

Consistory, which was entitled to select one of them as archpriest.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the appointment of a new archpriest was a process straddling the line between election and nomination by the bishop, and as such, between a recognition of merits and a game of intermingling spheres of influence.

To attempt to become an archpriest, one needed to fulfill certain minimal standards, both educational (such as completing theological studies,<sup>6</sup> passing specific clerical examinations) and moral. One of the stipulations for those wishing to obtain this position was that only candidates who had amassed at least 5 years' experience in the service of the church or in the educational system could enter the competition for this position.

While would-be Orthodox archpriests could expect this type of procedure when attempting to ascend to this position, their Greek Catholic counterparts were elected directly by the Ordinariate. The deanery therefore occupied an intermediate position between the central episcopal institutions and the parishes, operating as a bridge between the higher and the lower clergy. By virtue of this institutional position, the archpriests ensured the circulation of information in two directions, from the higher clergy to the priests, and the other way round.

In light of his position as local representative to the bishop, the archpriest was tasked with undertaking a series of canonical visitations at confessional schools and churches located within the boundaries of the deanery he was managing. Following these visitations, he would send a report to the bishop detailing what he had witnessed first-hand, offering proposals to improve the situation, or praising well-administered parishes and their shepherds.

It would be useful to provide here a brief overview of the main prerogatives associated with the status of archpriest, for both the Orthodox and Greek Catholic milieus.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the archpriest had the right to inspect and control the priests located in the deanery, in all matters, from examining their theological training to checking their parish registers and the material situation of their church. He was also tasked with organizing the elections for vacant parish priest positions, also dealing with the installation of newly-selected candidates. In this sense, he functioned both as a provider of recommendations and as a legitimizing instance, as in many cases the bishop would consult with the archpriest when new priests or confessional teachers needed to be appointed. No priestly assembly could be held in a deanery in the absence of the archpriest. In such cases, he would play a significant mediation role, helping to arbitrate and resolve conflicts between priests and their communities, or between various members of the clergy and the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

What is more, the archpriest was responsible with monitoring morality in parish communities, recording instances of concubinage, illegitimate births, divorces, etc. While priests headed the confessional school in a certain community,

the archpriests supervised and inspected all such educational institutions in a deanery. As such, they also fulfilled another role, namely that of persuading communities of the necessity of establishing new schools and churches.

## Archpriests at the Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia

**M**ANY MEMBERS of the clergy were present among the 1,228 representatives who attended the assembly of Alba Iulia as a sign of the desire for unity shared by the Romanians from Transylvania and Banat. Alongside the simple parish priests, who were representing their electoral constituencies, having been elected by their co-nationals to this role, the representatives of the ecclesiastical hierarchies of the two Romanian churches in former dualist Hungary were also present. They included individuals from the highest ranks—bishops, vicars, delegates of consistories and chapters, as well as archpriests.

As already indicated, our analysis will focus on this final group, namely, the archpriests who attended the Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia of 1 December 1918.

The Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches in Transylvania (in the broadest sense) were structured into 169 deaneries. The Orthodox Church in Transylvania was divided into 63 deaneries, 34 of which were in the Archbishopric of Sibiu, 18 in the Bishopric of Arad, and 11 in the Bishopric of Caransebeș.<sup>8</sup> The Greek Catholic Church in Transylvania was divided into 106 deanery districts, the majority of which were under the authority of the Gherla Bishopric (44). Another 32 were part of the Archbishopric of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș, with its residence in Blaj. Within the other two Greek Catholic suffragan bishoprics, that of Lugoj and that of Oradea, another 16 and respectively 14 deaneries functioned.<sup>9</sup>

129 of these 168 units would send their representatives to the Assembly of Alba Iulia. Most of these envoys were the archpriests themselves, or, when the office was vacant, the deanery's administrator or the vice-archpriest. There were also cases when, due to the archpriest's illness, the deanery sent a specially designated priest. The Orthodox priests Dionisie Brobeiu, the replacement of the archpriest of Deva, and Nicodin Cristea, the replacement of the archpriest of Cluj, along with the Greek Catholic priests Ioan Ternovan, the replacement of the archpriest of Codru, and Gavril Muște, the replacement of the archpriest of Lăpuș, would arrive in Alba Iulia to represent their deaneries in lieu of their superiors.<sup>10</sup>

We know with certainty that three of the archpriests designated to attend the Assembly were not present. Secondary literature, citing their memoirs, notes that they were unable to attend this remarkable event, for various reasons: for instance, the Greek Catholic archpriest of Braşov, Moise Brumboiu, a resident of Tohanul Vechi, wrote several years after 1918 that he had been unable to travel to Alba Iulia as “I was the only priest remaining in the parish in the entire deanery . . . and even more so, I was the only Romanian priest in the entire Braşov, along with the old Vasile Sfetea from Petocilele Braşovului.”<sup>11</sup> He also indicated that on the last day of November 1918 he held two funeral services, and another funeral on 1 December. His absence thus becomes more understandable.

A similar situation was experienced by the Greek Catholic archpriest of Arpaşul de Jos, Valeriu Florian, who was residing in Racoviţa. He had sought refuge along with the Romanian troops in the Kingdom of Romania in 1916 and had been mandated to handle the recruitment of Romanian volunteers in Russia. On 1 December 1918 he was in Kishinev (Ro. Chişinău), where he had remained in order to fulfill a series of tasks with the Bessarabian authorities.<sup>12</sup> The third archpriest of whose absence we know was Mihai Jivanca, who headed the Greek Catholic deanery of Ciacova. Despite the fact that he intended to fulfill his duty as envoy of the deanery, the Serbian troops in Banat prevented him from travelling to Alba Iulia.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, if we exclude the three cases of absentee archpriests, and the four cases in which priests were sent as envoys of deaneries, we are left with a number of 122 archpriests, deanery administrators, and vice-archpriests who represented their deaneries at the Assembly of 1 December. We have elected to include in the analysis, alongside the 112 archpriests, the eight deanery administrators, as well as the two vice-archpriests present, because, at the time of the Great National Assembly, they were fulfilling the same kind of tasks that a regular archpriest would have fulfilled, from the standpoint of the ecclesiastical administration. What is more, a majority of these individuals would then go on to serve as archpriests.<sup>14</sup>

## **A Group Profile of Archpriests Attending the Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia**

**O**N THE basis of the sources employed we have managed to draft a relatively detailed collective portrait of the 122 clergymen who, on 1 December 1918, were occupying the office of archpriest, and who also managed to attend the Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia.<sup>15</sup> Given that this

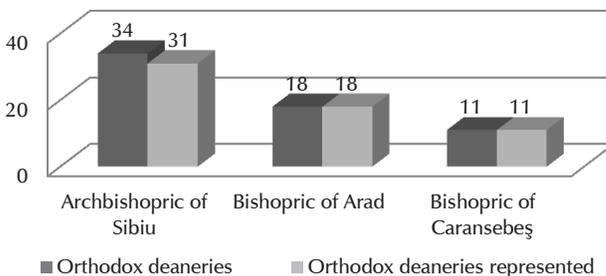
group is constituted of members of a local-regional elite, for which sufficient biographical information is available and already known to a wider audience, we have opted to employ a prosopographic approach. This served to highlight certain group-level features that are not immediately obvious when one only examines individual biographies separately. We have focused on several matters, namely, confessional adherence, educational background, professional pathway, and the involvement in the movement to develop the national and cultural standing of the Romanians in dualist Hungary. We have not neglected their activity during the war and in connection to the Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia, nor their subsequent political-parliamentary involvement in the interwar era.

### Confessional Adherence

**T**HE TARGET group was constituted of 58 Orthodox and 64 Greek Catholic individuals. Approximately 95% of the deaneries of the Orthodox Church of Transylvania were represented at Alba Iulia, a percentage that decreases to 92% if we discount the two priests who were sent as replacements of their deanery superiors.

It is also noteworthy that 100% of the deaneries in the two suffragan bishoprics of Arad and Caransebeş were represented. Moreover, 29 deaneries were represented by archpriests, with the exception of 3 deaneries of the Bishopric of Caransebeş, which were headed at the time by a deanery administrator. Thus, despite the fact that it was undergoing a difficult period following the war and the revolutionary events which had taken place in the autumn of 1918, the administration of the Orthodox Church of Transylvania endeavored to ensure that its flock could permanently benefit from the support and guidance offered by its regional representatives.

GRAPH 1. THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX DEANERIES REPRESENTED IN ALBA IULIA

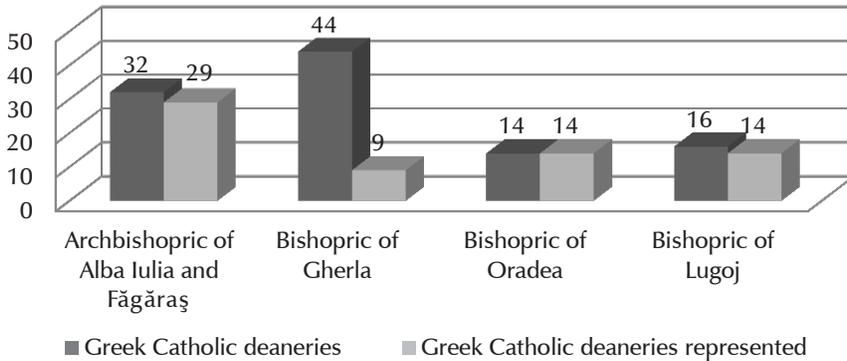


Around 62% of the deaneries of the Greek Catholic Church in Transylvania were represented at the Assembly of Alba Iulia, and if the two priests Ioan Ternovan and Gavril Muște are excluded, this percentage drops to 60%. The significant difference in the percentages of representation between the Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches requires a more detailed image of the latter's procedures for delegating their representatives to Alba Iulia. Thus, for the Archbishopric of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș, the percentage of deanery representation would have been 97% if both abovementioned archpriests, Brumboiu and Florian, had been able to attend, as only one deanery had not sent a representative to Alba Iulia. Even when their absence is taken into account, the percentage of deaneries represented remains approximately 90.6%, at a level close to that in the Orthodox Church. Of the 29 representatives of deaneries, 24 were archpriests, three deanery administrators, and two were vice-archpriests. In the Bishopric of Oradea the majority of the deaneries were represented by their own archpriests, with the sole exception of the deanery of Codru, represented by the priest Ioan Ternovan. For the Greek Catholic Bishopric of Lugoj, the representation exclusively by archpriests exceeded 87.5%, and it could have actually stood at 93% if the archpriest Juvanca had not been prevented by the Serbian troops from attending the Assembly in Alba Iulia. The only problematic case is that of the eparchy of Gherla: of the 44 deaneries in this unit, only around 20.5% would send their envoys to Alba Iulia, one of them being the priest Gavril Muște for the deanery of Lăpuș. The information we have obtained until now does not allow us to offer a clear explanation for this situation, but we may nevertheless suggest that the geographical, administrative, and political-military circumstances of the area were at least partially responsible for it. The three vicarages of Rodna, Silvania, and Maramureș functioned within the eparchy, and were situated on its extremities, precisely in order to assist in the management of these areas, located far away from the episcopal see in Gherla.

Therefore, the geographical distribution of the eparchy, combined with the difficulties in communication between the eparchial center and the vicarages, could have made it difficult to take definitive decisions concerning the representation at Alba Iulia. Additionally, some of the deaneries were situated in a disputed area, at the confluence of Ruthenian and Romanian interests.

Therefore, if one were to exclude the special case of the deaneries on the territory of the Gherla eparchy, we might state that the two Romanian Churches in Transylvania sent over 90% of their deanery representatives to the Alba Iulia Assembly.

GRAPH 2. THE ROMANIAN GREEK CATHOLIC DEANERIES REPRESENTED IN ALBA IULIA



## Educational Background

**T**HE MAJORITY of the archpriests in the sample were graduates of theological seminaries and institutes in Transylvania. Most of the Orthodox archpriests had attended the theological institute in Sibiu, while at least 23% of the individuals in this group had also taken classes in the metropolitan see. On the second position in the hierarchy of educational centers was Arad, where at least 12% of the individuals in the group had pursued an education.

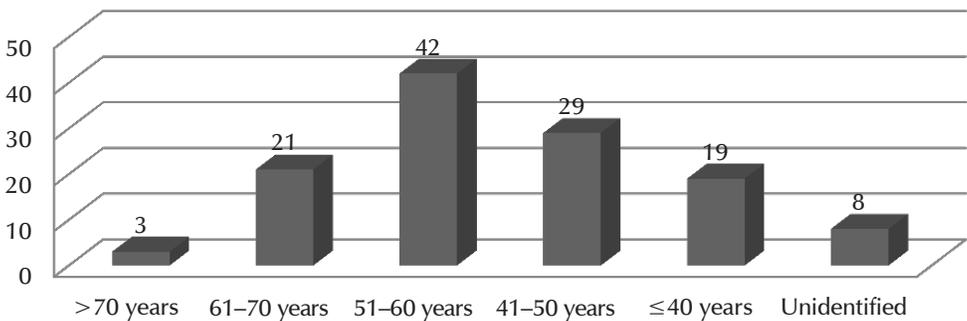
The Greek Catholic archpriests generally preferred the theological Academy in Blaj, where at least 22% of the individuals in this sub-group had pursued an education. Among other such institutions attended by the archpriests who were present in Alba Iulia in 1918 we should also note the institutes in Oradea, Gherla, and Caransebeș. Although university-level theological education was pursued to a lesser degree than secondary-level education at institutes, seminaries, and academies, around 16% of the archpriests discussed had also attended university. The most frequent choice was the theological faculty of the Royal Hungarian University in Budapest, where exclusively Greek Catholic archpriests studied. The Orthodox archpriests who pursued a university degree went to the theological faculty of the University of Chernivtsi (Ro. Cernăuți). In keeping with the times, a great part of the archpriests would have attended the courses of several theological educational institutions, some even up to four such establishments, during their formative years. This was for instance the case for the Orthodox archpriest of Mehadia, Ioan Sârbu, who had studied theology in Jena, Vienna, Chernivtsi, and Arad. In Jena and Vienna, he also attended the courses of the faculties of philosophy and history. At least 24% of the entire archpriest

group had also studied other fields apart from theology, particularly law and philology. What is more, 15% of the archpriests had obtained their doctoral degree, in theology or in other fields.<sup>16</sup>

## Becoming a Community Leader

**R**EGARDLESS OF their denomination, the profile of the Romanian archpriests involved in the Assembly of 1918 contains a series of characteristics specific to a local elite which acquired the role of national representatives. The majority of the individuals in the group were clergymen who had had a lengthy activity in the ecclesiastical, cultural, and national-political fields. Almost 54% of the archpriests were over 50 years old in December 1918, while around 24% were aged between 41 and 50. Only 16% were younger than 40, but no younger than 30. For approximately 7% we have no information concerning age. This elite segment should therefore be regarded as a highly experienced one, as it had witnessed the major events of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Romanian political movement in dualist Hungary (the Memorandum of 1892, the adoption of activism in 1905, etc.), and had also been actively involved in the First World War.

GRAPH 3. THE ARCHPRIESTS' AGE ON 1 DECEMBER 1918



From the perspective of their ecclesiastical careers, the 122 archpriests followed a relatively typical pathway: after a brief stint in episcopal chancelleries (especially for the Greek Catholics), they took their vows, were appointed parish priests, and shortly afterwards became archpriests. The amount of information collected for each archpriest may differ, as for some individuals the entire career track record is available, while for others only the last parish they served in

before being appointed in this position is known. Under these conditions, it is difficult to state that there was an ideal sequence of parishes in which a priest had to serve—with the exception of the deanery's residence—in order to become an archpriest. There were cases when, after having served for a lengthy period in the same parish, the priest was appointed archpriest and transferred to the resident-parish of the deanery. Similarly, counter-examples also existed, as many individuals would display a high degree of mobility within the deanery or the eparchy, moving from one parish to another. This suggests that there was no clear pathway leading one to this position from the perspective of professional mobility.

Archpriests were also a driving force behind the establishment and support of associations, a phenomenon that constituted a vector of modernization for the Romanian society in Transylvania. The archpriests headed branches of the ASTRA (Association for the Romanian Literature and Culture of the Romanian People)<sup>17</sup> and led the teachers', church singers', and reading societies. These individuals' efforts to enliven national cultural life were quite manifest.

Without a doubt, the clergy's involvement in the cultural associations or the various newspapers of the Romanians in dualist Hungary was an essential component in the evolution of these fields, and for the subsequent evolution of this nation's cultural life. The sources examined offer information on various collaborations undertaken by archpriests with contemporary newspapers—theological, national or political in nature. Although many archpriests would publish various articles, only around 5% of the sample were deeply involved in this field, serving as editors of gazettes such as *Tribuna*, *Drapelul*, *Românul*, etc.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Romanian credit institutions experienced a significant development in dualist Hungary. This phenomenon was occasioned by the ever-increasing need for liquid capital, experienced by the Romanian middle classes as a result of the modernization witnessed by the rural environment.<sup>18</sup> Thus, prior to the First World War, 168 such credit institutions with Romanian capital existed in Transylvania.<sup>19</sup> Their administration and management, ensured by the general assemblies of stakeholders, and by their executive committees, would be assumed by a socially and professionally heterogeneous elite, as there were very few Romanians trained in economic sciences. Clergymen thus came to play a significant part in this respect as well. Approximately 27% of the members of the executive committees of Romanian banks prior to the First World War were priests, while 41% of the leadership of such institutions was ensured by the same professional category. One explanation for this considerable presence of clergymen at the head of banking and credit institutions may reside in the significant experience they had amassed within the ecclesiastical administration.<sup>20</sup> In the examined sample, the percentage of archpriests

who were involved in this field was equally significant, 41% of these being active in such a capacity in Romanian banking and credit institutions.

What should not be omitted from this collective portrait of the archpriests are the political implications of their activity. Especially when the Romanian political elite in Transylvania was showing signs of fragility, the members of the clergy strongly felt the attraction of the political stage. Given the fact that the Romanian political elite had a relatively weak voice in the political arena of the Parliament in Budapest, as its greatest achievement occurred during the elections of 1906, when thirteen Romanian candidates managed to win seats running on the Romanian National Party's (RNP) lists,<sup>21</sup> the temptation to become involved in this field becomes understandable.

The archpriests' inclination towards political involvement was visible at various levels: the RNP's vice-president was the former archpriest of Alba Iulia, Nicolae Ivan, while many of his former colleagues from the ecclesiastical hierarchy participated in parliamentary elections as candidates, such as for instance Vasile Damian, the former Orthodox archpriest of Zarand, or Gheorghe Popovici, the former Orthodox archpriest of Lugoj.<sup>22</sup> Given the fact that political struggles were assimilated to a battle for national survival, these ambiguities and intersections between the ecclesiastical and political fields should not be surprising. What is more, they were specific to the entire East Central European region at the time. The archpriests' inclination to express their political opinions is also demonstrated by the high number of individuals who collaborated with Transylvanian political newspapers. Even if not all of them supported the activity of the RNP, some feeling compelled to collaborate with the Hungarian authorities, the true test of their loyalty occurred equally for all members of this group after the outbreak of the war.

## Archpriests in the First World War

**T**HE FACT that archpriests distinguished themselves as fervent supporters of the Romanian cultural-national life and as local leaders of the Romanians in dualist Hungary drew the attention of the Hungarian authorities. The entry of the Romanian army in Transylvania was a watershed moment, especially for the archpriests whose deaneries were situated on the southeastern border of the province. Their collusion with those who were regarded as the 'occupation force' by the Hungarian authorities led to an extremely virulent campaign against the Romanian clergy. Therefore, many of these individuals had to flee, first to the south of the Carpathians, and from there to Moldavia and then Russia, while many more were interned in the prison camps of Sopron,

Vác, etc., arrested, humiliated, and harassed.<sup>23</sup> Almost 20% of the archpriests discussed here were interned in such camps between 1916 and 1918.

Beginning with the autumn of 1916, Romanian archpriests become a permanently suspicious group in the eyes of the authorities, forced to exercise self-censorship, and careful to avoid any public expressions of their ideas. They become a counter-elite for the Hungarian authorities, which would retain the memory of the summer of 1916 throughout the entire war, unable to forget the terrible treason committed by these servants of the cross.

Furthermore, the archpriests' attachment to the national idea was most visible when the Romanian army entered the war on the side of the Entente, and initiated the campaign to occupy Transylvania. Although the circulars issued by the higher clergy emphasized the need to maintain loyalty to the emperor, there were numerous cases of archpriests for whom the national idea weighed more heavily than the directives of their superiors. While the high-ranking clergy in Transylvania, be it Orthodox or Greek Catholic, needed to function within a tense framework of the political constraints which exerted a great amount of pressure on their public behavior,<sup>24</sup> this middle-ranking clergy enjoyed more freedom of movement, being able to manifest their disobedience towards the higher ecclesiastical authorities. This phenomenon was highly visible in the analysis of the circulars issued by the hierarchs who ordered the archpriests to maintain prudence in manifestations, and fidelity to the Austrian-Hungarian throne, especially when these are contrasted with the archpriests' reactions: some welcomed the Romanian army with flowers, and then took refuge within its midst.

Invoking the 'unpatriotic' behavior of some Romanian archpriests, priests and confessional teachers in the autumn of 1916, Minister Albert Apponyi prepared, at the beginning of the following year, the project of 'cultural zones,' under which denominational schools in the border counties of Transylvania were to be nationalized.<sup>25</sup>

The end of 1918 found the archpriests taking on the mantle of political leadership and striving to ensure the first transfer of power in the area, from the Hungarian to the Romanian authorities, through the various organs they coordinated (national guards and councils).<sup>26</sup> The archpriests not only had to contend with a highly fragmented landscape, with competing centers of power, but were also called upon to find a way to political consensus. They had to carefully manage the tensions brought by soldiers from the frontlines, as well as the discontentment of the communities at home. When the traumas from the frontlines meet those on the home front, the possibility of social disorder in Transylvania became very likely. Within the highly unsettled context of the final months of 1918, the archpriests tirelessly worked towards achieving community consensus. They became central nodes in a network of authority, also involving the lay political elite.

Finally, the organization of the Great National Assembly can be seen as an immense effort to mobilize an entire host of historical actors, under circumstances that were highly unfavorable to such grand manifestations. The archpriests' coordinated presence at this event would legitimize it in the eyes of their parishioners, thus significantly contributing to its effects across the entire Transylvanian society at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Final Remarks

CERTAINLY, THE archpriests' participation in this highly significant moment in the nation's history—the Great National Assembly—as well as their activity undertaken in the service of their co-nationals during the troubled times of the First World War would bring them an extraordinary social capital. In the interwar period, their involvement would bear its fruits, as more than a quarter of the archpriests who attended the gathering of Alba Iulia would come to serve as deputies or senators in the Bucharest Parliament.

As the collective profile of this social-professional group has revealed, the archpriests constituted an intermediary elite, fulfilling a multitude of functions and covering a broad palette of activities. Many archpriests were involved in the cultural field, working as editors of gazettes and newspapers, or lending their expertise to the various cultural associations in Transylvania. Moreover, they were active members of banking committees, or were elected as parliamentary representatives on behalf of the Romanian National Party. Their pastoral obligations enabled them to reach a status that would be easily converted into that of community leader. Their activity at the end of the war showcases them as essential figures in the metamorphosis of this region from an imperial stronghold to a part of the Romanian national state. As vectors of mobilization, the archpriests not only welcomed the national scenario underway in November and December 1918, but also translated the new era to their communities of devotion, continuing to guide them spiritually and temporally. Their capacity to control a public space that was significantly out of joint, through their discourse and their organizational prowess, is emblematic for the authority they enjoyed in the eyes of their communities. This portrait confirms the fact that the majority of this group assumed a public intellectual role during the period under study. They not only gave a voice to comprehensive projects grounded in communitarian aspirations, but also ensured the mobilization of those whom they had shepherded at certain key moments, when the wide consensus of the society was required in order to overcome potential crises, with grave implications for the entire Romanian nation and the newly-fashioned state.



## Notes

1. Lawrence Stone, "Prosopography," *Daedalus* 100, 1 (Winter 1971): 46–79.
2. Katharine S. B. Keats-Rohan, ed., *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: A Handbook* (Oxford: University of Oxford Linacre College Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2007), 47–48.
3. *Statutul Organic*, "Dispoziții generale," point VI, and chapter II, article 29 (1910 edition), apud Paul Brusanowski, *Reforma constituțională din Biserica Ortodoxă a Transilvaniei între 1850-1925* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2007), 15–22.
4. Brusanowski, 20–21.
5. *Ibid.*, 263.
6. The candidate successfully passed the ecclesiastical maturity exam, and had the necessary qualifications for 1<sup>st</sup> class positions. However, the guidelines included an exemption concerning these educational qualifications for priests who had distinguished themselves in the ecclesiastical-cultural field through extraordinary intellectual and moral achievements. Lacking applicants with complete qualifications, individuals from the latter group were also accepted as candidates. *Ibid.*, 262.
7. *Statutul Organic*; Ioan Geț, *Administrația bisericească* (Oradea Mare: Tipografia Nagyvárad, 1912), 181–185.
8. The administrative structure of the Romanian Orthodox Church in dualist Hungary and of its deaneries followed the pattern provided by the *Protocolul Congresului național-bisericesc ordinariu al mitropoliei românilor greco-orientali din Ungaria și Transilvania, întrunit la Sibiu la 1/14 octombrie 1912* (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, 1913), and by the official Hungarian Schematism *Magyarország tiszti cím- és névtára*, 37 (Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda Részvénytársaság, 1918), 462–463.
9. The administrative structure of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church in dualist Hungary and of its deaneries followed the pattern provided by the ecclesiastical yearbooks: *Șematismul veneratului cler al Arhidiecezei Mitropolitane greco-catolice române de Alba-Iulia și Făgăraș pe anul 1911* (Blaj: Tipografia Seminarului Teologic Greco-Catolic, 1911); *Șematismul veneratului cler al Diecezei greco-catolice române de Gherla pe anul 1914* (Gherla: Tipografia Diecezană, 1914); *Schematismus Historicus Venerabilis Cleri Dioecesis Magno-Varadinensis Graeci Ritus Catholicorum Pro Anno Jubilari 1900* (Oradea: Typis Samuelis Berger, 1900); *Șematism istoric publicat sub auspiciile P.S.S. DD. Dr. Demetriu Radu, episcop gr.-cat. de Lugoj pentru Iubileul dela sfânta unire de 200 de ani, dela înființarea aceleiași diecese de 50 ani* (Lugoj: Tipografia Ioan Virányi, 1903), as well as by the official Hungarian Schematism (1918), 456–457.
10. The complete list of the 129 rightful members of the Great National Assembly, who represented the Greek Catholic and Orthodox deaneries, can be found in *Gazeta Oficială publicată de Consiliul Dirigent al Transilvaniei, Banatului și părților românești din Ungaria* 7 (1919): 35–36.
11. According to the information offered by Moise Brumboiu himself, published in Mircea Vaida-Voevod and Gelu Neamțu, *1 decembrie 1918: Mărturiile ale participan-*

- ților. *Ioachim Cnăciun: documente la un sfert de veac de la Marea Unire*, vol. 2 (Bucharest: Ed. Academiei Române, 2008), 50.
12. Cornel Lupea, *Racovița: Monografia unei străvechi așezări sibiene* (Sibiu: Tribuna, 1995), 303–304.
  13. Ioan Traia, Viorel Jiva, and Cornel Bercea, *Petroman, adevărat sat bănățean* (Timișoara: Orizonturi Universitare, 2008), 52.
  14. We did not include in our analysis the honorary Greek Catholic archpriests, as they did not fulfill from an administrative-ecclesiastical point of view the attributions of archpriests. These attended the assembly as delegates elected by electoral constituencies, and not as deanery representatives.
  15. The biographical information for this group was extracted from various studies devoted to the individuals who attended the Great National Assembly of 1 December 1918: Vaida-Voevod and Neamțu; Ioan I. Șerban et al., *Dicționarul personalităților Unirii: Trimișii românilor transilvăneni la Marea Adunare Națională de la Alba Iulia* (Alba Iulia: Altip, 2003); Daniela Comșa et al., *Clujenii și Marea Unire* (Cluj-Napoca: Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, 1998); Ioan Munteanu, *Banatul și Marea Unire* (Timișoara: Editura Mitropoliei Banatului, 1992), as well as from Mircea Păcurariu, *Dicționarul teologilor români* (Sibiu: Andreiana, 2014), and from the contemporary press: *Telegraful român* (Sibiu), *Biserica și școala* (Arad), *Foaia diecesană* (Caransebeș), *Unirea* (Blaj).
  16. The educational pathways of the archpriests who completed their university education was reconstituted on the basis of the information included in Cornel Sigmirean, *Istoria formării intelectualității românești din Transilvania și Banat în epoca modernă* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000).
  17. At least 66% of the archpriests in the sample were members of ASTRA, some even founding members, or presidents of various branches, according to the listing of the members of this association for 1917. See “Consemnarea membrilor Asociațiunii pentru literatura română și cultura poporului român pe anul 1917,” *Transilvania* (Sibiu) 49, 1–12 (1918): 40–64.
  18. Ioan Bolovan, *Transilvania între revoluția de la 1848 și Unirea din 1918: Contribuții demografice* (Cluj-Napoca: Fundația Culturală Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2000), 232–234.
  19. Vasile Dobrescu, *Funcții și funcționalități în sistemul de credit românesc din Transilvania până la Primul Război Mondial* (Târgu-Mureș: Ed. Universității “Petru Maior,” 2006), 8.
  20. Iosif-Marin Balog, “The Clergy’s Involvement in the Romanian Credit System from Transylvania during the Late Nineteenth and the Early Twentieth Centuries. Case Study: the Greek Catholic Clergy,” in *Recruitment and Promotion among the Romanian Greek Catholic Ecclesiastical Elite in Transylvania (1853–1918)*, ed. Mirela Popa-Andrei (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2014), 170–174.
  21. Keith Hitchins, *A Nation Affirmed: The Romanian National Movement in Transylvania 1860–1914* (Bucharest: The Encyclopaedic Publishing House, 1999), 162.
  22. Henrik Fabro and József Ujlaki, *Sturm-féle országgyűlési almanach 1906–1911* (Budapest: n.p., 1906), 82, 203.

23. Grigore N. Popescu, *Preoșimea română și întregirea neamului*, 2 vols. (Bucharest: Tipografia Vremea, 1940); Sebastian Stanca, *Contribuția preoșimii române din Ardeal la Războiul pentru Întregirea Neamului 1916–1919* (Cluj-Napoca: Cartea Românească, 1925); Mircea Păcurariu, *Politica statului ungar față de Biserica românească din Transilvania în perioada dualismului (1867–1918)* (Bucharest: Ed. Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1986), 266–282.
24. Marius Eppel and Andreea Dăncilă-Ineoan, “Negotiating National Consensus in Troubled Times: The Dialogue between the Ecclesiastical Elite in Transylvania and the Hungarian State during the Great War,” *Transylvanian Review* 26, Supplement no. 2 (2017): 259–264.
25. Lazăr Triteanu, *Școala noastră, 1850–1916: “Zona culturală”* (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, 1919); Păcurariu, *Politica statului ungar*, 164–178.
26. For 41% of the archpriests in the sample, we have found information that confirmed their participation in the local national councils and their involvement in the organization of the national guards. In this sense, see Augustin Deac et al., *1918 la români: Documentele Unirii. Unirea Transilvaniei cu România. 1 Decembrie 1918*, vol. 7 (Bucharest: Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1989), and Muzeul Național al Unirii, Alba Iulia, Special Collections, coll. *Participanți la Marea Adunare Națională de la Alba Iulia*.

## Abstract

The Activism of the Middle Clergy in Support of the National Desideratum: Romanian Archpriests at the Great National Assembly in Alba Iulia

Especially within the framework of collapsing multi-national empires, the end of the Great War brought about certain ethnically-charged processes meant to engender solidarity, which were completed through a translation of power centers and the emergence of new states, or the refashioning of extant ones. The present research examines the mobilization of national groups towards the end of 1918, through an analysis of a social-professional group that was deeply involved in the processes of national identification: the middle clergy. In order to narrow down this broad object of analysis, our research prioritizes the examination of the Romanian archpriests, who interceded between communities (parishes), ecclesiastical institutions, and the local and central state administration.

## Keywords

deaneries, archpriests, prosopography, 1918, Transylvania, national mobilization