

“What Bells Can Tell Us”?

The Romanian Bells from Transylvania and their Interesting Stories (19th–20th Centuries)*

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Introduction

THE GREAT boom of nowadays technique, the much easier way to send information, have made a number of other traditional means fall in disuse. But up to here various communication variants were used, the former being represented by the pyres lit in high places, relays, drums, horns, bells, etc.

Very simply speaking about the latter we will say that, in ancient times bells were used as a means of warning and of communication of information. In reality, the functions performed by the bells were far more numerous as they are highly synthesized by the Latin dictum: *vivos voco, mortuos plango, fulgura frango* (I call the living, cry the dead, drive away lightning). Also, bells fulfilled and fulfil a number of other social—symbolic functions, just as important. Thus, they contribute to the process of aggregation, solidarity and strengthening of the linkages between community members with a strong conservative function: he who hears the bells feels like being part of the community, by developing his identity belonging to the voice space. Bells maintain a permanent spiritual and symbolic link between the man who is away and the community he was born in, between the living and the dead, between past and present. Bells have also been associated with a preventive, magic, protective function exerted on the community.

But above any other function fulfilled by bells, is that they are part of a community's symbolic inventory and their sound helps create the territorial identity. The territory circumscribed by the sound of the bell falls within the classic beauty and is reduced to an enclosed space, ordered by the sonority of the center, the church, the tower bell or the steeple bell being the symbolic center of this territory. By the sound of the bell, man is integrated in space and harmonizes and identifies himself with it.¹

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The special importance of bells and their functions make us hardly imagine a place of worship without their presence. We can hear, admire or remain indifferent to the bells of church steeples. We know many, apparently, but few, in reality.

Few people know that these acoustic instruments have considerable experience and that they have been used since before the Christian era. According to some researchers, the first to use smaller bells were the ancient Assyrians, about 3000 year BC, evidenced by a bronze bell which is kept in a museum in Great Britain.² Others say that bells were first used in China, approximately 4000-3000 years BC.³

A bit later, it seems that the Romans announced public meetings by ringing bells,⁴ in order to make call signals in public baths, temples or for military purposes.⁵

It seems that some smaller bells were used by Christians since the 1st Century AD, such traces of gold, silver and bronze being discovered in catacombs and ancient Christian tombs⁶. However, in the 1st Century AD and during the religious persecutions Christians were called to prayer by specifically designated people who were passing on to their homes knocking to doors with some wood hammers.⁷ Then, the trumpet and the chop⁸ started to be used to call Christians to church.

Starting with the 4th Century AD, monks were called to prayer by the sound of a trumpet or of bells.⁹ And it is also since then that the first bell cast by bishop Paul of Nola's command seems to date.¹⁰ Although the use of bells begins to generalize starting with the 7th Century, in many places they were not known, and in others they were considered to be some extraordinary things. Since the reign of Charlemagne, bells become better known and are used in the western parts of Europe.¹¹

The Eastern Church has bells only since the 9th Century. In 865, Ursul, the patrician, or Ursus I, Doge of Venice, donated 12 bells to the Byzantine Emperor Michael III. They were placed in a bell tower purposely built next to St. Sophia Church. Subsequently, bells and their use were widespread in the Eastern part of Europe.¹²

The introduction of the bell as a rite instrument in the churches of the Romanian historical provinces is an unknown element. According to some researchers, actually this would have occurred before or after the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks (1453)¹³. The date of occurrence of the first Romanian bells is not known either.

Very likely, they appeared at the same time with the bell towers that were built to shelter them. In northern Transylvania there were bell towers even before the 13th Century, in Cuhea, Ieud, Giulești, Văleni and Apșa. The church of Strei, Hunedoara had a bell tower since the 13th Century and that of Sântămărie Orlea, since the 13th-14th centuries.

Objectives and sources

IT IS hard to imagine churches without bells and, especially, the churches in Transylvania without these acoustic instruments. But how much do we know about these too, how many things have we found out about them? How many of us have ever thought that, like people, bells have a destiny, an evolution, a story of their own?

The main objective of this research aims precisely, at restoring these issues, the stories of the bells belonging to the Romanian communities in Transylvania of the 19th and 20th centuries. We shall analyze a variety of sources: archival, memoirs, monographs, parish reviews, church press and periodicals, oral sources, to bring to light the true story with and about bells.

Destinies, stories, events, or about the bells of the Romanian communities in Transylvania of the 19th and 20th Centuries

LIKE PEOPLE, bells too have a start time, a year when they saw daylight, the “year of birth” being found, especially in the inscriptions on these acoustic instruments. Thus, on the metal body of the bell in Ighiu village (Alba County) the year 1843,¹⁴ is mentioned, on that of the church in Bica (Cluj County) the year 1933¹⁵ is written and that of Cojocna (Cluj County) bears the year 1938.¹⁶

Most of the analyzed inscriptions have the “year of birth” clearly marked and there are just few examples where they are not mentioned. However, if the year is not specified, it can be determined by appealing to adjacent information. For example, in the case of the place of Cetatea Braşovului, the bells date, most probably, from 1896, when the church was completed, and when the tower where the bells were placed was also built¹⁷. The church of Ruseşti hamlet (Cluj County) has a bell dating back from 1907, and, most likely, the second one is of the same year. The hypothesis is also strengthened by the information about the church year of building, 1907.¹⁸

It is more difficult to determine the year the bell of the old church of the town of Vătava saw daylight. In the absence of written information we can appreciate that this bell was made, most probably, between 1822 and 1865. 1822 is the year when the bell casting company belonging to Michael Manchen of Sighişoara starts to work, but it is quite hard to believe that this bell was cast before 1865. Most likely, the bell was brought to the church of Vătava in 1865, when its construction was finished,¹⁹ or immediately thereafter.

In some cases, the “bell year of birth” was put in association with important events of the past, or with different leading periods of some personalities. The bell of

Bica (Cluj) was cast in 1933, “15 years after the union of all Romanians.”²⁰ The inscription of one of the bells of the cathedral church in Sibiu stated that, “I was born in freedom to proclaim the victory of justice during the days of King Ferdinand I of United Romania.”²¹ And the bell of the church of Stănești (Cluj County) was cast in 1926 “during the reign days of His Majesty King Charles II, with Nicolae Colan as a Bishop, Nicolae Vasiu as a protopope and Alexandru Fodor as a parish priest.”²²

Later, after casting, the bell was sent to the town where it was to perform its duties, the entrance of the new member into the community family being an opportunity of great joy. The bells of the Greek Catholic parish of Zalău were brought to the train station on September 2, 1934, “in a real triumph, each on a cart with 9 pairs of oxen, with leading riders, and military music.”²³ Similarly, the bells of the village of Vătava (Mureș County) were brought into the village with great pomp, “with four pairs of oxen, they brought them by cart from Brâncovenești. They brought them by train . . . with pride, something triumphant about the village for the bell bringing. . . four pairs of yoked oxen, as they took Ferdinand to the pit, or Carol or Kennedy with four white horses.”²⁴

Before being mounted to the tower, bells were consecrated, blessed by sprinkling them with water, the ceremonial borrowing some of the specific elements of baptism. The custom of bell consecration and baptizing seems to date in the West since the 8th Century, and it was introduced in the East later on.²⁵ Considered at first sight a strange thing, this practice was not unusual if we think of the way bells were honoured and cherished. The birth of a new bell was, indeed, something of particular importance.²⁶ During the medieval period, when the new bell was finished, baptism date was set, some important people in the community being chosen as godparents, and sometimes a white consecration gown was made, as for a child.²⁷

Such practices were also common in Transylvania, during the investigated period; after bringing the bells in the city, their consecration and baptism were set, written invitations being made for this event. For example, during the meeting of the Greek Catholic parish committee of Aiudul de Sus (Alba County), held on November 9, 1922, the bell consecration is decided for the celebration day of the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel.²⁸ The parish priest of Sig (Salaj County) received from the Protopope Office of Crasna the invitation to attend the consecration of the bell of the town of Ban.²⁹

The bell consecration ceremony was held after the Divine Liturgy, because it was considered that in this way the veneration of the faithful to the bells increased.³⁰ Those who were present went in front of the church or in the church yard, where a table was placed on which there was a bowl of water, candlesticks with lighted candles, basil and the holy gospel. Near the table there were placed the bell or bells which were to be sprinkled with holy water both on the inside and on the outside.³¹ Psalms 148-150 were read alongside a series of prayers and songs mentioning the practical importance of bells in people’s lives.

An even greater similarity with the rite of people baptism was connected with the practice of bell godparenting. For example, the small bell of the church of Rebrîșoara was consecrated on November 15, 1925, by the godparents Ion Doboca Lașca and his wife Raveca and by Jacob Raz and Paraschiva. The consecration was celebrated by a group of three priests.³² And the great bell of the same town was consecrated on New Year's Day, 1928, with 37 godparents: Dr. Artene Mureșan, a judge in Bistrița, Macedon Linul, a teacher of Bistrița, the widow Mihalca Raveca with her sons (Ioan Mihalca, a priest and his wife, Traian, a secretary of the frontier funds of Năsăud), Ciuta Ionică and Matrona, Limul Ioan and Laura, Dorin Ioachim and Valeria, Oni Leon and Raveca, Ciuta Macedon a teacher and his wife, Victoria, Isini Dumitru, a school teacher and Elisabeta, Buzilă Nicolae and Onița, Roș Ștefan and Ludovica, Teșan Toader and Clementina, Moldovan Petru, the town secretary, Moldovan Dumitru and Raveca, Sarb Ioan and Firoana, Roș Ioan I. Petre and Ana, Varvoi Dumitru and Elena, Varvoi Valeriu and Ana, Durdulos Nicolae and Măriuca. The act of consecration was performed by three priests.³³

The bell of the church of Sesa was blessed on September 6, 1925, on the celebration day of St. Nicholas, and it was Christianised by six godparents: Eremei Noti and Raveca of Rebra, represented by their son-in-law, Elia Constantin and Rafila, Ion Doboca and Raveca. The consecration was celebrated by two priests.³⁴

The consecration of the bell of Cehu - Silvaniei was performed on February 27, 1939, and the godmother of the bell was Mrs. Elena Hossu-Longhin de Băsești, the daughter of George Pop Basesti, the Transylvanian politician, represented by the widow Marioara Sorescu, and the godfather of the bell was Mr. Alexandru Pop de Băsești, a rich owner.³⁵

The analysis of the occupations held by the bell godparents illustrates another similarity with the practice of human god-parenting. Many godparents were characters with a certain status, with a particular position within the social structure, with prestige and reputation.³⁶

The consecration of a bell was a happy, solemn event,³⁷ the ceremony including *specific elements* of the baptism ceremony; if we just think that some bells had even godparents, this practice is also an illustration of the humanization attributed to these acoustic instruments.

As far as the Occidental area is concerned, in the Middle Ages there was the habit of even giving names to bells, inlaid on the metal body, but this practice was abandoned in the 16th Century. In Transylvania, the available information at this time leads us to believe that this usage was extremely rare. Thus, we know for example that in the early 19th Century, Samuil Vulcan, the Greek-Catholic bishop of Oradea restored the clock tower that burned on June 19, 1836, "also making new bells, the largest of whom bears his name,"³⁸ and the large bell of the evangelical church of Sebeș bears the name of Erwin, as it was donated by Dahinten family in memory of their son, who had died young.³⁹

In the French area, in the folk language bells were rarely given names and the very common practice was to talk about “the large,” “the middle,” “the small” or “the first,” “the second,” “the third.”⁴⁰

This situation is also frequent in Transylvania, the examples being quite numerous. Thus, the church in Mărgău (Cluj County) had three bells: the smallest cast in 1753, the larger in 1846 and the middle bell in 1881.⁴¹ The church of Cizer village had two bells taken over during World War I, in the place of the two, a third bell being mounted, which is preserved today, too.⁴²

Entered the community family on a specific date, in a certain order, “baptized,” even with godparents, bells had a destiny of their own, a fate strewn with happy or less happy events.

And just as people, they were distinguished by certain qualities: great sound, beautiful aesthetics, extraordinary features. Thus, bells had a “sweet and harmonious voice,”⁴³ “nice and clean sound,”⁴⁴ “beautiful and well harmonized sound,”⁴⁵ “the sound harmony as of the organs.”⁴⁶ About the bells of Ilva Mare, Aurel Feștilă and Ilarie Cătună mentioned in the village monograph that when they were being rung “there was a real music, so well were they anchored and placed by the real experts in Bohemia”⁴⁷ and the bell in Năpradea (Sălaj county) was distinguished by “such a nice sound that no other like this can be produced around.”⁴⁸

On the other hand, bells have also been invested with other aesthetic elements “the beautiful bells in the church steeple.”⁴⁹ The small bell of the town of Monor was famous for “changing hard times”⁵⁰ Similar, the bell of the church of Nepos is famous for its special sonority, but also because in storms and hard times it scatters clouds and protects the place against natural disasters.⁵¹

Like people, many bells had a destiny sprinkled with a number of events they *overcome*, better or worse. Thus, the bells of the church of Bodia (Sălaj County) escaped intact after the tower was struck by lightning and totally destroyed.⁵² It wasn't the same luck that the bells in the village of Curtuiușu Mare in Maramureș had, as following a fire started in 1915, 32 houses and the wood church burned and the bells melted.⁵³ The bell of the town of Bișniț, Hunedoara County had the same fate in 1891.⁵⁴

Also, the moments of tension caused by the political-military conflicts during the 19th–20th Centuries, such as the 1848 Revolution, the First and the Second World Wars, have really left their mark on people, but also on bells.

Picking up bells during World War I for military purposes has also been called conscription. Basically, through this measure organised by the authorities, bells were, them too, “enrolled” in the war alongside people,⁵⁵ as they were taken “to make their duty on the battlefield.”⁵⁶ Thus, only from the Orthodox deanery of Dej a total of 36 bells were “recruited” for army needs,⁵⁷ from the Orthodox deanery of Unguraș 34 bells were picked up,⁵⁸ and from the Greek-Catholic Vicariate of Hațeg 48 bells were taken until 1915.⁵⁹

Some bells have escaped the war by being hidden. Thus, an old man in the village of Var (Sălaj County) buried a bell and put over it a haystack. After the war, although the haystack was broken to remove the bell, it was not used as animal food. The bell was mounted to the church steeple with great religious procession attended by the entire village.⁶⁰ Also, the small bell of Vărai village was picked up and taken to Baia Mare where it disappeared. It was later found at the bottom of a well around the city of Baia Mare. Because the name of Vărai was written on it, it was brought back to the village.⁶¹ I also met such a story in my field research. The ice bell of Războieni village was also hidden into a well so as not to be requisitioned “a bell, at the time of the war with the Hungarians, I know somebody found it at Buica, there was a well, a well and the Romanians put that ice bell in there for the Hungarians not to find it and take it away.”⁶²

The descent of a bell from the church steeple and bell’s departure for war sometimes generated a sad show, “with poignant scenes, of the grief of stricken hearts, of the veil of tears of dark eyes and of crushed sighs of afflicted viewers.”⁶³ The notice of bell handing over is received by people with great sorrow as this was the sad news of the separation forever of a loved person. Of a loved person, not of a loved thing, as the bell is not regarded as a mere object, it is humanized. The ceremony of separation has similarities with the ceremony held on the death of a man. Bells are rung as a sign of mourning both in the evening and in the morning “the soldiers had arrived in the village since Tuesday evening . . . so both on Thursday night and on Friday morning all the bells rang in unison so harmoniously and moving that there was no eye without tears the moment they felt they were separating from these bells as from some old and good friends.”⁶⁴

Equally sad was the separation of the beloved bell for the residents of Paclișa village (Alba County), too, the priest Nicolae Cado recalling this event in the parish chronic: “On the day the two larger ones, required, were to be taken, they decided to ring all the three of them at once, as a sign to tell them goodbye.” They rang them for half an hour: Iosa Ștehan, Cerb Cifor and Doțu Petru. I with several men, who had gathered to hear the sound of the bells, the old parish clerk Costea Dănilă and the school teacher Ștefan Cotoară among us, listened with tears in our eyes to the sweet last sound of our beloved bells.⁶⁵ Also, in Silivaș town, during the takeover of bells “people were crying over them as for the dead.”⁶⁶

Upon leaving bells are decorated “with garlands of flowers and green branches of fir”⁶⁷ and are seen on the way of no return by all believers, “to the border of the town,”⁶⁸ “were seen up to the train by our believers.”⁶⁹

The separation from bells takes place within a real burial ritual. On finding out the sad new bells are rang, priests say the obituaries, fir wreaths and flowers are used and bells are seen on the last way with lamentations and tears.

As events that marked the place history and people’s sensitivity, some priests wrote them down so that no one should forget them: “from our church in Pâclișa

bells were taken on October 24 (November 6), this year, 1917, around 9 hours before noon, namely, they took the two larger ones, leaving us only the smaller one.⁷⁰”

After the armed conflict closed, most communities try to return to normality by replacing the lost bells, but the situation does not last long, since of World War II outbreaks, requiring Transylvanian communities and bells another painful tribute.

Some bells have a sad fate, others a lucky one managing to survive the armed conflict. Such a happy case is that of the bell in the village of Vătava (Mureș county), turned back to the town after being descended from the church tower.

The recovery and restoration of the bell in the village was a great thing for the community, this event profoundly influencing the sensitivity of the people of that site who haven't forgotten it and passed it over to their followers. The similarity of the events the community and its bell went through and the humanisation of the latter can be learned from a simple witness but so significantly profound “our bell was at war!⁷¹”

And the bells of the Romanian communities in Transylvania of the 19th-20th Centuries had a personal trajectory themselves, similar, in many respects, to that of the people. They entered in a given year, in a certain sequence, they were distinguished by certain qualities and they have gone through different experiences just like any other human being.

Conclusions

THE ANALYSIS of archival, memoir sources, of monographs, parish chronicles, of church press and periodicals, of oral sources brought out a number of similarities between the destiny of people and the destiny of bells. As in people, bells, too, had a year of birth, they were consecrated, some of them even with baptismal godparents. They came out through a series of qualities, they have been subjected to all sorts of trials and they went through all the ups and downs, *through better or worse*. Each had its own story!



Notes

1. See, Elena Crinela Holom, “La fonction identitaire des cloches: Un modèle de sensibilité collective dans le monde rural roumain moderne et contemporain,” *Transylvanian Review*, 7, 2 (2008): 81–82; Constantin Oancea, Constantin Gheorghiș, Simona Condurache-Bota, “Complex Analysis of the Bells’ Sound from the ‘Saint Trinity’ Cathedral from Alba Iulia,” *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 7, 4 (2011): 103.

2. Aurel Crăciunescu, "Originea clopotelor," *Revista teologică. Organ pentru știința și viața bisericească*, 4, 1, 84.
3. Ibid.; Percival Price, *Bells and Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 2; John Camp, *In Praise of Bells. The Folklore and Traditions of British Bells* (London: Hale, 1988), 14; Satis N. Coleman, *Bells. Their History, Legends, Making, and Uses* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1971), 22.
4. Aurel Crăciunescu, 85.
5. Ruxandra Hurezean, Camelia Sisko, "Explicații detaliate. Drumul unui clopot Grassmayr din Austria la Cluj," *Explicatorul*, 13 (2005): 4.
6. Aurel Crăciunescu, 85.
7. Ibid.; Victor Bojor, Aron Papiu, Ștefan Roșianu, *Tipic Bisericesc* (Blaj, 1914), 98.
8. Miron Cristea, "Clopotele," *Telegraful român*, Sibiu, 53, 112, 1916, 449; Victor Bojor, Aron Papiu, Ștefan Roșianu, 98.
9. Victor Bojor, Aron Papiu, Ștefan Roșianu.
10. "Din istoria clopotelor," *Telegraful român*, 59, 17, 1923, 81.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 87; Victor Bojor, Ștefan Roșianu, *Tipic Bisericesc* (Blaj, 1931), 122.
13. Petru Râmneanțu, "Două clopote din secolul al XV-lea sau al XVI-lea din Gaiu Mic," *Mitropolia Banatului*, 16, 1–3 (1966): 59.
14. National State Archive, Alba Branch, *Fond parohia greco-catolică Ighiu*, file 1/1915, 31.
15. Valeriu Sima, *Biserici și preoți în raionul Huedin* (Poieni, 1987), 21.
16. Florian Mureșan, *Biserici și preoți din protopopiatul ort. rom. al Clujului* (Cluj: Tipografia Națională, 1946), 49.
17. Bartolomeu Baiulescu, *Monografia comunei bisericești gr. ort. române a Sfintei Adormiri din Cetatea Brașovului cu acte și dovede* (Brașov: Tipografia Ciureu, 1898), 48.
18. Florian Mureșan, 48.
19. *Siematismulu Veneratului Cleru alu Arhidiecesei Metropolitane greco-catolice a Alba-Iuliei și Făgărășului pre anulu 1896* (Blaj: Tipografia diecezană, 1896), 209.
20. Valeriu Sima, 21.
21. "O sărbătoare înălțătoare. Sfințirea clopotelor. Pelerinaj la biserica catedrală," *Telegraful român*, 74, 39–40, 1926, 3.
22. Florian Mureșan, 48–49.
23. National State Archive, Sălaj Branch, Colecția dr. Ioan Danciu, pack 1, no. I/17, 5.
24. Dumitru German, interview by the author, audio recording, Vătava, Mureș Conty, September, 2004.
25. Victor Bojor, Ștefan Roșianu, 122; J.F., "Baptism of Church Bells," 43; Alain Corbin, *Les cloches de la Terre. Paysage sonore et culture sensible dans les campagnes au XIX-e siècle* (Flammarion Champs, 1994), 95–96.
26. Satis N. Coleman, 84.
27. Ibid., 86.
28. NSAA, *Fond parohia greco-catolică Aiudul de Sus*, Registru cu procese verbale ale sedințelor curatoratului parohiei 1918-1947, B 2, 31.
29. NSASJ, *Fond parohia greco-catolică Sig*, file 10/1915–1943, 6.
30. Aurel Popoviciu, *Tipicul bisericii ortodoxe întocmit pentru trebuințele preoților români și ale elevilor seminariali* (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, 1917), 126.
31. Ibid.

32. National State Archive, Bistrița-Năsăud Branch, *Fond Emil Precup (1751-1965)*, file 59, 57–58.
33. *Ibid.*, 60–61.
34. *Ibid.*, 58.
35. Ștefan I. Vădeanu, *Celbu Silvaniei. Străveche cetate voievodală românească. Monografie istorico-religioasă* (Baia Mare: Editura Gutinul, 2007), 103; Derșida village church bell (Salaj county) had as godparents by John Gorgan, Gligor and his wife Theresa, John Alexander and his wife Teresa and the teacher Augustin Pop and his wife Maria Cf. Ileana Petrean-Păușan, Gheorghe Chende-Roman, Ioan Ghiurco, *Bisericile de lemn din Sălaj. Schițe monografice; foto album* (Zalău: Editura Sylvania, 2008), 77.
36. Bryan S. Turner, *Statusul* (Bucharest, London: CEU Press, 1998), 28–29.
37. “O sărbătoare înălțătoare,” 2; “Sfințirea de clopote din Egerseg,” *Telegraful român*, 56, 76, 1908, 313; “Sfințirea clopotelor bisericii din Brașov-Cetate,” *Telegraful român*, 76, 60, 1928, 2.
38. Bryan S. Turner, 28-29.
39. Anemarie Junesch, “Biserica evanghelică C.A. și viața sașilor din Sebeș,” in *Vârstele orașului Sebeș – 750 de ani de atestare documentară (1245-1995)* (Sebeș, 1995), 46.
40. Alain Corbin, 95.
41. National State Archive, Sibiu Branch, *Manuscrise Varia*, file II 548, 19.
42. Petru Galiș, *Cizer – 790 (1219-2009). File de monografie* (Zalău: Editura Școala Noastră, 2009), 125.
43. Vasile Cosma, *Cinci sate din Ardeal* (Cluj: Tipografia Națională, 1933), 58.
44. “Dela sate,” *Telegraful român*, Sibiu, 70, 1922, 3.
45. “Sfințirea bisercii catedrale din Sibiu,” *Telegraful român*, 54, 48, 1906, p. 209.
46. Teodor Tanco, *Pagini alese din istoria Monorului* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Virtus Romana Rediviva, 2001), 186.
47. NSASB, *Fond Oficiul parohial greco-catolic Ilva Mare*, file 24/1921–1938, 3 v.
48. NSASJ, *Parohia greco-catolică Năpradea*, file 11/1915–1917, 3.
49. “Sfințirea clopotelor bisericii din Brașov-Cetate,” *Telegraful român*, 76, 60, 1928, 2; “Sfințirea de clopote din Egerseg,” 313; *Unirea. Foaie bisericească politică*, 31, 34, 1921, 3.
50. Teodor Tanco, 86–187. The same qualities were held by the bells from Zagra Cf. NSA-BN, *Fond Oficiul parohial greco-catolic Zagra*, file 23/1973, 3v.
51. Mircea Daroși, Vasile Rus, *Monografia bisericii ortodoxe Bunavestire din Nepos* (Bistrița: Editura Karuna, 2005), 55.
52. NSASJ, *Fond propopiatul ortodox român Românași*, file 101/1881–1939, 1.
53. Roxana Selnic, Gheorghe Zah, Zamfira Tuns, *Monografia satului Curtuiușu Mare. Județul Maramureș* (Cluj-Napoca: Risoprint, 2002), 48–50.
54. M. Ioan Boteanu, “Bințiș în 7 Aprilie 1891,” *Telegraful român*, Sibiu, 39, 41, 1891, 163.
55. Elena Crinela Holom, 83.
56. “Informațiuni. Mândria lugojenilor,” *Biserica și școala*, 41, 46, 1917, 373.
57. NSACJ, *Fond protopopiatul ortodox român Dej*, file 278/1918, numbered.
58. NSASJ, *Fond protopopiatul ortodox Românași*, file 183/1918–1921, 1,3.
59. Camelia Elena Vulea, *Biserica și societate în vicariatul greco-catolic al Hațrgului între 1850-1918*, (Ph.D. thesis), Cluj-Napoca, 2005, 433.
60. Petru Itineanțu, *Monografia comunei Obreja* (Caransebeș: Editura Ionescu, 2002), 73.

61. Gheorghe Zah, *Monografia satului Vărai. Județul Maramureș* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Romsver, 2002), 46.
62. Aurel Herța, interview by the author, audio recording, Războieni, Alba Conty, December, 2004.
63. “Plecarea clopotelor. Săliște în 15/28 august 1916,” *Biserica și Școala*, 9, 39, 1916, 34.
64. Ibid.
65. Ioana Rustoiu, Dănilă Vaida, *Cronica parohiei Păclîșa (1901-1944)* (Alba Iulia: Editura Altip, 2008), 154.
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68. “Clopotele din Dieci. Hora clopotelor,” 209.
69. Valeriu Leu, Carmen Albert, 16.
70. Ioana Rustoiu, Dănilă Vaida, 153.
71. Vasile Popovici, interview by the author, audio recording, Vătava, Mureș County, September, 2004.

Abstract

“What Bells Can Tell Us”?

The Romanian Bells from Transylvania
and their Interesting Stories (19th–20th Centuries)

Like people, bells too, have a destiny, an evolution, a history of their own, the main objective of the present research targeting precisely, at the reconstitution of these issues, of the stories of the bells of the Romanian communities in Transylvania of the 19th–20th Centuries. The analysis of archival, memoir sources, of monographs, parish chronicles, of church press and periodicals, of oral sources, brought out a number of similarities between the destiny of people and the destiny of bells.

Keywords

Bells, Church, Romanian Communities, Transylvania, 19th–20th Centuries

