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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**VASILE ALEXANDRU BARBOLOVICI**

**Conciliul de la Ferrara-Florența (1438–1439): Istoria și ecleziologia unirilor**

(The Council of Ferrara-Florence, 1438–1439: The history and ecclesiology of the religious unions)

Forewords by LIVIU PETRU ZĂPĂRȚAN and VIRGIL BERCEA, introduction by CESARE ALZATI, Translated from Italian by MONICA OMILESCU Cluj-Napoca, Academia Română. Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2019.

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**V**ASILE ALEXANDRU Barbolovici is a Greek Catholic priest, doctor in Theology and a specialist in ecumenical studies at the Antonianum Pontifical University of Rome, where he defended his dissertation in 2017; a year later, in 2018, he published his doctoral dissertation entitled “Il concilio di Ferrara-Firenze (1438–1439): Storia ed ecclesiologia delle Unioni” (Bologna: EDB, 2018).

The present volume, is in fact a translation into Romanian of the aforementioned work, which was initially published in Italian; the translation was done by Monica Omilescu, while the forewords is signed by Liviu Petru Zăpârțan and Virgil Bercea; the introduction is written by Cesare Alzati. The Romanian version was published in 2019, and therefore we could say that it respected the one-year presentation and publication “cycle”: 2017—public defense of the doctoral dissertation in Rome; 2018—publication in the Italian language, in Bologna; 2019—the introduction of the

work into the Romanian scientific circuit, after its publication, at Cluj, under the aegis of the Center for Transylvanian Studies of the Romanian Academy.

The book is structured into seven chapters of unequal length totaling 283 pages, 37 pages less than the Italian publication, a difference probably resulting from the translation which thus renders the work more concise.

The foreword and the introduction tell us what the author’s motivation was for choosing the topic, namely, an impressive historical reconstruction of the tribulations of Christianity, with two objectives: the first one regards the investigation of the differences between the two main branches of Christianity, while the second objective was linked to tie between the historical evolution of Christianity and the territories inhabited by Romanians.

Chapter I, “Eastern Europe between Rome and Byzantium Until the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439)” (pp. 25–56), includes general information about Eastern Europe, a region which was, especially during the Middle Ages, at the confluence and under the influence of both European empires (Holy Roman and Byzantine), and of the two Christian Churches, ‘Latin’ and ‘Greek.’ As such, the first chapter is a general one, describing the political and religious context in Eastern Europe until the Council of Ferrara-Florence.

The second chapter, “The Union of Florence of 1439 and its Consequences

for the Romanians” (pp. 57–87), is general in nature, like the previous one, but in geographical and contextual terms the author focuses on the regions inhabited by the Romanians—Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia. The author also presents the consequences of the decisions adopted during the Council of Florence of 1439, especially those concerning the Romanian people living in the abovementioned regions.

Chapter III, “The Different Unions and Their Motivations” (pp. 89–127) presents the various unions established in the wake of the Florentine union of 1439, the chosen example being the Union of Brest, of 1595. The Polish people were the pathfinders for the Eastern European peoples who became united or reunited, in religious terms, with the Church of Rome. The model was followed by the Ruthenians and by the Romanians in Upper Hungary and in the Western marches of Transylvania (*Partium*); later on, there was a mass union of the Romanian people in Transylvania, during 1697 and 1701. The author observes that, from a historical point of view, the establishment of the Romanian Uniate Church (the Greek Catholic Church) around the year 1700 had remarkable consequences for the process of modernization and in terms of connecting the Romanians to European civilization and culture.

If the first three chapters contained historical aspects, proving the author’s skills as a historian, the next four chapters include ecclesiological information which, this time around, illustrates the author’s theological background.

Thus, chapter IV, “The Council of Florence and its Ecclesiology” (pp. 129–166), presents the preliminary stages of the Council of Florence, and the four main

issues debated and adopted in plenary session: Filioque, the matter and the form of the Eucharist, the Purgatory, and the primacy of the Roman pontiff.

Chapter V, “The Unions, between difficulties and resistance” (pp. 167–206), provides, as suggested by its title, a synthetic examination of the existing religious unions among peoples of Slavic origin in Eastern Europe, highlighting the importance of the Union of Brest, of 1595, especially for the good functioning of the two “sister Churches,” a phrase used and debated in the previous chapter. After the Union of Brest came other religious unions, such as the one of Uzhhorod in 1646, or that of Mukachevo (1664); these examples influenced the Romanian people in Transylvania, as the author shows.

The sixth chapter, “The foundation of the Unions: The Tendency Towards Unity” (pp. 207–224), is short, not very rich in information, but the details it offers have a significant impact on the reader. In this subunit, Father Barbolovici presents the case of the double ecclesial affiliation, hardly an isolated phenomenon at the time. A clear case of double loyalty in the Romanian space is that of Gheorghe Movilă, the Metropolitan Bishop of Iași and the head of the Church of Moldavia, who, together with Prince Petru Șchiopul, pledged allegiance to Rome in 1589, but the following year they also attended the Synod of Constantinople, which ratified the establishment of the Patriarchy of Moscow. The author also talks about Ieremia Movilă, Metropolitan Gheorghe’s brother, who was a Catholic priest. Although he lived according to the Orthodox tradition, he had no compunction when it came to giving confession before the Latin altar as well. The chapter also

presents other examples proving the dual loyalty of some people of the Church, but this should not give the impression of duplicity or pretense. On the contrary, their actions should be seen as an aspiration towards the manifest unity of the Church, according to the author.

In the last chapter, “The Second Vatican Council and the Catholic East” (pp. 225–251), the author briefly presents all the stages of the Second Vatican Council of 1962–1965: the preliminary stage, the sessions, and the effects of the decisions adopted, especially upon the Eastern Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*).

In conclusion, the work of Vasile Barbolovici is a historical theological exegesis that follows the central investigative line of the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439), an event of great ecclesiological, but also historical significance. The decisions adopted at this Council had echoes especially in the Eastern part of the continent, among the Christian peoples of Greek rite. All of these evolutions and transformations caused by the Council were approached by the author from a dual perspective, historical and theological, which is the defining feature of this work.



ROBERT-MARIUS MIHALACHE

ADRIAN ONOFREIU and CLAUDIA SEPTIMIA SABĂU, eds.

**“Despre împlinirea celor neîmplinite”  
în districtul Năsăud: Condițiile admin-  
istrative de la Măgura (1866–1868) și  
Șanț (1874)**

(“On the fulfillment of that which had been unfulfilled” in the district of Năsăud: The administrative records of Măgura, 1866–1868, and Șanț, 1874)

Foreword by IOAN BOLOVAN,  
Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română. Centrul  
de Studii Transilvane, 2018.

**T**HE EDITORS, Adrian Onofreiu and Claudia Septimia Sabău, are accomplished researchers whose comprehensive, utterly professional, and through endeavors have managed to bring to the attention of scholars an impressive amount of documents concerning the historical area of Năsăud.

The Năsăud District, a political-administrative entity created in 1861 in the region of the former Năsăud Border Regiment, had a majority Romanian population (mainly Greek Catholic), Romanian public officials in all administrative fields, and schools with Romanian as their teaching language.

This book contains documents and regulations recorded by local mayoralities in two villages of Năsăud District, Rodna-Măgura (for the timeframe 1866–1868) and Șanț (for 1874). These are important documents that help us understand the work of the Romanian authorities in that area, containing essential information about the mechanisms underpinning the administration of such villages. The documents show that, at local communities level, an important role was played by the mayors, with attributions regard-