Phd Thesis
- Summary –

ROMANIAN CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS IN THE REGION OF ORASTIE BETWEEN 1867-1918

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Saxon, colonization, Orastie region, Hunedoara county, Orthodox Church, the Greek Catholic Church, Transylvania, Sibiu, Lugoj, modern era, clergy, ordination, metropolitan, bishop, vicar, archdeacon, priest, parish, religious, district, the assessments, statistics, canonical visitation, church history, national identity, history of education, primary education, religious school, Magyarization policy, teachers, curriculum, conferences, meetings, student, law, textbook, attendance, exam, school timetable, teaching material, school network, the Austro-Hungarian dualism.

This paper aims at contributing to the study of the modern history of the Romanians in the region of Orastie, a region that has not benefited from a systematic and comprehensive approach as far as the historiographical investigation is concerned. In Romanian historiography, Orastie region, this multiethnic, multi-confessional and multicultural space, has not been treated as seriously as it should have, taking into account the role that the local people had in the modernization of the life of the Romanians in Transylvania. Although it has been analyzed in various aspects, the historical frame of the region of Orastie would be incomplete without a presentation of the local institutions that supported the life of the Romanians in a period of great changes for the Transylvanian Romanian society: the church and the school. Therefore, we chose to examine church history and the problem of the Romanian religious schools in the region of Orastie in the chronological interval 1867-1918, corresponding to the Austro-Hungarian dualism.

We used multiple sources of documentation in the reconstruction of the religious structures, both Orthodox and Greek Catholic, and of the network of religious schools in the district of Orastie. The paper is based on unpublished archival documents that we found in the National Archives Service in Hunedoara County, information supplemented by documents from the edited collections, ecclesiastical and laic papers, syntheses and dictionaries. We have chosen a chronological presentation of the events, analyzing the issues pursued at the local level, without losing sight of the overall context
in Transylvania. The paper is divided into 9 chapters, some final considerations, bibliography and appendices.

Chapter I, the introductory part, covers "The Romanians in the region of Orastie - historiographical past and present". This chapter aims to provide an overview of the main historiographical investigations having as subject the Orastie region, that is Orastie town and its surrounding rural communities. In doing so, we chose a well-defined period from the year 1224, the year of the first documentary attestation of the town of Orastie, until 1918, when the Great Union was accomplished. Bibliography is not exhaustive, however, it tends towards a complete picture of the historical and scientific achievements in Romania, about the past of the Romanians in the Orastie region. In our insight through the achievements of the Romanian historiography, we have considered the work, studies and articles published in various publications so far. Regarding the historiography of Romanian churches and schools in the region of Orastie, I have tried, without going into details, to provide insight references that highlight the contribution of religious and educational institutions in the region to the activity of the national churches: Orthodox and Greek Catholic. We hope this bibliography reflects, alongside the evolution of the topic as an object of research, the successful efforts of the various generations of the historians investigating the Saxon Orastie region.

Chapter II, on the topic "The region of Orastie during 1867-1914", aims to provide a succinct presentation of the Romanian society in the region of Orastie, showing several landmarks in the evolution of the population and of the network of settlements, some considerations on social and economic life in the area and some contributions of the citizens of Orastie to the development of the cultural and political movement in Transylvania during the Austro-Hungarian dualism. The retrospective analysis of this region shows that Orastie-town and its surrounding rural communities present the history of an upward trend beyond the hardships of those times, their life being full of turmoil and religious, cultural and political confrontations. Among the prominent people of the province were the ecclesiastical and teaching intelligentsia, all of them, clergymen and laymen, contributing through their actions and deeds to make this area appreciated and well-known by the Transylvanian Romanian society.
Chapter III, entitled "The Orthodox Church in the region of Orastie during 1867-1914", aims to provide a summary of what the Orthodox Church in the region of Orastie meant in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the next century. The attempts undertaken to give back some landmarks of the evolution of orthodoxy in the district of Orastie through historical documents has faced, for some parishes and time intervals the difficulty caused by insufficient background information. Testimonies of history have sometimes bypassed small villages, so that their past had to be reconstructed taking poor landmarks into consideration. Due to the extremely complex issue, I tried to look back at only some of the aspects of this religious institution of the Romanians in the region of Orastie: the birth of the Orthodox religious identity in this historic space, the organization of the deanery (within the territorial jurisdiction, the number of parishes, deanery management), districtual clergy (the intellectual, financial situation, the state of discipline, conferences of the priests), the situation of churches (renovations, construction, canonical visits), philanthropic activity of the believers (fund raising, donations, church funds).

Chapter IV, focused on "The Greek-Catholic Church in the region of Orastie during 1867-1914", has proposed a summary of the institutional evolution of this religious community at a local level. An important role in getting to know the religious life of the Greek-Catholics in the region of Orastie (for the period of time under analysis) was played by the documents found in the local parishes. Their study provides a way to shape a more or less consistent image about the main problems faced by the Greek Catholic communities: the area of jurisdiction of the deanery; theological studies of the priests; wealth and state of discipline of the clergy; the relationship between the priest and the community; the priests position to the events of those times; the state of the churches and parish houses; the philanthropic activity of the believers. Coexisting with the Orthodox Romanians, but lacking religious equality with them, the Deans, the Greek Catholic priests and believers gave colour to the Romanian life in the region of Orastie as good and useful participants in solving the problems of the spiritual, social-economic, cultural, national and political life.

Chapter V, on the topic "Romanian confessional school in the region of Orastie during 1867-1914", aims to provide a summary of the development of the
educational system at a local level. In the history of the Romanian school and culture, Orastie is among those towns over which the historical and political development of Transylvania has left important traces. As an old cultural center, Orastie must be associated with schools that have undoubtedly had a positive role in promoting cultural aspects. A number of documents point to Romanian schools in the region of Orastie organized in the spirit of the time, and that can provide information for the monographic study of the education in Transylvania. The religious education in the region of Orastie had a sinuous, but upward trend, in spite of the obstacles they faced. From its early period, then going through the rigours of the Hungarian law concerning education at all levels and until the outbreak of the First World War, the confessional school in the region of Orastie knew how to promote the national ideals, the language, the traditions, the faith and the Romanian culture. Throughout their work, the confessional teachers in this area, along with those in all the provinces under foreign rule, have contributed to the cultural advancement of the Romanian nation.

Chapter VI, entitled "The Orthodox Church in the region of Orastie during the First World War", aims to provide some examples in the life of the parishes, demonstrating that during military events, rural communities have been overtaken by the obligations imposed by the conflict. Believers in this period showed their desire be understood, especially in terms of material efforts. The hard situation of the believers came to be identical to that in the Romanian institutions already considered traditional, the church and the school. But church especially, through its role as an intermediary imposed by the authorities in times of war, added to the national conflict, supported until then especially from an administrative point of view; its mission was very difficult, it was impossible not to commit errors towards the authorities or the believers.

Chapter VII, with theme "The Greek-Catholic Church in the region of Orastie during the First World War", aims to provide some examples to show that in spite of many difficulties arising from the state of war, parishes came to support calls for help coming from different parts of Blaj or Lugoj. Of course, the situation of parishes, of the church life and property suffered a syncope with the war, since the pressure of the authorities was higher and higher. But the priests and the believers, with the risk of
blocking other local initiatives, chose to help the people left at home or the Romanian soldiers on the battlefields.

Chapter VIII, dealing with "The Romanian School in the region of Orastie during the First World War", aims to present synthetically the period in which numerous difficulties and hardships due to the war, had to be overcome so that the Romanian religious teaching process to develop in normal conditions. As for the parishes belonging to the two deaneries in Orastie, it is noteworthy that the Romanians have not established and have not supported many schools in this period, which proves the limits of the believers with regard to the difficult financial situation they were in because of the conflict.

Chapter IX, with the subject "Romanian clergymen and laymen in the region of Orastie in the struggle to form Great Romania", aimed at presenting data and facts that reconstruct the history of the years preceding the Great Union of 1918, in the investigated area: the situation of the Romanian communities during the war and their sacrifices for the country, the end of the war and the Great Union. In this new political and military framework, we notice an adherence of the local communities to the national movement, especially after Romania entered the war alongside the Allies in 1916. In this context, the outstanding contributions of some Romanian clergymen and laymen in the region of Orastie to the union of Transylvania with Romania must be highlighted: the actions of priest Ioan Mota and Dr. Aurel Vlad and Dr. Ioan Mihu. We must not forget those valuable Romanian officials in the land of Orastie that, from the lowest level to the top of political, legal and administrative power, or military hierarchy, contributed to the accomplishment of the Union from December 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1918. Of course, we cannot forget those modest Romanian communities located near Orastie that remained in an unfair "anonymous" and faced a series of problems arising from a conflict such as the First World War.