

# **The Uniatism in Transylvania**

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# **Pages from the History of the Romanian Church**

## **(Uniatism in Transylvania)**

The reason why we decided to publish these few pages lies in the desire to restore historic truth and to enlighten our faithful, as against so many articles printed of late in our press, concerning the Greek-Catholic Uniate Romanian Church, or, as it is now called, "The Eastern Rite Romanian Catholic Church", wherein the latter's role is obviously distorted, being presented in a biased and partial manner, much to the prejudice of the Romanian Orthodox Church, whose part played in our nation's life is considerably minimized, if not downright denied.

**Translated by Cristian Munteanu  
Bucharest, March 1991**

# The situations of the Christian Church till the Schism of 1054

It is a well-known fact that until the IX-th century, the Christian Church was rightfully considered one and undivided, such as she had been established by our Saviour Jesus-Christ and subsequently increased by the Holy Apostles, the Holy Fathers and the Ecumenical Councils. Both Eastern and Western Bishops actively attended the seven Ecumenical Councils, without any of them ever claiming primacy, while the West always agreed to all their decisions.

Nevertheless, the "Schism" or "Division" which occurred in 1054 was engendered by multiple causes, among which the political ones were of decisive importance, and which had been brewing for centuries. The major political- territorial change caused by the decline of the Roman Empire, still united by the end of the IV-th century also occasioned alterations in the life of the Church, bringing about disputes and mutual accusations, which gradually led to the latter's breaking up altogether. The first notable administrative- territorial changes within the Empire occurred by the end of the III-rd century, when Emperor Diocletian (284-305 A.D.) set up the so-called "Tetrarchy", thus dividing the Empire into four prefectures: The East and Illyricum, making up the Eastern Empire, plus Italy and Gallia, making up the Western Empire, each of the latter two being ruled by one August and one Cezar. However, the Empire was still deemed one. This system failed to prove its worth, so that Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337) suppressed it and restored the former unity of the Roman State, ruled by a single Emperor (the August).

It was the very same Emperor, however, who in 330 moved the capital from Rome to newly-founded Constantinople, which thus grew into the "New Rome" or the "Second Rome". In 395, upon the death of Emperor Theodosius the Great, the Empire definitely split up into the Western and Eastern sections. Rome was thereby left isolated and neglected, at the mercy of migratory peoples. It was therefore conquered by the Heruls in 476, so that its role as a "great power" in the ancient world was abruptly terminated.

Concurrently, the Eastern Roman Empire, or, as from the VII-th century, the Byzantine Empire, was considered as the sole legitimate follower of the old all-embracing Roman Empire, which couldn't but augment the Westerners' bitter resentments as against the Easterners. Under Emperor Justinian (527-565), an attempt to restore the old imperial unity was made, yet it did not last long. In 568 the Lombards overran much of Italy, where they founded a powerful kingdom. Thus pressed, the Bishops of Rome turned towards the Franks and asked for their help. Upon the request of Pope Stephen II, Pepin the Brief, King of Franks, crossed the Alps into Italy with his whole army and conquered

most of the Lombardss kingdom, including the former Byzantine Exarchate of Ravenna, recently incorporated into the Lombard state. All the lands taken over by the Franks in Italy were proffered by Pepin to Pope Stephan II, in 754, under the appellation of "Patrimonium Sancti Petri". Such it was that a secular papal state was created, called "Repubblica Romanorum", which lasted till 1870, when the modern Italian state came into being (the Papal State was reestablished in 1929, its territory being reduced to the Vatican Palace grounds). It was only natural that East- West tensions should increase after the inception of the Papal State. They further worsened when Emperor Leon III Isaurian (717-740) decided in 731 to put the Eastern Illyricum provinces, together with Southern Italy (Calabria), Sicily) and Crete, under the direct jurisdiction of the Patriarchate in Constantinople, whereas they had previously been placed under papal jurisdiction, thereby also seizing, at a stroke, all domains and revenues yielded by these rich provinces. A new political tension was occasioned on Christmas Night 800, when Pope Leon III crowned Charlemagne, King of the Franks (768-814) as "Roman Western Emperor". The prestige of the Byzantine Empire was once more sorely curbed thereby.

On the other hand, one should by no means ignore the fact that as from the VII-th century, the Eastern Roman Empire started hellenizing itself, so to speak, by exclusively using Greek not just in administration, (as against Latin, hitherto employed), but also in culture, not to mention the Church, who had used it from the very beginning. On the contrary, in the West, Latin became the only official language, even for such peoples as had never been part of the Roman Empire. Two distinct worlds thus took shape, the West and the East, namely Latins and Greeks, inheriting and developing different cultures and civilizations, different mentalities, traditions and languages.

Concurrently, also as from the VII-th century, various dogmatical, canonical and liturgical innovations were introduced into the Western Church. Among these innovations must be underlined specially the so called "four points" and these are: the papal primacy, the filioque addition to the Nicene Constantinopolitan creed symbol, the purgatory innovation and the azyma, or unleavened bread used while officiating the Holy Eucharist, innovations which were not known by the Apostolic Church of the first centuries.

All these political, ethnical and the Western Church and especially all these innovations added by the Western Church in dogmatic and liturgical fields were the main causes fostering the East-West conflictual situation, which finally led to the 1054 "Schism".

Actually, on July 16-th 1054, but an insignificant act was perpetrated, yet whose consequences would seriously affect Christ's Church: Roman Cardinal Humbert placed on the altar of the Saint Sophia's Cathedral in Constantinople, a Bull anathematizing the

Eastern Church. The Ecumenical Patriarchate only learnt of its contents a few days later, whereupon it replied by a counter-excommunication which excommunicated in its turn all those who had drawn up the Bull and who would acknowledge it.

The Patriarchal Act was endorsed by all the other Eastern Patriarchs (of Alexandria, Antiochia and Jerusalem) so that the "Schism" was completed. The Eastern Church will henceforward be called "Orthodox" ("truly believing" in Greek, from "orthodoxy" or "true faith"), which term had been used as early as the II-rd century to distinguish the true Church from the heretics, whereas the Western Church will be called "catholic" (that is "universal") or "roman", being centred in Rome. Since the centre of the Eastern Church was in Constantinopol, within the Greek or Byzantine Empire, she was named, by western theologians, the "Greek Church", although Orthodoxy also encompasses other so-called "national" Churches, such as the Georgian one (IV-th century), the Romanian one (or Dacian one) and the Slavic ones, namely the Bulgarian one (IX-th century), the Russian one (IX-th century) and the Serbian one (X-th century).

## **The question of ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the territories lying north of the Danube**

Many Catholic theologians have claimed in their worws that all the Dacian-Roman Church communities (thereafter Romanian) actually belonged to Rome. The truth however is altogether different.

We have already mentioned Emperor Díoctetian's political-administrative reform, then the final splitting up in 395, of the Roman Empire into its Western and Eastern halves. Such changes have obviously influenced church structures throughout the Danubian provinces. Through a decree enacted by Emperor Theodosius II in 421, all churches within the pale of the Illyricum prefecture (then part of the Eatern Empire) were subjected to the Archbishop of Constantinople. Through the Theodosian Codex, dated 438, Illyricum was again placed under Constantinopolitan jurisdiction. The early Romanian Church was therefore never subjected to Rome, the more so as during Christianity's first three centuries each local Church had her own bishop, thereby enjoying unbounded "autocephaly" and being answerable to no other authority whatsoever.

It goes without saying that Christian communities north of the Danube used the native

idiom as ecclesiastical language, namely vulgar Latin, then old Romanian.

As from the VII-th century, large groups of Slavs began settling on our territory, being promptly assimilated and wholly christianized as a result of their close and unbroken contacts with the native Dacian-Roman population. According to the assertion of such prominent historians as P.P. Panaitescu, C.C. Giurescu and others, Slavonic was introduced into North-Danubian Romanian churches as from the X-th century. This is to be accounted for by the fact that compact groups of Slavs were still surviving at that time, whose leaders spoke a different language which they wished to use in church, as against autochthonous archaic Romanian, which they ignored. On the other hand, one should not forget the fact that all through the VII-th/X-th centuries, Romanians were entirely surrounded by Slavs (even Pannonia, today's Hungary, was then part of Greater Moravia, a prosperous and powerful Slavic state), resembling a Latin island lying in the midst of a Slavic sea, with all bonds with either Constantinople or Rome temporarily snapped. That is why Slavonic was gradually adopted by the local Church and higher nobility, to be later introduced in the official court administration of both Wallachia and Moldavia. By formally introducing the so-called "Slavic-Byzantine rite" into their Church, Romanians continued to share their communion with the Eastern Church, thereby remaining to this day the only Latin Orthodox people, i.e. connected to Rome through language and origin, and to Constantinople through faith. This curious fact was underlined by Prof. D. Staniloae who wrote : "Such blending or synthesis between Latinity and Orthodoxy, a miracle in itself displaying unique originality, enabled the Romanian nation to maintain both its latinity as against the encircling Slavic world, and its orthodoxy as against the Catholic world lying close to its western boundaries": (apud D. Staniloae, "Orthodoxy's role in the formation and maintenance of Romania's national character and unity" in *"Orthodoxia"*, XXX, 1979, page 529).

The year 1054 marks, as we have seen, a destruction of the unity of the Church of Christ. During the following centuries, the Emperors of Byzantium made several attempts to restore unity, even by acknowledging papal primacy, to which compromise they were forced by the attacks of Seljuk's Turks who, by mid XI-th century having vanquished the Arabs, became a constant threat to Byzantium. Far from reaching an agreement, however, other events followed that only served to further fester the wound. Such were the Crusades, initiated by the Popes, which brought about new tensions between the East and the West as a result of the Crusaders' invasion of many Byzantine former possessions, including Greece, where various kingdoms and "Latin" dukedoms or fiefs were set up (the main in Jerusalem itself). In 1204, during the 4-th Crusade, while the Papal See was occupied by Innocent III (1198-1216), the French knights conquered Constantinople itself, the Capital. The storming of Byzantium proved to be one of the

sores events that ever occurred in the Middle Ages. A new, so-called "Latin" empire was founded here under the leadership of Baldwin of Flanders and of his successors. Instead of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, a Latin Patriarchate was set up, headed by the Italian Thomas Morosini. The entire imperial treasury was pillaged, together with numerous manuscripts and saints' relics, (which eventually reached Western Churches), Libraries and Museums. Throughout the brief span of the existence of the Latin Empire in Constantinople, the Greek clergy was systematically oppressed by the Latin one. Orthodox bishops were often removed from their sees and replaced by Latin bishops, who thereafter brought to bear many pressures upon Orthodox believers.

Throughout this period, Byzantine Emperors and Ecumenical Patriarchs sought refuge in Nicea, close by the Asiatic shore of the Marmara Sea, where they established a tiny independent Byzantine state, rather improperly called the Nicean Empire, under the Lascaris Dynasty. It was only in 1261 that Emperor Michael III Paleologue succeeded to free Constantinople, thereby restoring the Byzantine Empire, now confined merely to the Capital and its surroundings. Due to the ever growing menace of the Ottoman Turks, the same Emperor was compelled to start a dialogue with the Pope. A Union Council met in 1274 in Lyon (France), without any results at all. During the first half of the XV-th century, new attempts at dialogue were made by Emperor John VIII Paleologue. A preparatory council was convened in 1438 at Ferrara (Italy), adjourned to Florence, in 1439. After endless talks and under the Emperor's own pressure, 33 Orthodox delegates endorsed on July 6-th 1439, the Act of Union, thereby committing themselves to acknowledge 4 items out of the Catholic creed, namely : Papal primacy, the Holy Spirit's, proceeding both from the Father and from Son (Filioque), the Purgatory and the unleavened bread eucharist.

The Florence Union was however an empty act. It was formally rejected by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1441. The three remaining Eastern Patriarchs, (those in Alexandria, Antiochia and Jerusalem) met in a Council in Jerusalem, in 1443 never adhered to the false Union of Florence, which they termed uncanonical, since effected in unholy, tragic, circumstances, and being obviously contrary to the feelings of the largest part of the Orthodox clergy and faithful. An Antiunionist Synod was convened in 1450 in Constantinople. A few years later occurred Constantinople's downfall: on May 29-th 1453, Sultan Mohamed II's hosts entered the Capital. This Conquest had disastrous and far-reaching consequences, felt throughout the Orthodox East. Part of the Orthodox Churches and States in the Balkans and in the near East shared the same fate, afterwards knowing the burdensome and long-standing Turkish yoke (such were the Patriarchates in Constantinople, Alexandria, Antiochia and Jerusalem, or the National Churches of Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania, Cyprus). Under unfavourable circumstances, one can

handly of any contacts between the two Churches any longer.

## **How did Uniatism appear ?**

As a result of the Reform of the VI-th century the Romano-Catholic Church lost millions faithful, who whered either to Lutheranism and Calvinism or to Anglicanism. In such a predicament, the Church of Rome attempted to regain lost ground by converting, various peoples and Churches in Eastern Europe and in the Near East, who were just then in a sore national, political and economic plight. As a means towards achieving such objective mainly through schooling the Western Church used the order of the Jesuit monks. Yet the Jesuits also strove to achieve mass conversion to Roman Catholicism of the Orthodox nations lying at the borders of Catholic States. To begin with, far from imposing outright conversion to the whole people, a compromise was sought, i.e. the partial acceptance by the Orthodox of Catholic dogmas, which however went along with their entirely retaining the Greek (Byzantine) rite or cult (ritual). The dogmas were the 4 points already wordled out at the Union Council or Synod held in Florence in 1439: Eventually these 4 "Florentine" points were reduced to one : Papal primacy: Thus sprung up this "Uniatism" hybrid or the "Greek-Catholic" ("Uniate") Churches.

The first such "Union" was achieved at Brest (in today's Soviet Byelorussia) in 1596, when part of the Ukrainian clergy, nobility and faithful of the Catholic Kingdom of Poland, accerpted the Union with the Church of Rome. This act was followed by many troubles amongst the Ukrainians, resulting in the martyrdom of many hierarchs, priests and faithful, in church seizures and many other such like abuses. Yielding to similar pressures on behalf of the Jesuits and of Catholic nobility, part of the Ruthenians in Cis-Karpathic Ukraine were also forcefully "united" to Rome at Muncacs (in today's Soviet Ukraine). Sporadic attempts at uniting with Rome Orthodox believers in Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Syria, Palestine, although mostly doomed to failure, yet unfailingly led to troubles, divisions, intestine dissentions and sometimes, even to, partial denationalization. Although, as a first step, many of the newly-united believers were assured that Byzantine liturgy will be kept unchanged, however, in due course, gradual catholicization was also attempted, with the final aim of totally assimilating the Orthodox and "Old-Orthodox" believers to Catholicism.



# Antecedents of Uniatism in Transylvania

A quite similar political conjecture was formed, by the background of the events which led to the Union of part of the Transylvanian clergy and faithful with the Church of Rome. Before we proceed however we deem it fit to provide the readers with several explanations bearing on the history of the Transylvanian Romanian Church up to the end of the XVII-th century.

The Christian lore penetrated beyond the Carpathians immediately after the Roman conquest of Dacia. Clear proof of the above are several archaeological items dating from the III-rd/X-th centuries, besides literary-historical witnessings revealing the existence of various hierarchs, bishops, priests and monks, as well as of many worship places, throughout the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic area. However, after Transylvania was overrun by the Magyar Catholic Kingdom, deep ethnical, social and religious mutations did occur. Besides native Romanians, who always formed the majority, many Hungarians, then Saxons and Secklers, settled afterwards in the lands they still inhabit. In 1437 was established the "Three Nations' Union" between the Hungarian, Saxon and Seckler nobility, thereby gradually banning native Romanians from Transylvania's constitutional life. A particularly intensive proselytizing policy was also undertaken by the Popes, the Hungarian Kings or by various Catholic missionaries and inquisitors. Part of the Romanian princes were won to the Roman-Catholic Church, being thereby gradually magyarized.

There are nevertheless innumerable archaeological, documentary and literary proofs attesting the Orthodox Romanians' church life. Thus for instance, in Hateg and Hunedoara, tens of stone and brick churches and monasteries were erected during the XIII-th and XIV-th centuries, most of which are functioning to this day. We also have evidence of many Romanian protopopes and priests from the XIV-th/XV-th centuries, whose names have been duly recorded. Thus we have sure proof of the existence of such Orthodox Hierarchs as Archbishop Gelasius of Rimet, in 1377, John of Hunedoara in 1456, or of a certain Ioanichie in 1479. As from the end of the XV-th century, till mid XVI-th century; the see of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of Transylvania was moved to Feleac, near Cluj, where four hierarchs served in succession.

As from 1541, the Transylvanian Principality was converted into an autonomous province under Ottoman sovereignty, ruled either by Magyar princes or by Magyarized Romanians. Concurrently with such political mutations, considerable changes also occurred in the life of the Church. Three new confessions appeared and were officially recognized by the Transylvanian Diet, besides Catholicism : the Lutheran one (in 1550)

adhered to by Saxons, the Calvinistic or Reformed one (in 1564) and the Unitarian one (1568) both embraced by Hungarians and Secklers. The Magyar Roman-Catholic Bishoprics in Alba Iulia and Oradea were suppressed, together with their manasteries. They also had their property seized so that the Roman-Catholic Church was left with a singularly small number of faithful. Therefore, henceforward there will be no less than three nations (Magyars, Saxons and Secklers) and four confessians in Transylvania, all officially recognized: Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism and Unitarianism. The Romanians alone were left aside, with their Orthodox faith, in their former status : "tolerated" and wholly deprived of rights in their own country. During, this new era, the Catholic princes in Alba Iulia sponsored an active prozelityzing policy among Romanians, towards alluring them to Calvinism, thereby implicitly also Magyarizing them. Notwithstanding their efforts, Calvinistic prapaganda was largely unsuccessfull. A considerable contribution thereto was achieved by Transylvanian Metropolitans, who fixed their see temporarily at Geoagiu (Alba district), then, after 1572, in Alba Iulia. Noteworthy were among them, Ghenadie I, John of Prislop, Ghenadie II; Elijah Iorest, Simion Stephen and Sava Brancovici. They all maintained close ties with their brethren in Wallachia and Moldovia, thereby contributing to strenghtening the Romanians' ethnical, cultural and ecclesiastical unitary conscience.

The princes of Wallachia and Moldavia built a great number of churches and monasteries in Trannsylvania and sent there printers, copyists of manuscripts and church painters. Even the books printed in the two Principalities were equally distributed in Transylvania.

After the Ottomans' rout before the walls of Vienna in 1683, the Austrian Empire, ruled by the Habsburgs, took up the gradual conquest of parts of Central Europe, so far placed under Turkish dominion, among which in due course, Transylvania, whose Diet was compelled, on May 9-th 1688, to accept the Austrian 'Protectoiate'. Thus the Turks' "wooden yoke" was exchanged for the Austrians' "iron one", according to Magyar contemporary chroniclers. On Detember 4-th 1691, Emperor Leopold I (1658-1705) endorsed and issued the so-called "Leopoldine Diploma" whose 18, points served as Transylvania's real Constitution up to 1867. The Principality was to be ruled by a Governor, elected by the Diet and confirmed by the Emperor, assisted by a Government made up of a 12-member Council. The Diploma also acknowledged the former privileges of the "three, political nations" (i.e. their right to form the public administration), as well as the rights of the "four hitherto admitted religions". No mention at all was made of the Romanians still deemed tolerated, together with their Orthodox faith. Through the Karlowitz Peace Treaty of January 25-th 1699, the Ottoman Empire acknowledged the Habsburgs' possession of Transylvania. The Banat soon shared its fate in 1718.

# How was the Union actually effected in Transylvania ?

Immediately after the Habsburgs' occupation of Transylvania, the Austrians took energetic steps towards consolidating their rule. A prominent part in this respect was entrusted to the Roman-Catholic Church. For nearly one and a half centuries, the Calvinists had enjoyed a privileged political status, whereas Catholics had been thoroughly marginalized. Once the Catholic Habsburgs came into power, however, the balance of power was overthrown. Acts such as reestablishing the old Roman-Catholic Dioceses of Oradea (in 1692) and Alba Iulia (1715), giving back, arbitrarily seized churches and land-estates, granting new donations, recalling and reinstating the Jesuits; followed in quick succession. Yet their aim to regain lost economic, political and religious ground could only be wholly achieved by the increase in number of Catholic faithful. And since the relapse to Catholicism of the Calvinists, Lutherans and Unitarians was virtually impossible, the Jesuit missionaries and envoys turned their attention to Orthodox Romanians, more numerous than all the other "recognized" nations or confessions taken together. By attracting Orthodox Romanians to the Union with Rome, two goals were simultaneously reached: the numerical growth of the Catholics, with the implicit growth of the Catholic State's political importance (by the larger number of Catholic representatives in the Transylvanian Diet whose members were elected according to each confession's number of faithful) on the one hand, and the severing of whatever bonds that Transylvanian Romanians held with their Moldovian and Wallachian kindred.

Jesuit historians claimed that the Romanians Union with Rome was decided during a Synod convened by Metropolitan Teofil in Alba Iulia, in February 1697, when the four "florentine points" had allegedly been acknowledged, namely: papal primacy, the use of unleavened bread in the eucharist, filioque and the purgatory .Subsequent researhes however proved that no Union Synod was ever held and that the documets submitted for the purpose were forged (the Metropolitan's very signature was proved by graphological examinations to be a mere awkward imitation thereof). Their falsity is also logically demonstrated by the attempts at Union in 1698 and 1701, to be dealt with herebelow, which would have been unnecessary, had the Union been already completed as 1697.

Upon the death of Metropolitan Teofil, which occurred in the summer of 1697, young hieromonk Athanasie (cristened Anghel) from the Alba Iulia Monastery, was elected in his stead. In accordannce with an old custom, he left for Bucharest for consecration at the

hands of Metropolitan Teodosie of Ungro-Wallachia, which ceremony was only officiated on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1698. On this occasion he was summoned to endorse an "Orthodox profession of faith" of 22 points drawn up, (with Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu's knowledge), by Metropolitan Teodosie and by Patriarch Dositei of Jerusalem (then on a visit to Bucharest), requiring him to abide by all the Orthodox dogmas, whether dogmatic, canonical or liturgical; and especially by those contested by Calvinists and Catholics.

It was precisely during this vacancy period that Magyar Jesuits started alluring Orthodox Romanians to the Union with the Church of Rome. They endeavoured to avail themselves of the clergy's and the faithful's discontent with the Calvinists, who for nearly a century and a half had been actively, yet vainly proselytizing among them, as well as of the sore material plight of Romanian priests, left prey, together with their flock to a threefold oppression: national, social and religious. As early as 1697, the Alba Iulia Jesuit Paul Ladislau Barany submitted to the Imperial Court in Vienna a memoir on behalf of the "Transylvanian Catholic State" i.e. of the Catholic members in the Diet, concerning the Romanians' projected Union with Rome. Despite the pressures brought to bear by Catholics, Emperor Leopold I only issued an Act on April 14<sup>th</sup> 1698 stipulating that Romanians were free to adhere to any of the four "acknowledged" confessions, or to abide by their own Orthodox faith. It was however expressly provided that all priests that would accept the Union with any one of the 'officially recognized' confessions would enjoy all the rights or privileges granted to the clergy of the respective confession. It was further emphasized that all those uniting with the Church of Rome "would enjoy the full privileges of Catholic priests". Therefore only acknowledgement of papal supremacy was exacted from Romanian priests, who thereupon would be exempted from serfdom, and from the numerous taxes they had to pay to the state (especially in war-time) and to local landowners (the Nemes).

Such an Act was obviously far from satisfying Catholic circles. That is why, on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1698, Cardinal Leopold Kollonich, Archbishop of Esztergom, in Hungary, despatched a "manifesto" to all Romanian priests in Transylvania, stipulating that the privileges enjoyed by the Catholic Church and her priests would be extended only to such as would formally espouse the whole Catholic doctrine, and above all, the four Florentine points. On this basis, Jesuits resumed their pressure towards alluring ever more Romanians to the Union with the Roman Church. The only act that allegedly expressed the Romanian clergy's will to this extent is the so-called "Union Manifesto" or "Book of Faith", bearing the date of October 7<sup>th</sup> 1698 and endorsed by 38 protopopes.

How did the "Union Manifesto" look? It had three sheets, the first two being formed out of a big sheet folded into two, to which had been stuck another half-sheet. The first page

comprised the text proper, through which "the bishop, protopopes and, priests of Romanian churches "vaguely decládeł to "willingly unite with the Roman-Catholic Church, thereby witnessing to become Her members" yet also stressing the fact that we thereby intend to fully enjoy all the privileges granted to the priests and communities belonging to this: Holy Church. A post-scriptum was later added, consisting of 13 lines written in a smaller hand, so that it should entirely hold on the same page, and laying certain prerequisite conditions for the Union with Rome. Thus the contemporaries and their successors were engaged "to change nothing from the customs of our Eastern Church, so that we may be free to hold all ceremonies, holidays and fasts as we used to heretofore, according to the old calendar, and furthermore so that our beloved Archbishop Athanasie should be unconditionally kept on his throne till his death": It was further demanded that Athanasie's successor be elected by the protopopes' assembly, according to the old- tradition, and consecrated by the Serbian Patriarch in Karlowitz. Acknowledgement of the protopopes' rights was also requested, with the final stipulation that should all the above-mentioned assertions made to be fulfilled, "our seals and, signatures here should thereby automatically become null and void".

The second page contained a Declaration of Union in Latin, entirely different from the one on the front-page. Whereas in the Romanian text, the protopopes vaguely assumed the Union, the Latin text claimed that they embraced the Union through "divine grace", "acknowledging, witnessing and believing whatever the Holy Roman-Catholic Church Herself acknowledges, witnesses and believes, including the four points in which we were so far at variance". This therefore cannot be but an obvious forgery.

Pages 3, 4 and 5, held the signatures of 38 protopopes with 37 seals attached thereto (two of them having used the same seal). In between were transcribed their names and sees in Latin, so that it appeared that they had also subscribed to the Latin text on the second page, although they plainly ignored that language altogether. After the signatures, on the fifth page, a "Codicile" was inserted (graphologically attributed to Athanasie himself), specifying again that "we only accept this Union by keeping our customs, in full force, together with our old Liturgy and fasts and calendar, failing which, neither these seals nor these our signatures cannot be at all held binding upon us and upon our Church". This was obviously a summary of the post-scriptum on the front-page.

By carefully examining the "Union Manifesto", we can infer that it was drawn up as a result of material interests, deriving, to be more exact, from the protopes' desire to partake from the privileges enjoyed by the Catholic clergy, and not proceeding from troubled consciences or from any discontent with old-time faith. Quite to the contrary, the post-scriptum on the front-page, fully corroborated, by the Codicile on the last page, flatly demanded the full maintenance of the Orthodox creed (or "law"), of Church

structures (the Metropolitan's election and the protopes' rights) and liturgy ("our Church ritual, fasts and calendar"), twice stipulating in the end that should all these provisions not be fully met, the whole Act of Union thereby becomes null and void. A few formal objections might also be added, such as the lack of the Metropolitan's own signature, which actually nullified the entire Act, or the sheets stuck together, with two subsequent additions or interpolations.

Taking all the above into consideration, Prof. Silviu Dragomir, who has long and minutely studied the Union Declarations, reached the final conclusion that the Union decision, far from being taken in full Synod, was arrived at separately and the protopes' signatures gathered individually, as they passed through Aba Iulia, i.e. in case the final sheets had not even been torn from an altogether different document. Furthermore, no contemporary source mentions a Synod held on October 7-th 1698. This means that the whole Union Act was nothing but a fraud devised by the Jesuits. So as not to be exposed, the Jesuits concealed the Act till 1879 when it was discovered by the Uniate historian Nicolae Densusianu in the archives of the Magyar Jesuit Gabriel Hevenesi, counsellor of Cardinal Kollonich, having thereupon reached the Pesta University Library. This objective historian drew for the first time, attention, on the differences between the two texts, as well as on the probable forgeries perpetrated by the Jesuits.

In the autumn of 1698, Barany submitted, to the Transylvanian Diet, on behalf of the Romanian clergy, a memoir requesting its exemption from taxes, on the basis of the Imperial Decision dated April 14-th 1698. The Diet, formed mainly of Calvinists and Lutherans, decided to proceed to an inquest in Romanian villages, so as to make certain whether both priests and faithful acceded to the Union with Rome. Throughout 1699, two such inquests were effected, whose results were appalling: hundreds of villages proclaimed their will to stick by their old-time faith, whereas only a few of the priests declared that they were ready to unite, should the Metropolitan do the same himself.

Notwithstanding all that, most probably at Cardinal Kollonich's injunctions an instance Emperor Leopold I signed on 16-th/28-th February 1699 a new Diploma, known as the "First Leopoldine Diploma" thereby expressing his satisfaction at the Romanians' Greeks' and Ruthenians' conversion(!), and expressly validating their Union with the Church of Rome as a result of the acknowledgement of all Her doctrines, and mainly of the four big florentine points. No comments! Through the very same Act, Romanian Uniate priests were granted all privileges and exemptions enjoyed by the Roman-Catholic clergy.

One should not forget to mention the new forgery spread by the Jesuits, namely that an alleged Union Synod had met in Aba Iulia on 4-th/5-th September 1700, attended by 54

protopopes from Transylvania and Maramures, each accompanied by 2 priests and 3 lay faithful, all having unanimously and wittingly voted the Union with the Church of Rome, by acknowledging the four florentine points. The truth is that no original declaration from this so-called synod exists an record or on file. There is but one unsigned, un-endorsed copy, ample proof of the fact that it is all but another Jesuit invention. Again, no contemporary source ever mentioned the convening or proceedings of such a synod. There would have been no reason whatsoever for holding one anyway, since, according to the same Jesuits, two similar synods had already met previously for the very same purpose, one in February 1697 and another on October 7-th 1698. There is but one answer to all that: all these three "Synods" are sheer Jesuit inventions.

Throughout this period, Metropolitan Athanasius never faltered from his strictly Orthodox position. With Constantin Brâncoveanu's and Antim Ivireanul's help, (the latter being at that time both a Hieromonk and a printer), he published in 1699, at Alba Iulia, a "Spelling-book" and a "Kiriakodromion" (a reprint of Varlaam's Homilies of 1648). In June 1700 Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu presented the Metropolitan of Transylvania with the Merisani estate, in Arges district. On September 14-th 1700, the usual Standing Assembly of all Metropolitan Protopopes met in Alba Iulia, drawing up 28 points (or rules) regulating the priests' and faithful's moral-religious life, as well as the noviciate of would be priests. There was not the faintest, ,slightest or remotest hint or allusion at the Union with Rome, an the contrary, everything was kept along the old, traditional, Orthodox line.

This probably occasioned Athanasie's being summoned to report to Vienna at the beginning of the 1701. Attended among others by Jesuit Karl Neurautter, army missionary in Sibiu, who meanwhile had become the staunchest Union monger, in Barany's stead, the latter having been removed to Tîrnavia in Slovakia, Atanasie had barely reached Vienna, that he had to answer to 22 accusations drawn up by Transylvanian authorities; bearing an his moral life and various irregularities in his way of administering the Mitropolitanate. Faced with such serious charges, which would have easily led to his deposition, Atanasie was advised to officially acknowledge the Union with Rome. Yielding to such pressures, Atanasie was reordained priest on March 24-th 1701, and the very next day reconsecrated bishop (although ordination and consecration are non-repeatable mysteries) in a Jesuit chapel in Vienna by Cardinal Kollonich, assisted by two other Catholic bishops. On March 19-th/30-th 1701, Emperar Leopold I issued four acts concerning the new Uniate Church of Transylvania, among which yet another diploma, comprising 15 points and known as "The Second Leopoldine Diploma" which was the true founding act of the new Uniate Church. Athanasie was thereby confirmed only as Bishop of the Romanians in Transylvania, swearing allegiance to the Magyar

Roman-Catholic Archbishop of Esztergom (in Northern Hungary) and accepting the supervision of all his actions, correspondence and decision by a Jesuit theologian. The Emperor became the Supreme Head of the new Diocese, holding the right to appoint the future bishops out of three candidates, all forwarded by the Council of Diocesan Protopopes. On April 7-th 1701, Athanasie was forced to sign a humiliating, 16 point declaration, thereby vowing to acknowledge the Pope's supremacy and the jurisdiction of the Primate in Esztergom, to accept the Jesuit theologian, to sever all ties with Wallachia, to reordain all priests, a.s.o.

Once back from Vienna, he was reinstated, as "Uniate Bishop" in the Alba Iulia Orthodox Cathedral, founded by Michael the Brave. Deprived of any assistance from Wallachia, defrocked by the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople, his every step closely watched by the Jesuit theologians around him (Karl Neurauter, Paul Baranyi, Ioan Prentaller, Francisc Szunyog), compelled even to flee from Alba Iulia during Prince Francisc Rakoczy's uprising against the Habsburg dominion, Athanasie had to work under the most difficult circumstances. During a Synod of his protopopes, summoned in the summer of 1711, he desperately yet vainly attempted to do away with uniatism. Troubled with cruel remorse for what he had done, he died prematurely in August 1713. Two Jesuits spoke at his funeral, one in Latin, the other in Hungarian, living token of the humiliating position to which the Romanian Church in Transylvania had been reduced as a result of the, so-called 'Union'.

The consequences of the Act concluded by Athanasie Anghel were extremely painful: the Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania lost her "independence" thereby, the old Archdiocese, based in Alba Iulia being replaced by the Uniate Bishop placed under the jurisdiction of the Magyar Roman-Catholic Archbishop in Esztergom; the new uniate bishop was supervised by a Jesuit theologian, usually a Hungarian, watching all his actions and in fact appearing to be more powerful than the bishop himself; the emperor became "Supreme Head" of the Uniate Church, holding the right to appoint future bishops out of three candidates and to grant "benefices" (or stipends) to bishops and other hierarchs; the Metropolitan Printing-Press in Alba Iulia was closed for over half a century; cultural and ecclesiastical ties with Wallachia and with the Ungro-Wallachian Metropolitanate were broken; considerable divisions, hate and distrust were fomented and sown amongst the sons of the one Romanian people, who was thereby more easily mastered by the Habsburgs, in accordance to the old Roman principle of 'Divide et Impera'.



# The Uniate Church in the XVIII-th century

After Atanasie's death, the Uniabe. Diocese was headed by two Hungarian Jesuits, acting as "Directors", an unprecedented instance throughout Ecclesiastical History. Three electoral Synods met in Alba Iulia in 1713-1714, made up of diocesan protopopes, who proposed the nomination of Atanasie's former secretary, layman Wenceslaw Framtz, of Bohemian extraction, who had been forcefully imposed upon the late bishop. The Emperor, however, never confirmed his nomination. During the 4th electoral synod, convened in Sibiu, in 1715, the only attending protopope declared that his appointee is the Roman-Catholic priest Ioan Patachi, who had previously renegaded his Orthodox faith. Once the "election" was validated by Magyar Count Mikes, who was presiding over. the <<Synod>>, Patachi was promptly acknowledged by Emperor Charles IV. As a result of the Metropolitan Cathedral and Residence in Alba Iulia (built by Michael the Brave) having been pulled down in 1714, the Vienna government decided that the Uniate Bishopric be moved over to Fagaras. In 1716, the Court of Vienna asked for the pope's confirmation of Bishop Patachi. Surprisingly enough, it was only now that the Pope learnt of the existence of such uniate priests and faithful in Transylvania. Upon the Vienna Court's repeated instances, the "De propaganda fide" Congregation in Rome decreed on July 6th 1716 an Act referring to the setting up on the new Uniate Diocese. A Papal Huill however was only issued five years later, on July 15th 1721. Through the "Rationi congruit>> Bull, the foundation of the Uniate Diocese based in Fagaras, for the benefit of the "Greeks, Ruthenians; Romanians and Serbians living in Transylvania" was formally decreed(although there were absolutely no Greeks, Ruthenians or Serbians there at all), while the Orthodox Church in Fagaras (founded by the martyred prince Constantin Brâcoveanu) was thereby declared Episcopal Cathedral. Having reverted to the "Greek faith", Patachi was officially enthroned in Fagaras on August 6th 1723, thereafter arbitrarily proclaiming the Orthodox Cathedral as Uniate Episcopal Cathedral, despite the unavailing though strong, protests, of the local believers, and notably of Princess Marica, the late founder's widow.

Upon his death in 1727, the Episcopal See in Fagaras was again assumed by three Hungarian Jesuits, also acting as "Directors" till September 1732, when Inochentie Micu was formally enthroned (although he had been nominated as early as 1728). He proved to be the most prominent Uniate hierarch in Transylvania. He gained immense prestige among Transylvanian Romanians through the numerous memoirs he forwarded to the Vienna Court or to the Transylvanian Diet (whose member he was), wherein he asked for

socio-political rights to Romanians, namely their being recognized as the "fourth" nation, enjoying the same rights as the Magyars, Saxons and Szerk- lers. He only envisaged Uniatism as a means of national and political fight. Thus his constant rejection of the Jesuit theologians imposed on him or of the attempts at interference in his own Diocese made by the Pope and by the Esztergom Archbishop, were nothing but his way of fighting for the maintenance of the independence of his Church, of the Orthodox traditional doctrine, ritual and structure, as against any policies of catholicization or denationalization. In July 1744 he convened the Diocesan Council in Blaj (where he had removed his residence as early as 1737) and allowed many Orthodox to attend.

All this made him undesirable for the Court in Vienna. At Empress Maria-Theresia's own order, he was summoned to Vienna in the summer of 1744, where he had to face no less than 82 accusations, among which the fact that he was the Romanians' spokesman in political-national matters, besides the reproach that he was not sincere in his adherence to uniatism. Refusing to report to the Inquest Commission, he fled to Rome, hoping to secure the Pope's support

Pending however the agreement concluded between the Pope and the Vienna Court, he was compelled to stay in Rome for the rest of his life and in 1751 to even resign from the episcopal see. He died in exile in Rome on September 23-rd 1768, at the end of 24 years of banishment, full of deprivations and sufferings.

His sacrifice was telling proof of the fact that neither the Vienna Court, nor the Pope, nor the Jesuits or the Magyar Catholic nobility in Transylvania intended the Romanians' material or spiritual welfare, being only bent on securing their own interests, through Uniatism.

Under his successor, Petru Pavel Aron (vicar in 1747, bishop in 1754, died 1764), the Blaj printing-press was established, functioning first under printers originating from Rimnic who printed, purely Orthodox Prayer-books, reproducing the Rîmnic printings. In 1754 the first three public schools were opened in Blaj: "everyone's" or the elementary school, the "Latin" one (meant for languages and science) later to become a secondary or high school and the "priests' school" or theological seminary. It was he who sent Romanian youngsters abroad to study-theology and philosophy in Rome. Although a good pastor for the Uniate Church, Aron proved to be a dire persecutor of the Orthodox Church and of her faithful, by assisting Habsburg authorities in their reprisals of any popular uprisings in favour of Orthodoxy. The same attitude was displayed and shared by his followers Atanasie Rednic (1764-1772), Grigore Maior (1772-1782); Ioan Bob ( 1782-1830) and Ioan Lemeni ( 1833- 1848). In 1853 the Blaj Bishopric was elevated to the rank of Metropolis, and directly subjected to the papal see. A Metropolitanate was

thus established, comprising four Romanian dioceses (Blaj, Oradea, Gherla and Lugoj). By its direct subjection to the papal see, the Uniate Church lost whatever remains of autonomy it had preserved hitherto, since henceforward its hierarchs would be appointed directly by the Holy See

## The fight for the defence of Orthodoxy

We must emphasize the fact the Romanian people as a whole, i.e. the great majority of the faithful, the mass of the peasantry in particular, continued to abide steadfastly by their old Orthodox faith, even though their priests had partly adhered to the Union with Rome, out of sheer desire to partake of the rights, enjoyed by the Catholic clergy. The respective believers had no way to realize their priest's new orientation, since they could notice no apparent change or obvious alternation in the lore, organization, or liturgy of their own Church. The same was later to be formally acknowledged by the prominent Uniate scholar and protopope Petru Maior, who actually admitted that, owing to their sore material plight, Romanian priests "would only give up their Non-uniate (Orthodox) appellation, converting it into that of Uniate, thereby getting rid of the hardships they had fallen prey to and enjoying the right of officially acknowledged nations, without alternation whatever of their previous Greek (Orthodox) faith and customs; throughout Transylvania". (*History of the Romanian Church*, Buda, 1813, p. 140).

It was only in the Brasov, Fagaras and Hunedoara districts that word went out about "the faith being corrupted", which led to emergent protests against Atanasie: Thus, as early as 1701, the local faithful refused to acknowledge him as their bishop, to the extent that he was compelled to abandon them to their old faith. That same year, the faithful of Brasov and Tara Birsei requested to be expressly subjected to the spiritual guidance of the Metropolitans of Ungro-Wallachia (in 1728; the Habsburg authorities themselves placed them first under the jurisdiction of the Rimnic bishops, then, from 1739 until 1761, under that of the Serbian metropolitans of Kazlowitz). In 1701, the Romanian nobleman Gavriil of Tagu Mare, assisted by several believers lodged a protest with the Transylvanian Diet against the arbitrary act perpetrated by Atanasie, being thereupon arrested and imprisoned. Some of them died in prison, whereas Gavriil himself was only set free five years later.

Up to 1744 the Habsburg authorities took but little interest in the Romanians' religious disputes, deeming them all Uniates. That was precisely the reason why no Orthodox hierarchs were further elected or appointed for such priests and faithful who, for over six

decades i.e. till 1761, had staunchly abided by their ancestral faith. Parishes which rejected Uniate priests would send their own candidates to be ordained in Bucharest, Rimnic, or even Buzau, Roman, Radauti and Jassy. Things changed as from 1744. It was then that Hieromonk Visarion Sarai (apparently a Bosnian Wallachian", according to the latest researches) came to Transylvania and strove to foment mass uprisals against Uniatism. Unfortunately he was seized near Sibiu, carried from prison to prison, till he finally succumbed in Kufstein, Tyrol. As a consequence of his actions, the Transylvanian Government, launched a proclamation (Patent) imposing to all Romanians the Union with the Church of Rome. Several "commissions" were set up with task of spreading the contents of the the proclamation. The results were everywhere the same: all faithful formally declared that they would reject all Uniate priests and would never attend any liturgies officiated by any such. Many priests who were only now proved to be Uniates were driven off their parishes by their own parishianers. In view of the utter failure of the proclamation, Empress Mary-Theresia appointed in 1746 four Union "protectors" (two Magyars and two Magyarized Romanians), to whom she despatched a 15 points set of instructions, expressly directing them to forcibly exort the adhe- rence to Uniatism through heavy punishments such as various prison terms, flaggings, or fines, to be applied to all Orthodox priests and faithful as would but slightly attempt to hinder the spread of Uniatism. Another decree stipulated the arrest of all priests ordained in Wallachia and Moda- via.

A new persecutian era was thus opened, that was to last for another 15 years, during which periad an unbroken chain of staunch defenders of the faith whether priests or laymen, succeeded to hold the authorities, at bay, thus successfully opposing their nameless terrors, enduring cruel beatings, torture and long impresionment, being stripped of all their worldly possessions or travel- ling as far as the Vienna Court or the Tzars' Palace in Saint Petersburg to demand religious fre- edom. Many of them laid down their lives for the sake of their ancestral faith. Such were O- prea Micalus from Salistea Sibiului and priest Moise Macinic from Sibiul, both arrested as they were returning from an audience granted to them by the Empress in 1752, then imprisoned in Kuf- stein, where they died many years later without having been tried or released. Such was also the case with Ioan Oancea from Fagaras, sent to Vienna and Karlowitz on mission, then impriso- ned for over two years, with priest Cosma from Deal (Alba district), imprisoned for more than a year in Alba lulia, with priest Ioanes Vîlvorea from Gales, arrested and imprisoned first in Si- biu and Vienna, then in Graz, where he was still alive in 1776, with priest Ioan from Aciliu, ar- rested on his way back from a mission to Russia (his subsequent fate unknown), or with Hieromank Nicodim and with priest Nicolae Pop from Balomir (Alba district), both compelled to seek refuge in Wallachia. Priest Ioan from Sadu (near Sibiu) was also arrested and imprisoned then banned to Banat for no reason at

all. A priest's wife, also from Sadu, was arbitrarily held in custody for 31 weeks, not to mention hundreds of other peasants around Sibiu, among whom, for instance, 16 women from Poiana Sibiului who were imprisoned for 14 weeks in winter time, while ten other women from Colun were publicly whipped in Sibiu. The list is endless.

During 1759-1761, a real religious revolt broke out, under the coordination of Hieromank Sofronie from Cioara (Alba district); stretching throughout Transylvania; as far as Satmar and Maramures and sweeping away everything the authorities, together with the Uniate Church, had at great pains endeavoured to build up for six decades. Under such critical circumstances, Empress Mary-Theresia despatched General Bukow (Nicholas Adolf von), assisted by numerous cavalry and infantry troops, with strict orders to repress any actions hostile to Uniatism. Through the latter's initiative, two statistical lists were drawn up in 1761-1762, comprising the names both of the Romanian priests and of the Romanian faithful throughout Transylvania. Despite the utter lack of objectiveness clearly displayed, the orthodox were by far the most numerous: they actually numbered 128635 families with 1365 priests and 1362 churches, as against 25223 Uniate families, yet with 2250 priests and 515 churches.

The Uniates afterwards rapidly grew in number, as a result of the abusive and arbitrary manner in which the registration was conducted, Thus for instance, 47 villages in Bistrita-Nasaud area were arbitrarily declared as uniate (thus accounting for no less than a fifth of the entire number, of the latter), whereas in Hateg 55 villages, totalling 13367 families were also recorded as being uniate (amounting to half the latter's number). All the 515 churches owned by the Uniates had been erected by the Orthodox and arbitrarily granted to them. Even in villages with an insignificant number of Uniates, as compared to the whole population, the churches were delivered to them, while the Orthodox were compelled to build new churches for their own use. In villages with just 4 to 7 Uniate families, the Orthodox majority was forced to erect distinct churches or chapels for the Uniates. In many villages, the churches could only be turned over to the Uniates with the support of Bukow's troops (like in Cuzdriouara near Dej where two faithful were sentenced to death by hanging and two other to compulsory military service for life). Through like violence, Brâncoveanu's Fagaras and Ocna Sibiului foundations, as well as Prislop and Necula Monasteries, or the Densus princely church and many other worship places in Hateg, abruptly became Uniate.

Yet General Bukow's most barbarous atrocity was his utterly erasing *tens of Romanian sketes and monasteries throughout Transylvania* (there were nearly two hundred of them all in all), by burning down the wooden ones and by dismantling by cannon the brick or stone ones, especially around Sibiu and Fagaras. Those still left were handed over to the Uniate Church, only to be promptly closed for lack of monks. That explains why the

Orthodox Church in Transylvania had not one single monastery left to her till after 1918.

A new similar upheaval broke out in Nasaud area in 1763, only to be cruelly stamped out by the very same general: old Tanase Todoran was broken on the wheel, many peasants were hanged, still more beaten to death. Thus *General Bukow, Empress Mary-Theresia's personal envoy, may rightly be hailed as the second founder of the Uniate Church, for had it not been for his cannons and soldiers, all attempts to allure Romanians to Uniatism would have been doomed to utter failure.*

As a result of the constant pressure brought to bear upon them to "alter their ancestral faith" believers from many villages, especially around Sibiu and Fagaras, ended by migrating en masse south of the Carpathians, where they founded new villages, known either as "Ungureni" or under the name of their native place, which they had been forced to vacate. After the suppression of Orthodox monasteries, many Transylvanian faithful took the vows beyond the Carpathians, where they set up new monasteries, (such as Suzana and Cheia in Teleajen valley, Predeal in Prahova valley, Stînisoana near Calimanesti-Cozia, or Cocos in Northern Dobrogea).

Although, as early as 1761, Empress Mary-Theresia had agreed to appoint a "Deputy Bishop" for the Orthodox Romanians in Transylvania, namely a Serbian (assisted by three other Serbian hierarchs), bases in Sibiu, forcible conversions to Uniatism were also recorded during the following years. Thus for instance Bishop Atanasie Rednic proclaimed all the villages around Blaj as uniate, while his successor Grigorie Maior, assisted by two Hungarian commissioners, peremptorily converted to uniatism no less than 60 villages in the Salaj district, during an inspection tour.

Furthermore, in the 1760's, 21 Rumanian parishes in Bihor were arbitrarily declared uniate by various enquiry commissions charged with examining the respective villages' confessional adherence, by following orders from the Oradea Magyar Roman-Catholic Bishop, also the district's Prefect. In 1777, Empress Mary-Theresia founded a Uniate Diocese headquartered in Oradea and subjected to the Magyar Roman-Catholic Archdiocese in Estergom, whose holders were to be appointed directly by the Emperor, as its sole "patron", at the proposal of State authorities. Emperor Joseph II (1780-1790) endowed it with a fief of 13600 acres of land, taken over from the Roman-Catholic Archdiocese, thereby left in possession of 180000 acres only.

As early as the first half of the XVIII-th century, all Romanian parishes in Satmar and Maramures were put under the direct control of the Ruthenian Uniate Diocese in Munkacs (today's Mukachevo in USSR). Up to 1739, various Romanian Orthodox bishops acted here. Thanks to the efforts of the Munkacs bishops, many of whom were Magyarized Romanians, such as Andrei Bacinski, for instance, the local Romanian

parishes were forcibly declared uniate. Furthermore, many liturgies were celebrated in Hungarian, in some Ruthenian parishes. This Bishopric therefore served as a means to ensure the Romanians' and Ruthenians' magyarization. The Satmar Romanians had to endure this situation till 1824, when they were attached to the Oradea Bishopric, whereas those in Maramures were only "freed" in 1853, when a new Romanian Uniate Diocese was created at Gherla. A further argument in this respect is displayed by the so called Magyar Uniate Diocese in Hajdudorog, set up in 1912-1913, by the papal bull "Christi fideles Graeci". The new diocese was sponsored by the Ausro-Hungarian state and subjected to the Magyar Roman-Catholic Arch-bishopric in Esztergom. It comprised 162 parishes of which 83 (with 382 sections and 173 pagi) were taken over from the Romanian Bishoprics centering in Oradea (mostly Satmar), Gherla and Blaj (the Szecklers' area), amounting to 73225 faithful (of whom 35417 spoke only Hungarian). Other parishes were seized from the Ruthenian Bishopric in Munkacs. It was obvious to anyone that *the only aim pursued by setting up this new diocese was to forcibly magyarize both Romanian and Ruthenian Uniates* (a "Prayer-book" was even printed in Hungarian). This bishopric's holders were all Magyars, the administrative, nay, even the liturgical language used was solely Hungarian. Several priests and faithful around Satmar were arrested and sentenced to various prison terms. Thus priest Gheorghe Muresan from Moftinu Mic was sentenced to 18 months solitary confinement, along with 14 others (of whom 7 were under age), also sentenced to various terms. Priest Mihai Ciurdariu from Doba, arrested on Holy Friday, was also imprisoned. The Romanian parishes were freed from Hajdudorog jurisdiction after December 1st 1918, yet the latter's nefarious, obnoxious action and influence were resumed during Horthy's occupation of 1940-1944.

## **Brotherly cooperation and various attempts towards restoring Church unity**

Despite all the actions undertaken either by the Vienna Court or by Magyar Catholic prelates, which finally led to the ecclesiastical division of Transylvanian Romanians, we should not forget that in all parishes arbitrarily declared as Uniate or Greek-Catholic, the priests still abided by the same Orthodox ritual, using the same prayer-books edited in Rîmnic, Bucharest or in other printing centres, both in Wallachia and Moldavia. The impressive number of Orthodox cultic books found in former Uniate parishes or churches are clear proof of this assertion. As for the liturgical books published at Blaj, they were

merely copies of those printed in Rîmnic, and so things remained until mid XIX-th century. It was only then that, as a result of the "Latinist trend" various distinct expressions appeared in Blaj - printed books.

The great scholar Petru Maior noticed that, as early as the beginning of the XIX-th century, Uniatism in Transylvania could only be accounted for by the priests' material involvement thereto, since "they would merely exchange their Non-Uniate (Orthodox) appellation for that of Uniate, thereby getting rid of all their former hardships and partaking of the rights enjoyed by the other officially recognized nations, without altering in the least their previous Greek (Orthodox) faith". (*History of the Romanian Church*, Buda, 1813, page 140).

It was also Petru Maior who further noted: "Both Uniate and Non-Uniate priests flock together in brotherly communion, singing and officiating together, both at funerals and eucharists, sharing without reticence all spiritual and ecclesiastical rituals. And what is more, lay Uniates indistinctly go to confession to Non-Uniate priests. Even priests no longer pay any attention to the difference between Uniates and Non-Uniates, they only call them Uniates or Non-Uniates in accordance with the hierarchy they are subjected to (Ibidem, page 118).

In spite of the foreigners' various attempts at tearing asunder the Romanians' common faith and origin, the latter had no difficulty in transcending confessional divergences, thus remaining one with their nation's major aspirations. Bishop Inochentie Micu initiated his people's national-political emancipation, by requiring their being acknowledged as Transylvania's fourth nation. XVIII-th century "luminaries", whether Orthodox or Uniate, have massively contributed, through their Works, to their entire nation's cultural headway. Priests and lay scholars, both Uniate and Orthodox, drew up together the well-known *Supplex libellus Valachorum Transylvaniae* of 1791. During the first half of the XIX-th century, Bishops Vasile Moga from Sibiu and Ioan Lemeni from Blaj, jointly forwarded, following closely in Inochentie Micu's steps, both to the Vienna Court and to the Transylvanian Diet, ample memoirs demanding rights for their flock. Ministers of both Churches fought side by side in Horea's uprising, in the 1848/1849 revolution and during the 1892-1894 memoranda movement, endured together banishment and imprisonment during World War I and jointly militated for political unity in 1918.

Such brotherly cooperation also accounts for the often renewed attempts at restoring Church unity, thereby preserving national unity as well. Let us remind a few such attempts. In June 1711, the protopopes' assembly, convened in Alba Iulia under the presidency of Atanasie Anghel, simply repealed the Union Act enacted in 1701. It was only in November 1711 that, under hard pressure exerted by the Jesuit, theologian



imposed on him, Atanasie was compelled to recant, and once more profess Uniatism.

A venture to repeal uniartism also occurred during the grand general assembly convened by Bishop Inochentie Micu in Blaj, on June 6-th 1714, atteded both by laymen and clerks, by Orthodox and Uniates. In keeping with the Je- suits' own testimonies, Inochentie plainly asked all those present "whether they were still in fa- vour of adhering to Uniatism" in case the Romanians' requirements were not all acknowledged. According to another testimony, the Bishop offered to take command of the whole people and to cross the Carpathians into Wallachia. While in Rome, his protopopes wrote to him in 1747 that "the Romanian people renounces Uniatism and utterly, unanimously rejects both the Union and the Uniates".

The revolts led by Visarion Sarai, Sofronie of Cioara, or by other Orthodox priests and monks, were actually nothing but fresh popular ventures meaning to restore Church unity.

New attempts to relapse to Orthodoxy occurred after Emperor Joseph II decreed his Tolerance Edict on November 8-th 1781. Taking advantage of the act's provisions, numberless villages in Fagaras and Hateg area broke away from uniatism. Upon the instigation of the local political and ecclesiastical authorities, Emperor Joseph II endorsed, on August 20-th 1782, the so-called "Union Patent", thereby ordering that each of the two Romanian Churches (namely the Uniate and the Orthodox ones) should keep her own faithful and forbear of further prozelytism.

A fresh venture to restore Church unity was attempted in 1798, this time initiated by the leadership of both denominations. Thus Uniate Vicars Ioan Para of Fagaras and Ioan Budai of Sibiu (the own brother of writer Ioan Budai Deleanu), forwarded, together with Orthodox proto- popes Radu Tempea V of Brasov, director of the Orthodox schools in Sibiu diocese and Ioan Po- povici of Hondol-Hunedoara, vicar of Sibiu diocese, a joint memoir addressed to the Emperor himself, on the basis of the authority invested in them by many priests and protopopes. They thereby required that Uniate Bishop Ioan Bob should resign and that the leadership of the reu- nited Romanian Church be entrusted to the two vicars, Ioan Para and Ioan Popovici, each with a distinct consistory, one in Cluj and another in Sibiu. Notes on the memoir were drawn up by: the Governor of Transylvania, who claimed the Unian to be "a well-set evil"; the Magyar Catho- lic Bishop in Alba Iulia, the Aulic Chancellor of Galicia and the State Councillor in Vienna, all ad- mitting that the Romanians' division was extremely useful for the Habsburgs' empire. The memoir was thereupon buried away in archives.

A strong trend directed to the restoration of Church unity marked the 1848 revolution through- out Transylvania: Scholars from both Churches openly demanded to do away

with uniatism. Uniate August Treboniu Laurian for instance, wrote to Orthodox professor Nicolae Balasescu (later Nifon): "Let all Romanians gather together as one, irrespective of whether they are Uniates or not. Let us claim for one sole Romanian Archbishop throughout Transylvania. *Let us break away from Catholicism!*". On May 8th 1848, during a meeting of Romanian scholars, held in Sibiu, Uniate Constantin Vivu "kept urging the Romanians to wipe away this shameful religious distinction and to become all one". Another Uniate, Alexandru Palpiu Ilarian, wrote that, at the National Assembly in Blaj, many had proposed "plans to reform the Church, to restore the Metropolitanate, to reunite Uniates and Non-Uniates". The same scholar added: "We must needs unite, that there be no such thing as Uniates and Non-Uniates amongst as Romanians and longer!". One of the decisions adopted by the Blaj Assembly clearly stated as follows: "The Romanian nation demands that the Romanian Church should henceforward be free and independent as against any other Church, irrespective of confessional differences, equal in rights and privileges to all the other Churches in Transylvania. We further demand the immediate restoration of the Romanian Metropolitanate and of the yearly General Synod, according to old customs in which synod may be included both ecclesiastical and lay delegates. "An independent Church leader, placed above all the other Romanian bishops, was also expressly requested in the memoirs despatched to the emperor. The retaliations which suppressed the revolution, thereby momentarily stifling its freedom and unity ideals, prevented the actual achievement of such Church unity restoration. Nevertheless, during 1848 many parishes around Arad reverted to Orthodoxy (they had been forced to accept the union by bishop Samuil Vulcan of Oradea, back in 1834). Unfortunately, the elevation of the Blaj Diocese to the rank of Metropolitanate, in 1853, with its newly-created suffragan dioceses of Gherla and Lugoj, besides the older one of Oradea, considerably hindered future attempts at restoring such union.

Notwithstanding all that, under Andrei Saguna's ministry (1846-1873), several Uniate parishes throughout Transylvania did relapse to Orthodoxy, despite the authorities' interference, which Saguna himself mentioned in his memoirs. According to still extant records, some Maramures parishes equally reverted to Orthodoxy during the first decade of the present century.

Many meetings were also held by Uniate Romanians in 1912 as a protest against the setting up of the Hajdudorog Magyar Greek-Catholic Diocese, comprising both Romanian and Ruthenian faithful, and obviously destined to the latter's forcible magyarization. Iuliu Maniu himself, advocate of the Blaj Metropolitanate, openly declared, at the Alba Iulia meeting, on May 16th 1912, that the Romanians would "break the seal" of their Union with Rome, should the policy of their uprooting and denationalization be pursued.

A most favourable moment to achieve Church unity occurred in 1918. Political unity could naturally pave the way of ecclesiastical unity. Unfortunately however, the proposal to appoint Vicar Vasile Suci from Blaj (elected, but not yet confirmed), as metropolitan of all Transylvanian Romanians (due to the vacancy of the Sibiu see), fell short of acceptance. Many suggestions to restore Church unity were in exchange advanced by the contemporary press. Thus for instance, the issue dated March 21-st 1931 of the Blaj newspaper "Unirea" (Union) suggested that all Orthodox and Uniate theologians and hierarchs meet in congress and settle the matter at hand. Bishop Nicolae Ivan of Cluj replied by agreeing to convene a "sobornost" of all the Romanian hierarchs in Transylvania, towards resurrecting the former Alba Iulia Metropolitanate, with ten suffragan dioceses.

Whole Uniate parishes, together with their own priests, reverted to Orthodoxy in Maramures, Bihor and all around Cluj and Blaj. Notable examples are parishes such as Upper Ucea and Dragus in Fagaras area, Cheile Cibului, Poiana and Bucuresci in Hunedoara district, Hamba and Metis in Sibiu district, Bagaciu and Valea Lunga on Tîrnava river, Remeti, Virismont (today's Tisa), Sarasau, Valea Stejarului, Feresti, a.s.o., or Cherelus, and Nadas in Maramures, Bodesti in Arad district, and Ohaba Lunga in Banat. Among the priests, let us mention just Dr. Stefan Pop of Izvin in Banat, an outstanding historian, later a professor at the Caransebes Theological Academy and Dr. Ioan Pasca, professor at the Gherla Uniate Theological Academy then appointed at the Cluj Orthodox Academy, where he acted for over two decades. Individual recantations were recorded in many other parishes throughout Transylvania, Banat, Crisana and Maramures.

An "official" attempt at restoring Church unity was made in 1939. In response to the Manifesto- Appeal launched on February 18-th 1939 and endorsed by both Metropolitans, Nicolae Balan of Sibiu and Alexandru Nicolescu of Blaj, a huge National-ecclesiastical Assembly met at Alba Iulia on February 27-th 1939, attended by nearly 50000 Romanians. Speeches were uttered by both metropolitans, by university professor Onisifor Ghibu from Cluj and by prominent representatives from the cultural and ecclesiastical media, all requiring the urgent restoration of the Transylvanian Romanians' unity of faith. A document was drawn up in Union Hall during the supper that followed the meeting, summing up the previous discussions and offering concrete proposals towards achieving such much sought for unity. The act was endorsed by the hierarchs of both Churches, by various officials, priests and lay scholars. Unfortunately however, all suggestions agreed upon during the Alba Iulia meeting of February 27-th 1939 could never be put in action or practice owing to the impending World War II, thus dashing to the ground whatever hopes were entertained both by faithful and clergy.

# The return to the Mother-Church in 1948

The unity of faith of all Transylvanian Romanians was achieved shortly after the conclusion of World War II. Owing to the sheer fact that it was accomplished under communist rule, many have distorted it into a political action perpetrated by the atheistic authorities of that time. Although it is quite true that the communist state was keenly interested in breaking whatever ties our believers still held with the West, it would be sheer exaggeration to ascribe everything to the state. Furthermore, today's press often claims that Patriarch Alexis I of Moscow himself had issued orders to that effect to Patriarch Nicodeme of Romania (died 1948). Such wild assertions should be lightly dismissed, since the Moscow Patriarchate never actually interfered in the internal life of the Romanian Orthodox Church, who always maintained her full autonomy and autocephaly.

It is nevertheless clear that by 1948 all prerequisites were met towards achieving such reunion, as a result of the numerous proposals advanced hitherto and of the many local relapses, previously mentioned. Furthermore, on July 18-th 1948, through Decree no. 151/1948, Romania denounced the Concordat concluded on May 10-th 1927 with the Holy See. It should be emphasized that in accordance with Article 2 of the above-mentioned Concordate, the Transylvanian Greek-Catholic (or Uniate) Church, deemed autonomous by Romania's 1923 Constitution, had become a mere rite of the Catholic Church, in no way different from the Latin or Armenian ones, wherefrom can be easily inferred the clear intention of wholly catholicizing the Romanian Uniate Church. By the denunciation of the Concordate, this Church ceased to be a mere rite of the Roman-Catholic Church and reverted to its former status of autonomous Church.

Let us also record the fact that during the first half of 1948, two appeals were despatched to Uniate priests and faithful to revert to the Mother-Church, thereby restoring the unity of faith. The first was launched by Metropolitan Nicolae Balan from Sibiu (1920-1955), in the speech he delivered at Blaj, on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the National Assembly held in Liberty Moor, and the second by Patriarch Justinian Marina (1948-1977), on his own enthronement, on June 6th 1948. Taking into account both their regain of autonomy as a result of the denunciation of the Concordate, and the two above-mentioned appeals, numerous Uniate protopopes, priests and faithful held several meetings during July-October 1948, thereby deciding to rejoin their ancestral Church. Thus it was that on October 1-st 1948, 36 Uniate protopopes and priests, delegated by their 430 colleagues, met in Cluj, headed by Protopope Traian Belascu, and formally decided to revert to the Orthodox Church, wherefrom they had split, nearly 250 years before. ALL THOSE 36 priests were received on October 3-rd 1948 in Bucharest

by Patriarch Justinian and by the other members of the Holy Synod, to whom they imparted their decision. Their example was duly followed, during the subsequent months, by hundreds of other priests, who kept prompting their own flock to rejoin the Mother-Church. On October 21-st 1948 the great Church National Assembly met in the Alba Iulia Orthotox Cathedral, to acknowledge, in the pre- sence of Patriarch Justinian and of the whole Holy Synod, the reunion of the Romanian Ortho- dox Church.

The Greek-Catholic (or Uniate) Church thereby actually disappeared as a result of most of her clergy and faithful having joined the Romanian Orhtodox Church.

Nevertheless, part of the hierarchs of the Romanian Uniate Church, seconded by a small sec- tian of her clergy and faithful (mostly scholars), by ignoring the frequent appeals to unity addressed to them, refused to adhere to the Orthodox Church (thus Bishop Iuliu Hossu from Cluj even anathematized the 36 priests who had attended the Cluj meeting) and, by invalidating the Concorciate's denunciation, still persisted in their dissenting attitude and, by also rejecting any le- gal framework for their own activity, deemed themselves henceforward part of the Roman-Catholic Church.

Following up to the return of most of the Uniate clergy and faifhful to Orthodoxy, the State authority issued Decree no. 358/1948, published in issue no. 281 of the Official Monitor, dated December 2-nd 1948, which stipulated in Article 1 as follows: "As a result of the local Greek-Catholic communities (i.e. parishes) having relapsed to Orthodoxy, we now decree that, in accordance with Ar- ticle 13 of Decree no. 177/1948, all central and statutory Uniate organisms, such as the Metropolitanate, Dioceses, Chapters, orders, congregations, protopopiates, monasteries, foundations or associations, whatever their denominations, are hereby dissolved". Article 2 provided that : "All goods and properties belonging to the organizations and institutions mentioned in anticle 1 above *except for those expressly belonging to their former parishes*, will hereby be immediately taken over by the Roinanian State". It is clear that Article 1, *far from ordering the suppression of the Greek-Catholic cult, merely took act of its own dissolution*. As for Article 2, let us remember that, as a result of the 1948 reunion, all ex-Uniate priests and faithful were fully integrated into Orhtodox parishes, to which they brought, along with then, their former parishes' entire patrimony (whether consisting in churches, parish houses, or lands), which entirely became the new Communities' indeed lawful property, whereas the remainder of their belongings was taken over by the State.

# The Greek (Eastern) rite Romanian Catholic Church after the December 1989 Revolution

As a result of this memorable turning point in our history, complete freedom was granted to all religious cults in Romania. This also accounts for Decree no. 9/1989, repealing previously mentioned Decree no. 358/1948. Within short, various Romanian priests and bishops were busily active now called "Greek (Eastern) rite Catholics" naturally without State recognition. In March 1990, the Vatican appointed 6 Latin rite Catholic bishops and 5 "Greek (Eastern)" rite ones, also without consulting with Romanian State authorities, to whom they merely announced such nominations 24 hours in advance. In reply to protests issued by our Ministry for Religious Affairs, the Vatican retorted that: "Recent nominations were based on canonical law such as it was adopted three years ago by the Vatican Council, expressly stipulating such a procedure, without requiring the respective State authorities' being notified thereto". A few instances of similar nominations (in Koln and Minsk) were provided, with the mention that they did "cause some frictions", whereas a "like procedure was recently used" for Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, whose lay authorities were "only notified, out of sheer courtesy, a few hours before actually publishing the respective nominations" (see the "Adevarul" (Truth) daily dated March 25-th 1990, page 3).

In other words, the Vatican still deems itself a superstate, such as it used to be during the Middle Ages, a priori entitled to meddle into other states' internal affairs, the latter being looked upon as "terrae missionis". Such acts may well be considered a real offence for the Romanian State and the Romanian Orthodox Church, especially if we take into account that after the Revolution of December 1989, all the new hierarchs, elected by the Church Electoral Committee, have received confirmation from the President, according to an ancient tradition of the Orthodox Church.

Who are the new Catholic hierarchs? Metropolitan Alexandru Todea (born 1912), former Reghin priest and protopope, was clandestinely ordained at the hands of Bishop Joseph Shubert, in Saint Joseph's Cathedral in Bucharest, according to the Latin rite (whereas Archbishop Traian Crisan was himself ordained priest in Roma, on January 6-th 1982, by Pope John-Paul II in person also according to the Latin rite, to serve for the Romanian Western Uniate Diaspora). Other bishops had also been clandestinely ordained by the Pope's ex-nuncio to Romania, Bishop Ioan Ploscaru from Lugoj), as soon

as the Mother-Church was reunited in 1948. Most of them had long since died. Three new bishops namely those of Cluj, Gherla, Baia Mare and Oradea, were consecrated during the first months of 1990, all previously appointed by the Pope in March 1990.

As soon the Decree no. 9/1989 was enacted, Greek-Catholic hierarchs were firmly persuaded that all Orthodox priest coming from former Uniate families would immediately abjure Orthodoxy, together with all their faithful. They were much mistaken, for hardly 5 or 6 priests throughout Transylvania did act that way. It is also worth while noticing that, far from being followed by their own flock, some of them, on the contrary, were peremptorily requested to vacate their parishes at once. The reason why they had resorted to apostasy was either their failure to obtain urban parishes, as they had asked, or their utter lack of priestly conscience, since they were only out for material gains. A few others were mere "opportunists", i.e. old priests who had reverted to Orthodoxy in 1948, had long served in Orthodox Church suddenly remembered, immediatly after December 1989, that they had been initially "united to Rome". When were they actually sincere? There are also some priests, ordained before 1948, who never relapsed back to Orthodoxy but functioned as teachers or book-keepers in various State institutions throughout 1948 - 1989, some of them even possessing the precious red booklets proving their adherence to the communist party, of sad memory, which, vanished without a trace in 1989 (such an ex-priest actually acted as "party secretary" in a Sighetu Marmatiei school). They promptly resumed their cassock after December 1989. Obviously all are now in their seventies or even eighties. Other prists are those ordained "clandestinely", as Metropolitan Alexandru Todea himself formally stated in an interview granted to the "Flacara" (Flame) magazine in January 1990. Anyway, in early 1990, many Uniate priests were ordained by the recently appointed bishops, all recruited among professors, doctors, book-keepers and others such.

Why then is it that the Orthodox Church is so severely reprimanded to have allegedly closely cooperated with the odious atheistic regime throughout 1944 - 1948? Thus for instance, in a cable sent by Metropolitan Alexandru Todea to Mr. Nicolae Stoicescu, ex-Religious Affairs Minister, the Romanian Orthodox Church was termed "as having betrayed the nation in momentous historic instances" (see the "Dimineata" (Morning) daily dated February 24-th 1990). Not even the recently overthrown communist leaders dared as much! Or is it simply that Metropolitan Alexandru Todea utterly ignores the great contribution of the Romanian Orthodox Church, through history, to the promotion of culture and artistry, to the edification of a whole nation's moral-religious life, or to the creation of a peaceful atmosphere, that should forever reign among the inhabitants of our country? The very same metropolitan, in an interview granted to the broadcasting network "Free Europe" on August 27-th 1990, claimed that the reason why communism

in Romania ruled more harshly than in any other East-European country, is to be solely ascribed to the fact that it was firmly supported by the Orthodox Church! How are we to judge such wild assumptions?

The role played by the Romanian Orthodox Church is equally slighted, if not downright contested or denied, in many other press articles. In exchange, it is strongly claimed that the Uniate Church never failed the people during decisive historical events, such as: the Transylvanian school trend, the 1848 Revolution, the 1918 political Union, the fight against the 1940 Vienna Dictate, the resistance against communism, a.s.o. (see the 12-th issue, dated March 6-th 1990, page 4, of the "Adevarul in libertate" (Truth with freedom) published in Cluj). The respective authors nevertheless fail to mention the brutal and fraudulent manner in which the union with Rome was actually achieved in 1697 -1761, with the massive support of Magyar Jesuits despatched by Emperor Leopold I or of General Bukow's troops, sent by Empress Mary-Theresia, not to mention our forefathers' dire sufferings throughout the XVIII-th century. Yet they never fail to remind us of the sacrifice sustained by Uniate hierarchs, many of whom died in communist prisons or labour camps, or of the many Uniate priest or faithful who toiled and perished at the Danube-Black Sea canal. Anyway, what has the Orthodox Church to do with that? As though numberless Orthodox priests and faithful were not equally imprisoned, tortured and killed by the same communists! Were they really persecuted because of their Orthodox, or, for that matter, Uniate, faith? Let all such authors be at least sincere and admit that all were actually apprehended and kept in prison due to political reasons however imaginary, it is quite true, and irrespective of their confession! Why should we forget about the cruel fate of our great Orthodox theologians, such as professors Ilarion Felea from Arad and Liviu Galaction Munteanu from Cluj (both killed at Aiud), Nichifor Crainic, Teodor M. Popescu, Dumitru Staniloae and Ion V. Georgescu or archimandrite Benedict Ghius, Sofian Boghiu, Grigore Babus, Valeriu Vartolomeu Anania, all Bucharest? Over ten priests are still living in Sibiu, headed by Metropolitan Antonie, who barely got out communist prisons alive (some of them after over 20 years' reclusion).

It is also wrongly claimed that the Uniate hierarchy was the only one to have undergone persecutions after 1948. One should by no means omit the sufferings of the Orthodox hierarchs, throughout the very same period. Let us remember the Bassarabia and Bukovina hierarchs, compelled to abandon their flocks as early as 1944. Let us think of all those whose dioceses were arbitrarily suppressed in 1948, whereupon they were forcibly deposed or removed to various monasteries (such Grigore Leu, from Husi, Veniamin Nistor from Caransebes, Partenie Ciopron from the army, a.s.o.) Let us equally remember Bishop Policarp Morusca, prevented from returning to his faithful in America and many



Assistant-Bishops whose sees were also suppressed at that time. Of worthy memory is also Bishop Nicolae Popovici from Oradea, who in 1950 dared demand the youth's catechization in public-schools, whereupon he was immediately deposed (although hardly 47 years old) and despatched to Cheia Monastery, where he was confined till his death).

On the basis of hitherto mentioned Decree no. 9/1989, Metropolitan Alexandru Todea, seconded by many Uniate bishops and priests, as well as by several scholars, peremptorily required, in rude articles and harsh terms, wholly devoid of objectivity, immediate restitution of whatever property belonged to their Church in 1948 ("restitutio in integrum"), namely: all goods having belonged to former Uniate parishes (whether churches, parish houses or cemeteries), and now belonging to Orthodox parishes (as a result of the former uniate faithful having rejoined their Mother-Church), as well as whatever goods were seized by the State as per Decree no. 358/1948 (thereby forgetting their own previous abusive seizure of many buildings, forests and arable lands belonging to the Orthodox Church from times immemorial). Raising such claim is useless anyway, considering that on April 9-th 1990, during the meeting held in Bucharest, with president Ion Iliescu himself attending, by all hierarcs of the Transylvanian Orthodox Church with those of the Greek (Eastern) Rite Catholic Church, it was unanimously and expressly agreed that worship places be distributed to Uniates only in strict proportion with the officialy registred number of their faithful in each parish! Well, so far only such isolated requests were recorded, especially in towns or in a few rural parishes, made by ex-Orthodox priests, and not by the whole community! The Vicar General of the Cluj - Gherla Diocese subsequently strongly protested against this very decision (taken by his own superior hierarcs!), requiring restitution of all properties, whether arbitrarily seized from the Orthodox Church or not! The very same vicar moreover claims that the ex-Uniate faithful as a whole are being compelled to remain within the pale of the Orthodox Church, which would actually amount "to a spiritual genocide, since they are subjected to priests forcibly appointed by an illegitimate hierarchy". The Vicar goes on asserting that the Uniate Church now numbers no less than three million faithful! The truth is that back in 1948 they hardly amounted to one million, whereas now there are hardly a few thousands left of them. (see the "Dreptatea" (Justice) daily of May 30-th 1990, issue no. 94, page 3).

Faced with such ludicrous claims and accusations, we cannot but enquire: how can one possibly raise such groundless claims? Everyone knows that such property, far from belonging to the Orthodox Church or to her hierarcs, entirely belongs to the parishes themselves, i.e. to the local faithful communities, as lawfully recognized legal persons. The respective parishes, whether made up of old Orthodox believers or of ex-Uniates reunited in 1948, are nevertheless wholly Orthodox nowadays, being baptized and raised

within the Mother-Church, as equal sons of the same Romanian people and of the same rightful Orthodox faith!

There are many who even claim "the restitution of consciences". Thus the "Viata Crestina" (Christian Life) periodical in Cluj, published in several successive issues, the statistics of the former Uniate dioceses, suppressed in 1948. Many old Uniate priests and hierarcs absolutely refuse to take nowadays' reality into consideration, namely the considerable socio-economic, cultural and demographical changes having occurred during such a long lapse of time. Thus, to be more concrete, the vast majority of ex-uniates have by now long forgotten the insignificant doctrinary organizational or liturgical differences, thereby wholly integrating into their old Mother-Church, as Eminescu used to call our Orthodox Church. Most of the youthful believers have never, if at all, heard about Uniatism. Ex-Uniate priests have long and faithfully served at our altars, many youngsters from former Uniate parishes have followed the courses of our Orthodox Institutes and seminaries, lovingly serving today either in formerly Orthodox or in formerly Uniate parishes. The old churches have been restored and freshly painted, or new churches have been erected in most of former Uniate parishes. Throughout the totalitarian era, all priest and faithful have been working praying and suffering together (irrespective of their spiritual allegiance before 1948), looking forward to their release from darkness and oppression. Thus it is that the crushing majority of ex-Uniate faithful is reluctant to revert to Uniatism, clinging to Orthodoxy, which faith was ever shared by all Romanians, on both sides of the Carpathians. Except for a few aged scholars (who, incidentally, during the dictatorship, either concealed their true religious feeling or frequented Magyar Roman-Catholic churches), how many practicing faithful are there still left to the so-called Greek (or Eastern) Rite Catholic Church? Her hierarcs or priests could well see it for themselves while ostensibly officiating their liturgies "in the open", in public squares, allegedly for lack of proper worship place, thereby displaying the constant "persecution" they are being subjected to both by the Romanian Orthodox Church and by State officials. Thus for instance, only about 3000 to 5000 faithful throughout Transylvania managed to gather at Blaj, on Freedom Moor, for the Liturgy celebrated on March 18-th 1990, despite the repeated press invitations and announcements. It is further of major significance that tens of thousands of Orthodox (formerly Uniate) faithful attended in 1990 the patronal feasts of the Orthodox Neula, Bixad and Prislop monasteries (forcefully closed by General Bukow in 1761). The Uniate hierarcs nevertheless claim the restitution of all churches they possessed back in 1948, even deprived of their faithful!

Such a restitution as they wish could only be achieved through General Bukow's barbarous practices, back in 1761, when he arbitrarily granted 515 Orthodox Churches to

the Uniates. For everyone's information, we would stress the fact that the Greek-Catholic Church already disposes of many private chapels, which are more than enough for her few believers and adherents. Furthermore, in Baia Mare Protopopiate, Orthodox priests even suggested authentic Romanian brotherhood, effective immediately, by joint or alternative worship in the same Orthodox churches, by offering to provide material assistance to build new churches or to hire private residences wherein to set up chapels. All such proposals were utterly rejected. Still more significant is the case of the Lugoj church presented by the Timisoara Archdiocese to the Uniates for the sake of peace. Once he had taken it over, the Lugoj Uniate Bishop, Ioan Ploscaru (80 years old), hastened, as alleging that it had been "defiled" by the Orthodox. We're still in the Dark Ages, apparently!

Moreover, in many cases Greek-Catholics are resorting to open violence against the Orthodox, trying to arbitrarily seize the latter's churches. A shining example is the incident occasioned in Baia Mare, on November 11-th 1990, when a small group of up to 200 Uniates, brought there from neighbouring villages, attempted to hinder by undue violence the ceremony of the enthronement of the new Orthodox Bishop of Maramures, first by preventing the hierarcs from entering during the liturgy, whereas over 300000 Orthodox faithful were peacefully listening and praying.

Furthermore, Uniate priests are, as of late, becoming increasingly and visibly estranged from the old Orthodox canonical, dogmatical and liturgical rules and regulations, still in force. Herebelow are a few such instances: - they invalidate the Orthodox sacraments and liturgies: thus they christen a second time, they ignore marriage, extreme unction and funerals;

- they do not fast before officiating the Holy Liturgy;
- they fail to observe the traditional fasts instituted by the Church;
- very often take themselves and give the faithful Eucharist with azymn;
- far from abiding by the old "chants" commonly used in the Uniate Church, they now imitate the specific Roman-Catholic songs;
- they often discard Orthodox garments and prefer Catholic robes;
- they often ordain priests devoid of any theological background or formation.

As against the troubles newly-fomented by the resurgence of Uniatism, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church took a firm yet constructive stance as early as January 1990, by openly declaring both its readiness for dialogue, and its determination to respect every believer's freedom of conscience, who should be left to choose for himself and express his option for one cult or another. The Holy Synod is further of the opinion that all church property including places of worship, should be fairly divided, in strict accordance with the principle of proportionality. Faced however with the Uniates'

rejection of dialogue and open resort to violence, the Holy Synod has launched several appeals, all made public, towards restoring confessional peace and goodwill among the sons of the same nation. Unfortunately, far from being heard and complied with, such calls were deliberately ignored or even misconstrued by Uniate hierarchs

## Future prospects

In view of the above, it is quite clear to everyone that the present Greek-Catholic hierarchy is intent upon restoring its Church in Romania through the same means of constraint, intimidation and cheating as were so unscrupulously used back in the XVII-th century. Through all his acts, Metropolitan Alexandru Todea only dismantles his people's unity of faith, by sowing hate and division among his own brethren. Even though no longer supported by the Jesuits or by the Imperial Court in Vienna, he is fully seconded, in exchange, by the local Romano-Catholic Bishops. This also accounts for the fact that the bishops of both Catholic "rites" in Romania have lately been holding frequent meetings and consultations, while stubbornly rejecting whatever dialogue with the representatives of the Orthodox Church they have actually derived and split from. Uniatism obviously becomes an ever greater drawback in the way of the ten-years old theological dialogue between the Orthodox and the Roman-Catholic Churches. The joint international Commission for such dialogue met in several plenary sessions: Patmos 1980, Munich 1982, Crete 1984, Bari 1986-1987, New Valaamo - Finland 1988 and finally Freising 1990. On December 7-th 1965 were concurrently lifted, both in Rome and in Constantinople, by Pope Paul VI and respectively by the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, the anathemas thrown on July 16-th/24-th 1054.

During the 6-th Plenum of the Joint Commission for Orthodox Roman-Catholic Dialogue, held in Freising, near Munich, on June 7-th/15-th 1990, Uniatism was discussed at length. It was again remarked that Uniatism as a model of restoring Church Unity, automatically excluded dialogue. All those present, including Catholics, agreed that Uniatism should be rejected, as it is founded on division, on tearing asunder the Body of a sister Church. Wherever it was established, it brought about but misery and trouble, fomenting constant tensions between the two sister Churches, namely the Orthodox and the Catholic ones.

Since both Churches seek sincere dialogue, as a means towards restoring Christian unity, the setting up of the Uniate (Eastern Rite Catholic) Church, torn away from the Orthodox Church and lying between the two, without completely sharing the doctrine of either of

them, could serve but to embitter their relations and hinder or block such dialogue altogether. A prominent professor, such as Ernst Christian Suttner from the Vienna Catholic Theological Faculty deems "Catholicism and Uniatism as mutually exclusive" (see "Dialogue und Uniatismns", in the "Una Sancta" would be the use of the Uniate Church, who keeps causing new tensions entirely contrary to the ecumenical spirit, such as it is proclaimed by all Christian confessions? Who would benefit nowadays of such furtherance of intestine confessional dissensions, when Transylvania is already prey to much more serious troubles ahead? Why should we split again, after 42 years of internal peace? Who of today's faithful, who were baptized four or five decades ago, would still care to accept the teachings about filioque, the purgatory or the azyma or would agree to attend other than Orthodox liturgies? Shall we again be divided for the sake of the Pope, whom we should reverently look upon as "The Head of the Universal Christian Church and as Saint Peter's Successor"? Yet are we not Orthodox Christians, actually the followers of his brother, the Holy Apostle Andrew, "the first called" by the Redeemer (cf. John 1, 40-41), who preached in our own Dobrogea (then Scythia Minor) and converted the Getae and Dacians? Should we not rather adhere, in our missionary work, to the "primacy" of serving the Romanian people, instead of the Pope?

Since Romanians did reach, even in their tenuous past, a real ethical, linguistic, cultural and spiritual unity, despite unnatural political boundaries, it is the more so required of us today to keep inviolate the unity of faith which they handed down to us through countless generations, as a sacred and invaluable inheritance. Any relapse into fresh confessional divisions would actually mean a betrayal of our major national interests.

We therefore all share the sacred duty of maintaining the unity of faith dreamt of by Petru Maior at the onset of the XIX-th century, by the 1848 revolutionary patriots, by the 1918 unionists, by metropolitans Nicolae Balan and Alexandru Nicolescu, as well as those present at the Alba Iulia assembly achieved in the fulfilment of this glorious task! Future prospects

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Uniatism obviously becomes an ever greater drawback in the way of the ten-years old theological dialogue between the Orthodox and the Roman-Catholic Churches. The joint international Commission for such dialogue met in several plenary sessions: Patmos 1980, Munich 1982, Crete 1984, Bari 1986-1987, New Valaamo - Finland 1988 and finally Freising 1990. On December 7-th 1965 were concurrently lifted, both in Rome and in Constantinople, by Pope Paul VI and respectively by the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, the anathemas thrown on July 16-th/24-th 1054.

During the 6-th Plenum of the Joint Commission for Orthodox Roman-Catholic Dialogue, held in Freising, near Munich, on June 7-th/15-th 1990, Uniatism was discussed at length. It was again remarked that Uniatism as a model of restoring Church Unity, automatically excluded dialogue. All those present, including Catholics, agreed that Uniatism should be rejected, as it is founded on division, on tearing asunder the Body of a sister Church. Wherever it was established, it brought about but misery and trouble, fomenting constant tensions between the two sister Churches, namely the Orthodox and the Catholic ones.

Since both Churches seek sincere dialogue, as a means towards restoring Christian unity, the setting up of the Uniate (Eastern Rite Catholic) Church, torn away from the Orthodox Church and lying between the two, without completely sharing the doctrine of either of them, could serve but to embitter their relations and hinder or block such dialogue altogether. A prominent professo, such as Ernst Christian Suttner from the Vienna Catholic Theological Faculty deems "Catholicism and Uniatism as mutually exclusive" (see "Dialogue und Uniatismns", in the "Una Sancta" would be the use of the Uniate Church, who keeps causing new tensions entirely contrary to the ecumenical spirit, such as it is proclaimed by all Christian confessions? Who would benefit nowadays of such furtherance of intestine confessional dissensions, when Transylvania is already prey to much more serious troubles ahead? Why should we split again, after 42 years of internal peace? Who of today's faithful, who were baptized four or five decades ago, would still care to accept the teachings about filioque, the purgatory or the azyma or would agree to attend other than Orthodox liturgies? Shall we again be divided for the sake of the Pope, whom we shoul reverently look upon as "The Head of the Universal Christian Church and as Saint Peter's Successor"? Yet are we not Orthodox Cristians, actually the followers of his brother, the Holy Apostle Andrew, "the first called" by the Redemptor (cf. John 1, 40-41), who preached in our own Dobrogea (then Scythia Minor) and converted the Getes and Dacians? Should we not rather adhere, in our missionary work, to the "primacy" of serving the Romanian people, instead of the Pope?

Since Romanians did reach, even in their tenous past, a real ethical, linguistic, cultural and spiritual unity, despite unnatural political boundaries, it is the more so required of us

today to keep inviolate the unity of faith which they handed down to us through countless generations, as a sacred and invaluable inheritance. Any relapse into fresh confessional divisions would actually mean a betrayal of our major national interests.

We therefore all share the sacred duty of maintaining the unity of faith dreamt of by Petru Maior at the onset of the XIX-th century, by the 1848 revolutionary patriots, by the 1918 unionists, by metropolitans Nicolae Balan and Alexandru Nicolescu, as well as those present at the Alba Iulia assembly achieved in the fulfilment of this glorious task!

## ENCLOSURE

### Uniate scholars referring to the Union with the Church of Rome

#### 1. Inochentie Micu on the Romanians' situation after 1701

"Therefore do both the Uniate clergy and the Romanian people now bitterly complain that, despite having made use of all imaginable means to prove their true and sincere adherence to the Union, yet have they gained nothing so far thereby being still deemed neither schismatics nor Catholics. For Latin rite Catholics look down on them and accuse them of lukewarm zeal. Thus do Uniates now realize that they had fared much better while schismatics, for then were they always protected, both by Romanian princes and by Muscovy, whose manifold support rendered them far more noteworthy, both at the Imperial Court and in Transylvania. And even were their desires not to be fulfilled, yet did they at least deem it no injury to themselves, as they well knew they were by no means entitled to such as they wished".

(From Augustin Bunea's monography: "*Bishop Innocent Klein*", Blaj, 1900, page 119).

#### 2. Bishop Inochentie Micu on the Jesuit theologian

"Far from defending the clergy from the abuses of their heretical brethren or from enlightening them and guiding them towards truth, the Jesuit theologians are only intent upon converting, nay, upon *estranging Romanians from truth*. For far from being guided by apostolic zeal, in which case they would have ample manoeuvring room within the Magyar nation itself, they are mostly led by the keen desire to further diminish and destroy the already shaky foundation of the Uniate Bishop. They might well content themselves with their Cluj Collegium and with their rich residences in Sibiu, Alba Iulia,

Brasov and Orhei, whence they are free to despatch whatever propagators of the Catholic faith they please. Yet far from deeming that proper, they rather seek rest than work, and rather than converting themselves into new apostles, they would lord it over bishops and clergy and would seize part of the 3000 florins amount destined to the bishop, without taking into account the fact that the Uniate clergy is utterly destitute both of food and garments. Quite the contrary, they would like to also bring the bishop to ruin, which in fact they have already managed to achieve, as the latter, who hardly has a decent home of his own, must now also provide for the Jesuit's quarters, for his vegetables and for whatever is further required both by himself and by his horses, thereby becomes actually the latter's purveyor. Such is the dire, fallen state of the episcopal dignity today! Such is our miserable lot, whose like is hardly to be found anywhere else in Europe!"

(From Augustin Bunea: "*Bishop Innocent Klein*", Blaj 1900, pages 149-150, excerpt from a memoir dated September 14-th 1741).

### **3. Samuil Micu on the Jesuit theologian**

"Another Diploma was issued this year (1701) by Emperor Leopold, whose original being found lacking, rumours of it were received with considerable suspicion: for it was claimed that the act was only enacted for the benefit of the Jesuit theologian attached to the Romanian bishop, that the former's position may thus be further strengthened. That is accountable to the fact that various Romanian Bishop, such as Baron Inochentie Klein and Petru Pavel Aron, openly expressed their loathing of such diploma, which they would not acknowledge. For in his donation granted to Bishop Atanasie, issued upon the very same day of the year when the Second Leopoldine Diploma was also issued, the Emperor praised Atanasie I for his wit and learning, whereas in the diploma he stipulated that the reason why a Jesuit pater is attached to him, as his Latin theologian and *causarum auditor generalis* (i.e. ecclesiastical judge) lay precisely in Atanasie's own ignorance of canonical regulations.

At that very time, directions were issued by Archbishop Kollonich of Strigonium, carefully detailing the rights and duties of the Jesuit theologian. According to those instructions, the whole episcopal charge was wholly assumed by the theologian, whereas the bishop was only left with an empty title, so that he might well be termed the theologian's vicar. Other official instructions, allegedly issued by the Holy See, further reduced the bishop's power and authority by placing the Jesuit above both the bishop and the clergy, for the bishop was now forbidden either to pay visits, or to ordain priests, or to punish unruly behaviour, or to preside over judgement, or to issue directions to his own clergy, or to hire or remove his own servants without the theologian's previous consent, or to write and despatch letters without first showing them to the theologian, or



even to convene a synod or to give advice without the theologian agreeing to all that and more".

(From Gheorghe Sincai's "*Works. Volume III, Romanian Chronicle*", editor Florea Fugariu, Bucharest, 1969, pages 262-263).

#### **4. Gheorghe Sincai on Uniatism**

"Uniatism finally proved beneficial to priests only, for they were thereby exempted from many hardships although with great reluctance, whereas the nobility thereby reaped no advantage whatsoever. Indeed the Latins (Catholics) had reached their aim of *prevailing over the Calvinists* (by far the stronger at that time), *through cheating the Romanians* and thus alluring them into their own camp.

Without offence to those sincerely devoted to the Church of Rome, let us confess that Uniatism was never achieved, nor is valid, out of genuine attachment to Catholic customs, but it was only accepted on condition that we Romanians might still cling to our Eastern rites, for the four florentine diverging points (forgive me for my rudeness) are not only utterly ignored by the mass of illiterate and stupid Romanians, but also hardly comprehended at all by our very scholars, who usually misinterpret them and can barely make themselves understood one to another".

(From Gheorghe Sincai's "*Works. Volume II, Romanian Chronicle*" edited by Florea Fugaciu, Bucharest, 1969, page 184).

#### **5. Petru Maior on Bishop Ioan Patachi (1723 - 1727) and his liturgical innovations**

"Athanasie's successor, as bishop of Transylvania Romanians, upon the former's death, was elected Ioan Patachi or Nemes, on whom the Emperor had bestowed the title of "liber baro". Although born Romanian and Orthodox, he had embraced Catholicism, wherefrom, upon being elected bishop by Transylvanian Romanians, he again relapsed to Orthodoxy. I personally heard, when but a child, our elders vouch for his adherence to Popish faith: some of them even assured that he had joined the Jesuits.

Ioan Patachi proved to be rather a scholastic than a dogmatical theologian, since he absolutely forbade the use of the "Seven sacraments church book" printed in Ramnic in 1724, which maintains that during the Holy Liturgy bread is converted into the body, and wine into the blood, of our Lord Jesus Christ, as a result of the following words: "Turn Thou this bread into Thine honoured Christ's body and the contents of this here glass, into Thine honoured Christ's blood". Had we really taken Bishop Ioan Patachi's order seriously, we would then have had to discard the books of the most learned Latin

scholars, who equally teach and strongly prove that the eucharist is really fulfilled through such words.

As soon as the Jesuit theologian was imposed on the Romanian Bishop, he hastened, as though it were his utmost concern, to abolish the Orthodox custom to allow divorces in case of adultery and to acknowledge subsequent marriages in that particular instance, by introducing the Papists' entirely opposite law. He had timed his action well, for Bishop Ioan Patachi had not only studied theology in a Catholic school, but had himself abided by the Popish law for long years. Thus it was that both, equally familiar with Catholicism and quite ignorant of Orthodoxy, utterly imposed this new law, forbidding any divorce. Nevertheless Romanians still clung to Greek Orthodoxy, for they had only accepted the Union with Tome on condition that no Popish custom should ever be imposed on them either by their own Bishop, or, much less so, by foreigners".

(From Petru Maior's *"History of the Romanian Church"*, Buda, 1813, pages 376 - 377, 384, 385, 387)

## **6. Petru Maior on Uniatist propaganda under Bishop Atanasie Rednic (1764 - 1772)**

"Thereafter Bishop Athanasie Rednic, Petru Pavel Aron's successor, decided to go preach Uniatism all over the country himself, so as to persuade the Orthodox to accept the Union. Now he was rather enclined to be a monk than a bishop, for he was a rough man, not given to taming or alluring the mob: thus he would drag the Orthodox in irons, to his gatherings, forcing them to listen to his sermons, for the most part full of bookishness unintelligible to the common bulk. Furthermore he had had the Florentine council painted on a big canvas, quite resembling a huge tree. If I remember right, Photius, the Constantinopolitan Patriarch, was depicted in the manner of a broken branch. Among the attending fathers was also depicted Petru Pavel Aron, the late bishop, familiar to all by his figure and bearing. Among the audience were conversant with the history of the Florentine Council, held in 1439. And since Petru Pavel Aron had never actually attended the Florentine Council, as he appeared to have, in that painting, all priests kept deriding the preacher's teaching, which they deemed entirely false, so that the common people would equally abhor both the painting and the bishop. So it was that all Bishop Athanasie's pains were to no avail, whereupon he would return home, dumbfounded and discomfited, together with his learned clerks".

(From Petru Maior's *"History of the Romanian Church"*, Buda, 1813, pages 114 - 115).

## **7. Petru Maior on Uniate Theologians**

"There are still those among us who, having studied theology in Rome, firmly believe

that all truth derives therefrom, to the extent that they would gladly lay down their very lives for the sake of the Pope's dominion. Oh, would it that God had protected our Romanian nation from such scholars and theologians, who would prevail over all through their pompous habits and glistening garments. Whenever they open their mouths about Rome, they expect you to stop speaking instantly, not to budge and to listen flabbergasted. As soon as you attempt to contradict their fabulous arguments with the support of the Holy Fathers, of the old canons and of the ancient history of the Church, you are taxed as being schismatic and worse than heretic. They actually expect everyone to bow low to them, to call them rabbis, nay, excellencies or eminences, all which titles are against monkish regulations. And, to crown it all, they are thereby convinced that they strictly abide by Church canons and faithfully serve God. O tempora, o mores!".

(From Petru Maior's "*Procanon*", second edition, published by Prot. Dr. Grigore Marcu, Sibiu, 1948, pages 68-69).

### **8. Simion Barnutiu (1808 - 1864) on the Union with the Church of Rome**

"While Romanians were gallantly opposing such dire calamities, Transylvania's Catholic Magyars had fallen quite low and their number had considerably diminished under the rule of the Reformed Princes, so that they were utterly unable to achieve anything at all, whether in the Diet or towards supporting their own Catholic brethren. Now then, availing themselves, in their predicament, of the opportunity of having been conquered by the House of Austria, they tried to allure Romanians to a new covenant, by binding themselves, under oath, to grant them all the rights, privileges and favours enjoyed by the Catholic Church, provided only that they would renounce the Eastern Orthodox Church and would adhere to the Western Catholic one. That accounts for the fact that the Romanians, in their anxiety to get out of their sore plight, finally accepted such union with the Hungarians (I deliberately repeat it: *with Hungarians, not with Rome*), for increasing the Catholic faith and improving the Romanians' lot were by no means the aims pursued by Hungarians, the latter merely taking due advantage of such favourable circumstances as were mentioned above, so as to attract Romanians in their own camp. Indeed, little did they care for the Romanians' soul or happiness, they were but eager to subject them, instead of the Calvinistic Superintendent, to the Alba Iulia Bishop or to the Cluj Jesuit rector. That is why I made bold to say that, far from seeking the Romanians' welfare, *the Hungarians were only intent on securing their own supremacy*. That is also why I further venture add that the Strigonium (Esztergom) Archbishop actually ascribe such union to the desire of upholding the Magyar Church and of subjecting and dismantling the Romanian one. That is why the Archbishop managed to persuade both Emperor Leopold and many Romanians thereto. That is why he spread it amongst the

Jesuits.

It was also the Strigonium Archbishop who afterwards estranged part of the Romanians therefrom, through his unpopular Jesuits, and who is quite likely to further alienate the hearts of all the rest, should he further insist upon his claims of imposing his metropolitanate, protectorate, primacy, supremacy, or whatever else he chooses to call it, upon the Romanian Church. For it was under the wing of this Strigonium Archbishopric that the Jesuits used to manufacture forged diplomas, Imperial decrees and Papal bulls directed to the renewed subjection of the Romanian Church under the name of Fagaras Bishopric. The Romanian priests' simplicity alone prevented the utter downfall of the Romanian Metropolia, for they kept, even after the Union, chanting as they had always used to do in their own churches, and would still bow to their own archbishop, much to the Papists' discomfiture and rout.

Let us nevertheless admit that from such Union sprang as unto a fount, considerable material relief aid, which the Romanians were in sore need of, as the Calvinistic Princes had utterly deprived them of whatever goods their Church had previously owned. Let us further admit that the very privilege now enjoyed by Romanian priests not to personally sit in judgement unless before an ecclesiastical court of their own was due to the Union. Let us also admit that the Blaj schools themselves were established as a result of this same Union, where from many Romanians were enlightened, by enabling them to study abroad and thus to restore us to the beginnings of our history and to reawaken our conscience to our Roman origin, thereby sowing anew the seeds of ancestral virtues in Dacia's soil. Let us even finally admit that it was the Union which shook the Romanians out of their torpor, by breathing new life into them and by inspiring and prompting them to strive even since Inochentie Micu, towards bettering our lot. *Yet let us not forget to equally recollect the many wounds done to our body politic through the Union, if we really wish to set our relationships with the Hun sound bases in every respect.*

As soon as the Union was completed, there was the Jesuit pater rector presiding over our synodal meetings in the same place formerly held by the reformed superintendent and there also was the Jesuit theologian closely supervising our bishop, whose every step he keeps watching as though he were a malefactor. What difference is it, I'm asking you, between superintendent of Tefecs and Jesuit Baranyi? Which one of them proved to be more beneficial to us Romanians? Immediately upon the Union, The Catholic Bishop in Alba Iulia subjected our own Archbishop, by appointing him his Vicar and kept scolding and watching and obstructing him, whereas the Archbishop of Strigonium promptly stripped him of his archepiscopal dignity by appointing him his suffragan Bishop, thereby again placing our Church under Hungarian domination. Our clergy was thereby induced to new servility, coupled with disgusting infatuation, which this fresh servitude

favours, especially as against Non-Uniates, who enjoy no privileges. What sin has our Church committed (let us ask, as Bishop Inochentie did) that the mere adherence to her is now considered as infamous desertion from the true faith, unless having agreed to such Union be indeed a most grievous sin? For this Union brought about such bitter hate amongst us Romanians that it has been raging unabated for over eighty years now. Pardon me, brothers, for I would rather forbear to describe the hellish fury which tore our people apart during those unhappy times, or the quarrels that broke between fathers and sons, or the frequent fights between brothers, occurring for no reason at all, or to relate how our priests kept anathematizing one another, while Magyar noblemen and bishops were hard at work pleading with the Court for forcible Union, exhorting Uniate bishops and monks to proselytize amongst Romanians, who were too blind to see that they had become mere tools whereby Hungarian envy kept fomenting intestine dissensions in their midst. Who could ever tell Romanians' sufferings during those troubles? The so called Non-Uniates were left destitute, without priests and without bishops, till they fell under Serbian dominion. There was no law to protect them in their own land, whereas the delegates whom their enemies constantly despatched their bondage. So intolerable were the hardships endured by the Romanian nation after the Union, that as early as 1735, that is just 35 years later, the Uniate protopope Nicoara Boianu uttered this bitter complaint to Bishop Ionichie: *"I very much fear that the only gain we shall ever reap out of this Union of ours will be brotherly hate and cruel remorse"*. Shortly afterwards, another protopope, preaching within the walls of this very church cried out in anguish: *"The Romanians were grossly cheated into Uniatism"*. Only it was far too late for lamentations now: hate among brothers ran deep, while the Romanians' sleepless enemies kept constant watch lest such hellish flames should ever be extinguished".

(From Simion Barnutiu's *"Romanians and Hungarians. Speech uttered in the Blaj Cathedral on May 2-nd/14-th 1848"*. Preface and comments by G. Bogdan Duica, Cluj, 1924; apud Cornelia Badea, *"The Romanians' 1848 Revolution. An account substantiated by dates and testimonies"*, volume I, Bucharest, 1982, pages 456 - 458).

## **9. Augustin Teboniu Laurian (1810 - 1881) on the ecclesiastical division of Transylvanian Romanians**

"Besides all these Imperial Decrees and Orders, Transylvania's Government and Diet proved so skilful in messing everything up, that Romanians were left as sorely oppressed and despoiled of their rights as they were before the Union. According to imperial decrees complete equality should have reigned amongst the four acknowledged confessions, namely Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinistic and Aryan (or Unitarian), meaning that the clergy should have enjoyed equal freedoms and exemptions and the laymen equal rights, in accordance with their respective status of noblemen, free citizens or serfs. Being now

included amongst Catholics, Romanians were fully entitled, both politically and ecclesiastically, to partake of all benefits enjoyed by the latter, from the most exalted nobility down to the humblest peasantry. *Catholics had considerably increased in number as a result of the Romanian's Union, as against the other sects, which they by far exceeded...*".

*"Far from reaping substantial gains as a result of the Union, Romanians lost a lot thereby except for minor exemptions enjoyed by some of the clerk. Thus were deprived by the prevailing heterodox of their former independence as Romanians and Eastern Orthodox; they lost their Archdiocese, which was promptly degraded into a mere Bishopric, closely subjected to Jesuit censorship. They even lost their own nationality. Formost of the Romanians who gradually, and mostly perchance, rose, due to their fresh prerogatives as Uniates, to higher dignities than those enjoyed by Catholic Magyars, would abjure the Eastern for the Western Catholic rite, by claiming that they were boh alike, thereby also estranging themselves, at a stroke from their own people and converting themselves into Hungarians. There are only too many such instances. So deplorably demoralizing were such examples, that the Romanian ation could never soar out of its plebian state, since whoever rose to high places or favours, would immediately also renounce his own people. Such are the far reaching consequences of this machiavelic corruption! Romanians must needs know that they are such, and even should they all be turned into Catholics, yet should they stand by one another as Romanians and be proud of their Roman extraction"*.

(From *"Magazin istoric pentru Dacia"* (Dacian Historical Review), volume IV, Bucharest, 1847, pages 326 - 329).

## **10. Augustin Treboniu Laurian to the Orthodox Professor Nicolae exorting him to contribute to the restoration of Church unity**

"What about, you, my far-away brother? Why do you keep silent, Why do you all sit still? Now is the time to meet, to talk, to send petitions, both to the Goverment and to the Saxons' Diet. Let all Romanians gather together as one and proceed to their own union. Ask for your own Romanian archbishop in Transylvania. Break away from the Catholic Union. Man the Banat dioceses with Romanians only. Set up two bishops in Banat, one in Arad, one in Oradea, one in Bukovina and two more in Transylvania proper. They all may well clamour for their own Romanian archbishop. Convene a general Romanian synod".

(From Silviu Dragomir's *"Lettres exchanged by Transylvanian scholars in 1848"* in *"Hommaga to Ion*

*Bianu*", Bucharest, 1927, pages 156 - 157.

## **11. Alexandru Papiu Iarian (1828 1878)**

"Such were the condition under which was achieved the Romanians' Union with the Church of Rome": it was therefore a real compact concluded by them with Transylvanian Catholics, who were then sorely oppressed by Calvinists. It was furthermore, as far as Romanians at least were concerned, a sincere, genuine political act, whereby the latter felt certain that they would not just escape persecutions and hardships, but that they would also gain equal rights with the other nations and confessions".

*"Yet, far from reaping any advantages, out of such Union except for a few exemption granted to some clerks and hierarcs, Romanians stood to gain nothing at all, on the contrary, Saxons and Hungarians were so deft in trespassing whatever decrees or laws were issued by the Imperial Court, that up to 1848, they still deemed Romanians as a tolerated nation, by always distributing dignities among the three nations and the four acknowledge confessions. They seldom appointed Unite Romanians at all by claiming: "It's true we nominated a Catholic, but you are also Catholics, so what difference does it really make?" As for the freshly-appointed Unite Romanian dignity, he was compelled to become a fullfledged Catholic, thereby turning Hungarian. Thus upper-class Romanian inteligentsia was quickly magyarized, thereafter such renegades proving more dangerous to their former brethren than born and bred Hungarians themselves. Immediately after the Union, Romanians also lost their metropolitanate, since the Archbishop in Strigonium assumed, together with the protectorate, the right of lording it over Transylvania's Romanians as their metropolitan. concurrently, he appointed from among the lower clergy a Jesuit theologian to supervise the Romanian bishop's actions, which he did more strictly than had ever done the Calvinistic superintendents before. Such step was justified by the Bishop's alleged ignorance, which he shared with the mass of this faithful".*

"Lately however, upon becoming increasingly aware of having been cheated through this Union, further incensed by the Jesuits' arrogance and outragerous conduct, many Romanians, impelled both by fanaticism and by ignorance, and equally instigated by foreigners, who never favoured their union (as Petru Maior well said: foreigners would ever foment the Romanians' division), *have begun to deviate from Uniatism*. Wallachian and Serbian missionaries roaming the countryside prozelytizing. Cruel hate and bloody fraternal quarrels have sprung up like mushrooms, due to the diverging opinions of Uniates and Non-Uniates".

(From Alexandru Papiu Iarian's *"History of the Romanians in Dacia Superior"*, volume I, Vienna, 1852, pages 57-60).

## **12. Alexandru Papiu Ilarian on Uniate theologians**

"Not only Sincai, but also Bishop Micu and monk Klein, Petru Maior and all the enlightened scholars in XVIII-th century Blaj, *were fully aware of all the evils brought about by the Union. Hark ye, Romanian Jesuits in Oradea Mare or Gherla, ye, who, notwithstanding today's enlightenment and freedom, still dare urge Romanians to attend the Catholic Council in Pesta, ye whose boldness prompts ye to brestow the hated and strange name of Catholics upon us Romanians, ye, who by such criminal means, still strive to tear asunder a considerable section of our nation, beware ye of Prophet Sincai's anathemas and hasten to convert yourselves, while there is still time!*".

(From Al. Papiu Ilarian "*Gh. Sincai life and works*", Bucharest, 1870, pages 32 - 34).

## **13. Uniate Revd. Dr Stefan Pop (1866 - 1947) accounting for his relapse to Orthodoxy, on June 2-nd 1923**

"It was not out of personal resentment or due to any quarrel with Your Excellency that I left the pale of the Greek-Catholic Church.

So as not to annoy you by the lenght of my argument, let me solemnly swear unto you: the reasons of my recantation are derived from my lifelong studies, which fully persuaded me of the purity of faith of the Eastern Orthodox Church, thereby also fortifying my other inner conviction, namely that the Eastern Orthodox Church is the real Mother-Church of the Romanian nation, whose future I can only think of within the frame work of its national autonomous and autocephalous Church, free of any outward interferences.

The careful study of both the past and the present of the Christian Church can but render anyone, anywhere, always and forever, fully, utterly and actively Orthodox.

The history of Orthodoxy, duly blended with Romanian's past, present and future existence, saintly and insollubly binds one to the Holy Synod of the Motherland's metropolis. There can be no redeeming truth and soul's rest beyond this Romanian Orthodox Mecca of ours: there can be no national life and peace, no complete Romanian bliss, out of Her pale! Let us fervently hope that our Uniate Romanians in Transylvania and Banat will finally realize it now that "the tima has been fulfilled" after over two centuries' aimless wanderings and estrangement, and that having seen the truth at long last, they will hasten to rejoin our traditional Romanian Orthodox Church".

(From Stafen Pop's "*Romanian troubles around the Arad Orthodox Episcopal See*", Arad, 1929, pages II - III).



**14. Uniate Professor Revd. Dr. Ioan Pasca (1892 - 1949) accounting for his relapse to Orthodoxy (January 1-st 1924)**

I, undersigned, hereby resign from all functions hitherto entrusted to my care. Yet upon tending my resignation from the main position I was hitherto charged with, namely that of spiritual director of the Gherla Theological Academy, I do deem it my duty to acquaint you with the reasons accounting for my decision. I cannot in my conscience continue to fulfill my job, which, in itself, whether I like it or not, perpetuates the religious division perpetrated by foreigners amongst the sons of the same nation, with the sole purpose of annihilating us. Now that I have become fully aware of the fact that our people's religious division, far from being an act of faith, was actually either forcibly imposed to us by foreigners or achieved through favours and privileges, I couldn't possibly further contribute to rehabilitate and perpetuate such wrongs, whose nefarious consequences are growing increasingly obvious to all. Endless law-suits, constant misunderstandings between priests and their faithful, decisions arrived at with respect not of justice but of opportunities, the weakening of discipline amongst both clergy and people, moral dissolution which forgives or deliberately ignores major canonical offences, all these originate in our religious division only and there is no way out of such impending chaos and ruin but the voluntary return to the Mother-Church, thereby restoring our religious unity".

(From the booklet: *"Romanian priests breaking the seals their Union with Rome"*, Arad, 1924, pages 16 - 17).