

THE SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE UNION OF TRANSYLVANIA WITH ROMANIA

Abstract: This study analyses the religious consequences of the Union of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania, which took place on 1 December 1918. Emphasis is laid on the situation of the main denominations in Hungary and their relations with political power up until the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, after World War I. Light is shed on the political responses of the religious leaders of the Transylvanian confessional communities to the decision regarding the Union of Transylvania with Romania. Attention is given to their horizon of expectations concerning the legislation issued by the new Romanian state, as well as to the Romanians' desire to maintain the rights they previously held. Moreover, the study also analyses the ever more strained relations, after 1918, between the two Romanian confessions (Orthodox and Greek-Catholic), pointing out the changes that were brought about by the main enactments adopted in the third decade of the 20th century, which modified their status and governed their activity.

Keywords: ethnic-confessional minorities, rights, Greater Romania, the Orthodox Church, the ethnicity-confession relation.

*

It is well known today that one of the components of the rich dowry with which Transylvania announced its entry into the Romanian state resided in the ethnic, linguistic and cultural mosaic across its territory.² The management of the situation of the ethnic minority groups raised serious problems for the Romanian public administration after December 1, 1918, due to the fact that they approached differently the decision of the union taken by the Romanians at that time. After a natural period of uncertainty, the Transylvanian Saxon community adopted an unambiguous political behaviour, recognizing and adhering to the Union of Transylvania with Romania,³ and expressing its confidence, through this gesture, that the principles set out in Alba Iulia would be applied in a non-discriminatory manner. The Hungarian community did not manifest the same attitude. For its members, it

¹ Assistant Professor, PhD, Faculty of History and Philosophy, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. E-mail: lucian.d.turcu@yahoo.com.

² Paul E. Michelson, "Romanian Unity 1859, 1918, 1989: Beginnings, Opportunities..., and Illusions," in Kurt W. Treptow (ed.), *Tradition and Modernity in Romanian Culture and Civilization 1600-2000*, Iaşi-Oxford-Portland, The Center for Romanian Studies, 2001, p. 53; Elemér Illyés, *National Minorities in Romania. Change in Transylvania*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1982, pp. 33-39; Ioan Scurtu (ed.), *Istoria românilor, vol. VIII. România întregită (1918-1940)*, Bucureşti, Editura Enciclopedică, 2003, pp. 31-35.

³ Béla Köpeczi (sous la direction de), *Histoire de la Transylvanie*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1992, p. 638; Illyés., *National Minorities in Romania*, p. 73. The text of the declaration adopted by the general assembly from Mediaş, in Ioan Scurtu, Liviu Boar (eds.), *Minoritățile naționale din România 1918-1925. Documente*, Bucureşti, f.e., 1995, pp. 126-128.

appeared downright impossible to admit that the millennial kingdom of St. Stephen had collapsed in such a short time.⁴ The prospect of becoming a *gens minor* inside a state run by Romanians, whom they perceived through the lens of myriad cultural and ethnic stereotypes, led many ethnic Hungarians either to leave the territories that were now subject to “Romanian imperialism,” or to engage in passive resistance, from within the new state, whose geographical legitimacy they utterly refused to acknowledge.⁵

In close connection with ethnic diversity, multi-confessionalism represented another distinctive feature of the Transylvanian province, given the great variety of the internal religious landscape.⁶ Amid the continuing state of uncertainty relating to the international status of the provinces detached from Hungary, the Romanian administration approached cordially the problem of denominational plurality.⁷ Among the first measures taken was the invitation extended to the church, school and cultural authorities across the province to cease any kind of relations with the government in Budapest.⁸ This was a difficult thing to achieve, not only in the Transylvanian area, where the ecclesiastical geography was strongly connected to a well-entrenched framework of symbolic representation, but also on the wider scale of Central-Eastern Europe, where religious homogeneity was, most of the times, just an exception.⁹ In the case of the province of Transylvania, the most important denominations, with the exception of the two Romanian Churches, were: Roman Catholics (approx. 860,000 believers), the Reformed (approx. 650,000 believers), Saxon Lutherans (approx. 260,000 believers), Unitarians (approx. 70,000 believers), Hungarian Lutherans (approx. 30,000 believers), and the Jewish community, which consisted of approximately 300,000 members.¹⁰ Together, they amounted to approx. 2,200,000 members of other denominational groups than those of the Transylvanian

⁴ Zoltán Szász, “Revolutions and national movements after the collapse of the Monarchy (1918-1919),” in Zoltán Szász (ed.), *History of Transylvania. Volume III. From 1830 to 1919*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 779.

⁵ Apostol Stan, *Iuliu Maniu. Naționalism și democrație. Biografia unui mare român*, București, Editura Saeculum I.O., 1997, p. 81; Carlile A. Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors. The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, 1919-1937*, London-New York-Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1937, pp. 279-280.

⁶ Titus Podea, *Transylvania*, Bucarest, f.e., 1936, p. 131; Nicolae Gudea, “Reflecții privind relația Stat-Biserică – o abordare teologică greco-catolică,” in *Theological Doctrines on the Ideal Church-State Relation*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000, pp. 50-51.

⁷ Gheorghe Iancu, *Contribuția Consiliului Dirigent la consolidarea statului național unitar român (1918-1920)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1985, pp. 260-261.

⁸ *Gazeta Oficială. Publicată de Consiliul Dirigent al Transilvaniei, Banatului și Ținuturilor românești din Ungaria*, no. 5/1919, p. 17.

⁹ Ivan T. Berend, György Ránki, *East Central Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977, p. 107; Antonietta Moretti, “Transylvania: terra di tre culture,” in Adriano Caprioli, Luciano Vaccaro (a cura di), *Storia religiosa dell’Ungheria*, Gazzada, Fondazione Ambrosiana Paolo VI, 1992, p. 315.

¹⁰ I have taken over this information from Z. Străjanu, “Culte minoritare în Transilvania,” in *Transilvania, Banatul, Crișana, Maramureșul 1918-1928*, vol. II, București, Cultura Națională, 1929, p. 835.

Romanians, representing almost 40% of the total population in the province.¹¹ The presence of these groups in an area that had been redefined geographically and politically raised the issue of their adjustment to the new territorial and power coordinates.¹² The first reactions, which were all too natural, were those of reluctance or even the refusal to acknowledge the new regional or central authorities, an attitude that was manifested at the symbolic level through the refusal to take the oath of allegiance to the sovereigns of Romania and to comply with the laws governing the new country.¹³

The drawing of the new state borders also led, however, to the need for an adjustment of the confessional perimeter to the new political boundaries. The biggest transformations affected the ecclesiastical structures on the western and north-western border of the young Romanian state. The territory of the three Catholic dioceses of Latin rite was severed through the drawing of the new borders: the believers in the Diocese of Satu Mare became the citizens of three neighbouring countries: Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia; the greatest area of authority of the Diocese of Oradea continued to lie on the territory of Hungary, while the largest part of the Diocese of Cenad belonged, from a geographical point of view, to Romania, an apostolic administration being set up in Timisoara in 1923.¹⁴ Basically, the only Catholic diocese of the Latin rite that had remained intact from the point of view of its jurisdictional territory was that of Transylvania.¹⁵

But confessional diversity was not a feature that was the exclusive preserve of the minority ethnic groups. Even inside the Romanian ethnic bloc, the political unity accomplished in 1918 became vulnerable because of the presence of a second Church, the Greek-Catholic one. An inseparable part of the same Transylvanian heritage, the Greek-Catholic Church risked being associated now, unwittingly, with an unwanted stigma that was reminiscent of the religious schism which had emerged inside the same nation more than two centuries before.¹⁶ At the same time, it symbolized the perpetuation of a tradition that had been reinforced over time, a tradition of loyalty to the reigning Austrian House, but also of solid cultural and intellectual connections with the Catholic West.¹⁷ Thus, after World War I, this ecclesial community was faced with the prospect of cohabitation in a majority Orthodox confessional environment, strongly connected to the eastern traditions and values, of Byzantine tradition.

¹¹ *Ibidem*. Similar data are provided by Illyés, *National Minorities in Romania*, pp. 213-216.

¹² Maria Ghitta, "Între ideologie și mentalitate: problema minorităților din Transilvania în primul deceniu interbelic," in *Identitate și alteritate. Studii de imagologie*, vol. II, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1998, pp. 333-335.

¹³ Străjanu, "Culte minoritare în Transilvania," p. 836.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 842; Mózes Nóda, *Biserica romano-catolică din Transilvania în perioada interbelică*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Studium, 2008, pp. 19-22.

¹⁵ Nóda, *Biserica romano-catolică din Transilvania*, p. 23.

¹⁶ Irina Livezeanu, *Cultură și naționalism în România Mare 1918-1930*, trans. from English by Vlad Russo, București, Humanitas, 1998, p. 167.

¹⁷ Liviu Maior, *In the Empire: Habsburgs and Romanians. From Dynastic Loyalty to National Identity*, Cluj-Napoca, Romanian Academy, Center for Transylvanian Studies, 2008, pp. 223-240.

In fact, the problems entailed by the diversification of the religious spectrum inside the new Romanian state represented a topic for reflection also in the political world of the Old Kingdom. Even before knowing for sure that their country would win the war, Take Ionescu and Nicolae Filipescu, who had been irreconcilable political opponents until not long before, had been considering, ever since the onset of hostilities, “the fatal consequences of the transformation of Smaller Romania into Greater Romania, including [the Romanians] across the Carpathians.”¹⁸ There were six major issues the two political leaders identified as requiring immediate, yet cautious resolution. Among these, the last but one place was occupied by “the matter of the Church.” Resuming these ideas in the plenary of the Assembly of Deputies, during the time of exile in Iași, the leader of the Conservative-Democratic Party proposed a rethinking of the foundations of the power relations between the state and the Orthodox Church: “today we have only one religion, we have citizens of only one religion in the state, Eastern Orthodox, and we have a church organization which is – how should I put it? – an established, official church. Over there (in Transylvania – our note), there is also an Eastern Orthodox Church, but it is experienced in freedom. We will have to unify them. And then, what? Will we take our statist system over there? Or will we adopt the system of freedom [from across the mountains]? Of course, we will thus have a free Church in a free state, as Cavour said. And let us not fear the power of the Church. In the land of universal suffrage there should also be other strong bodies, besides the state, because the balance of all these forces will give birth to true freedom, the vibrant life of new Romania.”¹⁹ In addition, that talented orator did not hesitate to give an overview – true, somewhat complicated – of the confessional structure of future Romania: “in new Romania, there will be around 1½ million Greek Catholics, about half a million Roman Catholics, a few hundred thousand Protestants, all of them citizens of the Romanian state. The Romanian state will not afford to be a confessional state, but will be, like all modern states, a state in which we will have, as I said, free Churches in a free state.”²⁰

As a matter of fact, ensuring the religious rights and freedoms in the successor states of the great empires was one of the major concerns in the debates that were held at the Paris Peace Conference. The desperate messages submitted by the representatives of the religious confessions in Transylvania aroused concern among those who were to confirm the dismantling of the old religious universe, through the reshaping of the national borders. The commitments taken by the Romanian government were not sufficient to ensure the good intentions of the new state towards the ethnic-confessional minority groups across Romania’s territory, despite the fact that the principles the Romanians were willing to build the new state upon were among the most promising: suffice it to think about the resolution with constitutional effect adopted in Alba Iulia, which explicitly guaranteed the “equal entitlement and full autonomous confessional freedom for all the denominations in the State.”

¹⁸ The episode in question is also commented by Nicolae Brînzeu, *Culte în România*, Lugoj, Editura “Sionul Românesc,” 1925, pp. 4-5.

¹⁹ *Monitorul Oficial. Part III. Desbaterile Adunării Deputaților*, no. 58/1917, p. 622.

²⁰ *Monitorul Oficial. Part III. Desbaterile Adunării Deputaților*, no. 58/1917, p. 623.

The forthcoming change was to prove fundamental also for the two Romanian denominations in Transylvania. With a comparable institutional architecture (at the time of the Union of Transylvania with Romania, the Greek-Catholic Church had a metropolitan see with the three suffragan dioceses, while the Orthodox Church also had the rank of a Metropolitanate and of two subordinate bishoprics, of Caransebeş and Arad, within the latter operating a second consistory, in Oradea – an ecclesiastical body that was on the same par with the diocesan body) and with a relatively balanced number of believers, the Greek-Catholic and the Orthodox Churches had managed to secure their independence in relation to the other ecclesiastical institutions, this status being recognized also by the laws by which the country was governed. The Greek-Catholic Church had been removed from under the authority of the primacy of Hungary in the mid-19th century. This should be correlated with the efforts made by the Holy See at that time to strengthen and fortify, from a confessional point of view, the territories from the eastern border of the Habsburg Empire, after the dramatic moments that had taken place inside its borders in the middle of that century, when the revolutionary fury had shaken the framework of the Monarchy's institutional establishment.²¹ The Orthodox Church had received the consent to be elevated to the rank of a Metropolitanate, at a time of profound internal reorganizations, which had led to its hierarchical separation from the Serbian Orthodox Church and the adoption of a status that, besides standardizing its organization, ensured its cohesiveness and contributed to the massive secularization of its decision-making bodies.²² The place that each of the two Romanian denominations had acquired in the corpus of Hungarian legislation was similar. Law article XXXIX of 1868 recognized the independence of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church; moreover, law article IX of the same year acknowledged the independence status of the Romanian Greek-Oriental Church in Hungary and Transylvania and its right to autonomous organization. In addition to this, at the proposal of Ioan Puşcariu, the Parliament in Budapest adopted paragraph 6 of the same law by which the Orthodox Church was recognized as a national Church.²³

Through the Union of Transylvania with Romania, the clerical and secular elite of the two Churches hoped not only that each ecclesial institution would maintain the rights and freedoms gained during their operation within the frameworks of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (with all its avatars of governance), but also for a speedy improvement of the overall situation of these churches, which would now operate inside the Romanian state and upon which political and national pressures would no longer be exerted. Given the radical metamorphoses that had transposed the

²¹ Edward Elton Young Hales, *Pio IX: studio critico sulla politica e sulla religione d'Europa nel secolo XIX*, traduzione italiana a cura di Francesco Bianchi, Torino, Società Editrice Internazionale, 1958, pp. 111-130.

²² Johann Schneider, *Ecleziologia organică a mitropolitului Andrei Şaguna şi fundamentele ei biblice, canonice şi moderne*, translated by diac. Ioan I. Ică jr., Sibiu, Editura Deisis, 2008, pp. 98-102.

²³ Sándor Biró, *The Nationalities Problem in Transylvania 1867-1940. A Social History of the Romanian Minority under Hungarian Rule, 1867-1918, and of the Hungarian Minority under Romanian Rule, 1918-1940*, translated from the Hungarian original by Mario D. Fenyó, New York, Columbia University Press, 1992, p. 130.

two Romanian confessions – together with the whole multi-ethnic and pluridenominational society in Transylvania – within a framework that was fundamentally different from a political and statal point of view, there appeared a concern to regulate the relations with the new authorities which had assumed the governance of the province and whose legitimacy was unequivocally recognized by the high prelates of the two Romanian Churches. Less than three weeks after the entry into service of the Ruling Council, the head of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Instruction announced the intention of this institution to establish a regulatory framework that would create “a solid ground for the future development of religious and cultural establishments.”²⁴ Consequently, he extended an invitation to the senior member of the Greek-Catholic episcopate (at that time the metropolitan see of Blaj was vacant) to draft, by 1 March 1919, a “well-documented memorandum in which you will present most accurately the views and wishes you have with regard to the consistency of relations between the Metropolitanate led by Your Holiness and the new Romanian state, as well as to the affairs of the denominational schools under the patronage of Your Holiness.” The document compiled in reply was the result of discussions among the most important leaders of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church at that time, during a conference that lasted no less than four days, in which they debated the most pressing issues of the Church. In the requested memorandum, they emphasized the fact that the two entities (Church and State) were to exist in a relation of independence from each other. However, this idea was understood in a fundamentally different way from the model of total separation, practised in the European West.²⁵ Assuming a goal of the “transcendental spiritual” type, the Church did not lose sight of the “welfare and fleeting happiness of its members,” and by promoting the principles of Christian order, freedom, brotherly love, etc., the Church brought the state “the most beautiful service.” Addressing basically the same subjects in their twofold capacity as members of the Church and citizens of the state, each institution could benefit the other. The Church endeavoured to show “due honour” to the state and to promote its interests “with all the strength of its moral,” while the state was bound “to respond to it by honouring, shielding and materially supporting it.”²⁶ As can be easily seen, in defining the relations between state and Church, the Greek-Catholic religious leaders laid emphasis on the social function of the latter: through the dissemination of moral precepts, the Church aimed to perfect its members on a spiritual level, which was also a goal the state pursued through its laws, albeit on a material, immanent level. This was reason enough to assert that the rapport between the two tiers of power was to be one of coordination and collaboration.

The representative of the Holy See in Vienna showed an interest in the evolution of the events in the former Dual Monarchy. During the first days of January

²⁴ Arhivele Naționale, Serviciul Județean Alba, Fond *Mitropolia greco-catolică română de Alba Iulia-Făgăraș, Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, files no. 497/1919, f. 2r.

²⁵ *Biserica și Statul. Memoriu prezentat Consiliului Dirigent român din partea Episcopatului provinciei bisericești greco-catolice române de Alba Iulia și Făgăraș*, Blaj, Tipografia Seminarului greco-catolic, 1919, p. 3.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

1919, he informed the secretary of state, Pietro Gasparri, about the principles set out by the Romanians on December 1, 1918.²⁷ Despite the non-discriminatory nature of the decisions reached at that time, the diplomatic envoy of the sovereign pontiff did not lose sight of the fact that the Catholics were to have the status of a religious minority within the framework of the widened Romanian state. Not only the number, but especially the attitude that the Romanian state had manifested towards the Catholic subjects in its territory before the war aroused concern among the high church officials. The Catholic denomination was virtually ignored in the corpus of Romanian legislation. Coupled with this, the attitudes of suspicion towards the insular communities of Catholic believers and clergy conveyed a strong feeling that the Catholic Church was considered a foreign body in Romania or, even worse, that it could be labelled as an enemy of this state.²⁸ Only on 18 March 1918, during the preliminaries of the peace treaty with the German Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, was it explicitly shown that the Catholic Church would have its legal person status recognized by the Romanian state.²⁹ But above all, the serious concerns among the pontifical circles regarding the future of the Catholic Church in Greater Romania were based on the tutelary attitude the state displayed towards the Orthodox Church, which it endeavoured to capitalize upon as its own property and to place it at its sole discretion.³⁰ This idea was emphasized by Alexandru Nicolescu in his correspondence with the pontifical officials, in his capacity of procurator of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church to the Holy See.³¹ In one of his reports, the legate for the province of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș used the term “enfeoffment” to describe the relationship between the Romanian state and the Orthodox Church across its territory.³² Like the rest of the Orthodox Churches that had become “slaves to the civil power,” abandoning their independence for which the Holy Fathers had fought to the point of martyrdom, the Orthodox Church of old Romania had long been pressured by the “tyrannical yoke” of governments, political parties and influential people, as Nicolescu stated. To support his claims, the authorized representative of the Greek-Catholic Church thoroughly analysed the provisions of the legislation still in operation in the old Kingdom at that time, whereby the Orthodox Church was

²⁷ Ion Dumitriu-Snagov, *România și Vaticanul. Relații diplomatice 1918*, București, f.e., f.a., p. 18.

²⁸ Raymund Netzhammer, *Episcop în România. Într-o epocă a conflictelor naționale și religioase*, vol. I, ed. Nikolaus Netzhammer in collaboration with Krista Zach, București, Editura Academiei Române, 2005, *passim*; Ion Dumitriu-Snagov, *România în diplomația Vaticanului*, București, Editura Europa Nova, 1999, pp. 40-41.

²⁹ Netzhammer, *Episcop în România*, vol. I, pp. 765-796; vol. II, pp. 1493-1500; Hans-Christian Maner, *Multikonfessionalität und neue Staatlichkeit. Orthodoxe, griechisch-katholische und römisch-katholische Kirche in Siebenbürgen und Altrumänien zwischen der Weltkriegen (1918-1940)*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007, p. 51.

³⁰ Olivier Gillet, “Orthodoxie, nation et ethnicité en Roumanie au XXe siècle: un problème ecclésiologique et politique,” in Maria Crăciun, Ovidiu Ghitta (ed.), *Ethnicity and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe*, Cluj-Napoca, Cluj University Press, 1995, p. 349.

³¹ Sergiu Soica, *Biserica greco-catolică din Banat în perioada anilor 1920-1948*, Timișoara, Editura Eurostampa, 2011, p. 41.

³² Arhivele Naționale, Serviciul Județean Alba, Fond *Mitropolia greco-catolică română de Alba Iulia-Făgăraș, Blaj. Arhiva generală. Acte inventariate*, file no. 4147/1934, vol. I, f. 1r-8r.

subject to the whims of the temporal power holders – a degrading situation that should draw an alarm signal for the Greek-Catholic Church. Finally, the confession and especially the religious education of the sovereigns of Romania and their offspring was another thorny issue, which had imperilled Romania's relations with the Holy See at the beginning of the 20th century. Imposed as a *raison d'état* when the dynasty of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen was brought to the Romanian throne, the constitutional provision which stipulated that “the descendants of His Highness will be raised in the Orthodox religion of the East” was likely to produce tensions and even fractures in the relationship between the Catholic ruling family and the Holy See.³³ The fact that King Carol I lacked direct heirs meant that the constitutional article in question produced effects only upon the descendants of Ferdinand I. This was the main reason why, as of 1900, the future sovereign of Romania was denied the administration of the Eucharistic sacrament.³⁴ In fact, the situation was not unique in the area. The reigning house of Saxa-Coburg Gotha in Bulgaria was in a similar position. The fact that Ferdinand entrusted the religious education of the Crown prince Boris to the Orthodox Church led to the rebel monarch being denied the absolution of sins and communion until that serious error had been corrected. In the Romanian case, the separation between the sovereign and the Catholic Church lasted for more than two decades, conciliation being the result of severe negotiations between the two parties.³⁵

After the Union of Transylvania with Romania, other, less fortunate events strained the relations of the Romanian state with the Catholic Church. Of all, the most offensive towards national pride appears to have been the refusal of the Roman-Catholic higher clergy in Transylvania to submit the oath of allegiance to the sovereign of the Kingdom of Romania. Seen as an act of disobedience and rebellion towards the new centre of political power, this episode was put an end to in the spring of 1921, when the minority bishops took the requested oath (despite their continuing dissatisfaction with the dwindling of their agrarian property and, hence, of the revenue it generated, with the agrarian reform law, with the policies adopted in the

³³ For King Carol I's relations with the Catholic Church, see Ana Victoria Sima, “La religione della Casa Reale di Romania e le sue implicazioni politiche a ridosso della Prima Guerra Mondiale,” in Ion Cârja (a cura di), *Imperi e nazioni nell'Europa centro-orientale alla vigilia della Prima Guerra Mondiale. Atti del Convengo internazionale, Cluj-Napoca, 21 febbraio 2014*, introduzione di Andrea Ciampani, Roma – Cluj- Napoca, Argonaut, 2016, pp. 189-201.

³⁴ Netzhhammer, *Episcop în România*, vol. I, p. 19, 83; Francesco Dante, “Sui rapporti tra Santa Sede e Romania tra Ottocento e Novecento,” in Ion Cârja (a cura di), *I Romeni e la Santa Sede. Miscellanea di studi di storia ecclesiastica*, Bucarest–Roma, Casa Editrice Scriptorium, 2004, p. 129.

³⁵ Netzhhammer, *Episcop în România*, vol. I, p. 826; vol. II, pp. 909, 919-920; Alexandru Marghiloman, *Note politice, vol. IV: 1918-1919*, București, Editura Institutului de arte grafice “Eminescu,” 1927, p. 210; Adela Herban, *România-Vatican 1920-1940. Relații diplomatice*, Deva, Editura “Călăuza,” 2002, p. 64; Marius Theodorian-Carada, *Acțiunea Sfântului Scaun în România. De acum și de întotdeauna*, București, Editura Autorului, 1936, p. 13. For details, see Lucian Turcu, “Com'è avvenuta la riconciliazione del re Ferdinando I di Romania con la Chiesa cattolica? (la fase postbellica),” in Ioan-Aurel Pop, Ovidiu Ghitta, Ioan Bolovan, Ana Victoria Sima (a cura di), *Dal cuore dell'Europa. Omaggio al profesor Cesare Alzati per il compimento dei 70 anni*, Cluj-Napoca, Accademia Romana, Centro di Studi Transilvani, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2015, pp. 363-376.

field of education, or with the plans for the diminution or even the dissolution of some dioceses), pledging to respect the laws that governed the country.³⁶ During that ceremony, the two bishops who took the oath (Majláth Gusztáv Károly and Glattfelder Gyula) handed over to the sovereign of the country several petitions through which they demanded that the state should recognize the rights that the Catholic Church in Transylvania had benefited from within the framework of the Hungarian state: an autonomous organization, financial assistance from the state, the intact preservation of the denominational education system, the exemption from expropriation of the estates owned by the Church and by the Catholic Status.³⁷ The implications of the gesture of the Roman Catholic bishops in Transylvania are significant from several points of view: first, it opened the way for an official relationship between the Transylvanian branch of the Roman Catholic Church and the Romanian state. The latter proceeded immediately to the payment of the amounts representing salary supplementations, retroactively, as of 1 July 1920.³⁸ Then, what should not be overlooked is the change that took place at the level of the political behaviour of the Hungarian community, influenced by the decision of its leaders to abandon the attitude of passive resistance against the Romanian authorities, an attitude that had been adopted immediately after the December 1, 1918, and to replace it with an active presence on the Romanian political scene, through the founding of the Hungarian Party in Romania, at the end of 1922. This political organization began a long battle for obtaining the right to self-government in the regions where Hungarians represented the majority of the population.³⁹ The gesture of the Catholic episcopate of Latin rite must be put in connection with the clarification of the international situation of the provinces that had been detached from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as this contributed to a clearer diplomatic policy adopted by the Holy See towards this space⁴⁰ and toward the new Romanian state. This enabled the contacts between Romania and the Holy See to become official and for the first exchange of diplomatic envoys to be made between the two sides. Demetriu Pennescu received then the assignment from the Averescu government to represent the interests of Romania to the Holy See, while Francesco Marmaggi, titular Archbishop of Adrianople, was empowered by the pope to open the series of apostolic nuncios accredited with the royal government of Romania.⁴¹ The ambitious plans of the first diplomatic representative of the sovereign pontiff in Romania, to win over the Orthodox Romanians to the Catholic Church, required the tempering of the grievances expressed by the Catholic communities inside the country against the Romanian political decisions. To that end, the Holy See showed

³⁶ *Cultura Creștină*, IX, no. 7-9/1920, p. 217; *Unirea*, XXXI, no. 16/1921, p. 3; Străjanu, "Culte minoritare în Transilvania," p. 840; Nóda, *Biserica romano-catolică din Transilvania*, p. 32.

³⁷ Nóda, *Biserica romano-catolică din Transilvania*, p. 32.

³⁸ Străjanu, "Culte minoritare în Transilvania," p. 840.

³⁹ Nóda, *Biserica romano-catolică din Transilvania*, p. 37; Ion Scurtu, Gheorghe Buzatu, *Istoria românilor în secolul XX (1918-1948)*, București, Paidea, 1999, pp. 36-37.

⁴⁰ Martin Conway, *Catholic Politics in Europe 1918-1945*, London and New York, Routledge, 1997, pp. 2-4.

⁴¹ *Cultura Creștină*, IX, no. 4-6/1920, p. 170; Dante, *Sui rapporti tra Santa Sede e Romania*, p. 129.

its willingness to comply with requests made by the Romanian authorities, including those of transferring some individuals from the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy who had become undesirable, such as the Bishop of Cenad, Glattfelder Gyula, or the Archbishop of Bucharest, Raymund Netzhammer.⁴² In any case, this generous idea of religious union had gathered strong roots among the Romanians, immediately after the end of the war.⁴³ For some of its apostles, it became an imperative placed in the service of strengthening the internal cohesion of the nation, given the fulfilment of the national ideal.⁴⁴ For most, however, it was a good opportunity to shed light, sometimes with sufficient aggression, on various confessional partisanships. To address this drawback, which affected the image of the Romanians' perfect cohesion, several variants were taken into account, some of them being far from applicable. But beyond their content, these plans managed to highlight the image that their authors projected both onto the denomination they belonged to and onto other denominations.⁴⁵ The Orthodoxist hypothesis relied on the idea of a common destiny of the Romanian state and the Orthodox Church in its bosom. In view of this overlap, bordering on confusion, the sign of equality between "Romanian" and "Orthodox" seemed only natural.⁴⁶ This osmosis between nation and confession encouraged the notion that Orthodoxy was the source of the Romanians' spiritual unity.⁴⁷ Under these conditions of doctrinarian intransigence, it was evident that other variables of the state-Church equation were difficult to admit. The Greek-Catholic Church, for instance, was acknowledged for its undeniable merits in the cultural and social history of the Transylvanian Romanians, but with the fulfilment of the ideal of national unity,

⁴² Nicolae Brînzeu, *Memoriile unui preot bătrân*, edited, foreword and notes by Pia Brânzeu, Timișoara, Editura Marineasa, 2008, pp. 338-339; Attila Varga, "Primul război mondial și consecințele Marii Uniri din 1918 asupra relațiilor dintre Biserica romano-catolică din Banat și guvernul de la București (1918-1923)," in Gheorghe Mândrescu, Giordano Altarozzi (eds. / a cura di), *Războiul și societatea în secolul XX. Lucrările sesiunii italo-române Cluj-Napoca – Arcalia, 6-8 mai 2005 / Guerra e società nel XX secolo. Atti del convegno italo-romeno Cluj-Napoca – Arcalia, 6-8 maggio 2005*, Cluj-Napoca–Roma, Editura Accent, 2007, p. 161.

⁴³ See, for instance, the ideas of Onisifor Ghibu, *În jurul catolicismului și a unirii Bisericilor*, Arad, Editura Librăriei diecezane, 1925, pp. 3-54; *Idem*, *O imperioasă problemă națională: unitatea religioasă a românilor*, Beiuș, Tiparul Tipografiei "Ateneul," 1931, pp. 3-64.

⁴⁴ Charles Upson Clark, *United Roumania*, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1932, pp. 102-103; George Enache, "Religie și modernitate în Vechiul Regat. Dezbateri privind rolul social, politic și național al Bisericii ortodoxe române în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea și începutul veacului al XX-lea," in Ioan Bolovan, Sorina Paula Bolovan (eds.), *Schimbare și devenire în istoria României*, Cluj-Napoca, Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2008, p. 392; *Biserica noastră și cultele minoritare. Marea discuție parlamentară în jurul Legii Cultelor*, cu o introducere de N. Russu Ardeleanu, București, f.e., 1928, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Cesare Alzati, Laura Evola, *Il dibattito confessionale nella Grande Romania e i suoi echi nella pubblicistica prima e dopo l'89. Alcune considerazioni*, în Luciano Vaccaro (a cura di), *Storia religiosa dello spazio romeno*, II volume, Milano, Collana promossa dalla Fondazione Ambrosiana Paolo VI, Centro Ambrosiano, 2016, pp. 646-650.

⁴⁶ See Dumitru Stăniloae, *Ortodoxie și românism*, Sibiu, Tipografia Arhidiecezană, 1939, *passim*.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 349; James P. Niessen, "Naționalismul românesc: o ideologie a integrării și a mobilizării," in Peter F. Sugar (ed.), *Naționalismul est-european în secolul al XX-lea*, translated by Radu Paraschivescu, București, Curtea Veche, 2002, p. 236; Dumitru Stăniloae, *Reflecții despre spiritualitatea poporului român*, București, Editura Elion, 2004, *passim*.

it was considered that its mission had come to an end.⁴⁸ Although it was regarded as one of the most effective channels whereby Romanians could draw closer to West European civilization, the Greek-Catholic Church was criticized for its hierarchical and dogmatic obedience to Rome, which was considered responsible for tainting national sovereignty and “breaking the law” and the eastern traditions of faith. In addition, the Greek-Catholic Church belonged to the universal family ecclesial and this gave it a note of cosmopolitanism, which was not altogether favourable to the sentiment of national pride. These assessments after a rigid nationalist grid were coupled with other imputations, of a subjective nature. In the first place, Greek-Catholicism was perceived in Romania as a “specific Transylvanian brand.”⁴⁹ Although the presence of Greek-Catholics in the extra-Carpathian space was not a recent phenomenon, those communities, which were scattered geographically, enhanced the idea of the denominational divisionism present among the Transylvanian Romanians. Secondly, it should not be overlooked that a significant percentage of the Transylvanian political leaders belonged to this incriminated denomination. After a failed attempt, in the early 1920s, at political collaboration between the Romanian National Party and the National Liberal Party, the public discourse condemning the regionalist aspirations noticeable inside a Transylvanian political group started to include references to the Greek-Catholic Church, which, by its very presence, allegedly sustained those centrifugal trends.⁵⁰ Finally, the overt or covert involvement of some priests, of the press or even of organizations inside the Catholic Church in the election campaigns or in support of the candidates of the Romanian National Party gave the impression of a Church that was politically engaged, exceeding by far the scope of its primordial mission. On the other hand, at the level of the elite of the Greek-Catholic Church, a broad horizon of expectations had been created concerning the benefits of cohabitation with the “blood brothers.” The reality was, however, to refute, little by little, those ambitious ideals.⁵¹ The foremost among them and certainly the most pretentious was that of attracting all the Romanians to Greek-Catholicism.⁵² Such a path was appealing not only because of the Romanians’ Latin roots, but also considering the capital of prestige that the Catholic Church held (in terms of its organization, the instruments through which it

⁴⁸ Gudea, *Reflecții privind relația Stat-Biserică*, p. 54.

⁴⁹ Gúdor K. Botond, “Biserica Greco-Catolică între 1918-1948. Considerații generale,” in Călin-Daniel Pațulea, Anton Rus, Andreea Mârza (eds.), *Coordonatele preoției greco-catolice. Istorie și actualitate*, Blaj, Editura “Buna Vestire,” 2002, p. 273.

⁵⁰ *Biserica noastră și cultele minoritare*, pp. 8-9.

⁵¹ As a member of the delegation mandated by the Ruling Council to present in Bucharest the resolution of the Assembly of Alba Iulia, Iuliu Hossu stated in front of the political figures south of the Carpathians, at the festive dinner given in honor of the guests from Transylvania, that Bucharest was “the Jerusalem of our political and spiritual aspirations”: *Credința noastră este viața noastră. Memoriile cardinalului dr. Iuliu Hossu*, ed. Pr. Silviu Augustin Prunduș OSBM, Cluj-Napoca, Casa de Editură “Viața Creștină,” 2003, p. 109. For the meanings of this statement, see Ioan-Marius Bucur, *Din istoria Bisericii greco-catolice române (1918-1953)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Accent, 2003, pp. 30-31.

⁵² Biró, *The Nationalities Problem in Transylvania 1867-1940*, p. 464; Mózes Nóda, “The Historical, Political and Ecclesiastical Background of the 1927 Concordat between the Vatican and Romania,” in *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 9, no. 27 (Winter 2010), p. 289.

propagated the teaching of faith or its social involvement), even among the Orthodox world.⁵³ But this admiration was, no doubt, subjective, if we take into account the fact that there was no official, institutional dialogue between the Orthodox Church of Romania and the top representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, in which the aforementioned theme was debated.

If the ideal of a communion of faith with the Catholic Church was difficult to achieve among all the Romanians, the right to self-organization and autonomous operation was obsessively clamoured by the religious leaders of minority groups and not only.⁵⁴ Making a common front to face the measures taken or envisaged by the Romanian authorities, the representatives of the Catholic (the Transylvanian branch of Latin rite), Reformed and Unitarian denominations laid the foundations for an interfaith bloc, which intended to engage in a targeted and efficient cooperation through the adoption of a unitary conduct towards the ecclesiastical, educational or cultural measures that were taken by the Romanian authorities and affected them directly.⁵⁵ Even inside the Greek-Catholic Church, plans of this kind were ardently devised at that time, opening a broad horizon for projections concerning the desirable role and place of Greek-Catholicism within the post-war framework of the Romanian state.⁵⁶

The third decade of the 20th century represented not only a period in which the new ethnic-confessional groups adjusted to the new political, cultural and societal ambience in which they were included after 1918, but also a time when the most important legislative acts regulating their activity were issued. Becoming a milestone for the political milieu and for the Romanian society in general, the Constitution of 1923 was the first notable attempt at anchoring the Orthodox and the Greek-Catholic Churches in the Romanian legislation after 1918. The feeling that both Churches had come out victorious from that test did not last long. The Orthodox Church did not hesitate to exploit to the maximum the benefits that its close links with the state and its identification with the Romanian nation could bring, while the Greek-Catholic Church sought to accelerate as much as possible its institutional development and to preserve its identity heritage, in spite of the fact that its competitive relationship with the dominant Church placed it in a position of obvious disadvantage.

If Article 22 of the Constitution outlined the general framework for the functioning of the religious denominations in Romania, insisting on a unitary organization of the Orthodox Church, the last paragraph of the same article announced that the “relations between the various cults and the state will be established by law.”⁵⁷ The need to develop a special legislation which would regulate

⁵³ George Enache, *Ortodoxie și putere în România contemporană. Studii și eseuri*, București, Nemira, 2005, p. 459.

⁵⁴ Valentin Buda Niga, “Integrarea cultelor religioase în România Mare (1918-1928),” in *Istorie și conștiință. Profesorului Ion Agrigoroaiei la a 65-a aniversare*, Iași, Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza,” f.a., pp. 226-227.

⁵⁵ Străjanu, “Culte minoritare în Transilvania,” p. 838.

⁵⁶ *Cultura Creștină*, VIII, no. 1-2/1919, p. 3.

⁵⁷ *Constituțiunea, promulgată cu decretul regal no. 1360 din 28 martie 1923. Publicată în Monitorul Oficial no. 282 din 29 martie 1923*, București, Imprimeria Statului, 1926, p. 7.

in detail the relations between the different denominations and the state had been strongly supported by the religious leaders of all faiths since the beginning of their operation within the Kingdom of Romania. The right to autonomous organization, sheltered from any interference of the state, was, as seen above, one of the major demands after 1918. For the Romanian state, the situation was unique, too, since before the war, Orthodoxy had been the only denomination that had enjoyed recognition and protection, while the other denominations had been granted freedom of operation in so far as they complied with the legislation ensuring the safety of the state and the public morals.⁵⁸

Up until World War I, the Catholic communities in the old Kingdom were under the political protection of Vienna's diplomatic representatives in Bucharest.⁵⁹ The first attempt at regulating the relations between the Catholic denomination and the Romanian authorities was made by the central committee in Focșani, mandated to work for the legislative unification of the of the two Romanian Principalities, which had been united through the double election of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, and to develop common laws for the new state.⁶⁰ Article 19 of the draft Constitution drawn up on that occasion mentioned the fact that "another law will regulate the position of the Catholic Church and the other recognized Christian denominations in the united Principalities, the nationalization of the clergy of these religions and their independence from any foreign protection."⁶¹ The constitution adopted seven years later contained only general references to the religious denominations in the state, with the exception of Orthodoxy, which was defined as the "dominant religion of the Romanian state," ensuring its hierarchical independence from any ecclesiastical authority outside the borders of the state, its synodic organization and a special law for the election of its bishops. By the end of the war, the Romanian civil legislation referring to the Catholic denomination had recorded a single important moment: the above-mentioned project of the peace treaty with the Central Powers, which contained a provision by which the Romanian state undertook to recognize the legal person status of the Catholic Church, with all the consequences stemming from this fact.⁶²

In the Kingdom of Saint Stephen, the Catholic Church was one of the officially recognized confessions of the Hungarian state and, in spite of the proclamation of confessional equality under law article XX of 1848, it continued to be one of the denominations that the state took special care of, particularly since it

⁵⁸ Ioan G. Savin, *Problema cultelor în România*, București, Tipografia ziarului "Universul," 1937, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Vezi Petre Gârboviceanu, *Biserica ortodoxă și cultele străine din Regatul român*, București, Institutul de arte grafice "Carol Göbl," 1904, *passim.*; Maner, *Multikonfessionalität und neue Staatlichkeit*, pp. 48-49.

⁶⁰ Artur Gorovei, *Primul proiect de Constituție întocmit de Comisiunea centrală din 1859*, Folticeni, Tipografia Josef Bendit, 1914, p. 13.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*; Gillet, *Orthodoxie, nation et ethnicité en Roumanie au XXe siècle*, p. 350; Ion Mateiu, *Dreptul bisericesc de stat în România întregită. Regimul general al cultelor*, București, Tipografia cărților bisericești, 1926, p. 24.

⁶² Netzhammer, *Episcop în România*, vol. I., pp. 765-796; vol. II, pp. 1493-1500.

was the faith professed by the Imperial Court.⁶³ The lack of a Constitution in Hungary meant that the confessional field was regulated by means of law articles. Besides the already mentioned article XX of 1848, adopted under the pressure of the revolutionary events of that year, the provisions relating to the religious confessions also contained the following articles: XLVIII of 1868, relating to the procedures for separation/divorce in the case of confessionally mixed families; LIII of 1868, relating to the religion of the children resulting from interfaith marriages; XXXI and XXXIII of 1894, relating to the compulsory civil registration of marriages; XLII of 1895, which granted official recognition to the Mosaic faith and allowed Hungarian citizens to declare themselves as non-religious; XIII, 1909, regarding the commitment of the state to ensuring a minimum income for each category of servant of the Church.⁶⁴ The special position of the Catholic Church in the Danubian Monarchy and the interest which even the highest authorities of the state showed - most visibly from the absolutist period onwards - in the actions carried out by the Church, regarding the training and recruitment of the ecclesiastical staff or of its potential for social disciplining, led to the recognition of the right of supreme patronage (*ius supremi patronatus*) of the Emperor in Vienna, a prerogative that Maria Theresa's court historian, Adam Kollár, had introduced in the ideology of Habsburg imperial power.⁶⁵ As pointed out already, at the time of the Union of Transylvania with Romania, the two Romanian Churches in this province were in a relatively similar legal situation, despite the fact that in terms of the number of believers, the Orthodox Church had a slight advantage. To this was added the fact that the majority of the population in the old Romanian Kingdom were Orthodox. All in all, about 70% of the citizens in Greater Romania belonged to the Orthodox confession.⁶⁶

The regulation of the relations between the Romanian state and the different denominations operating on its territory acquired, after 1918, a well-defined political and religious logic. The central tenet of this legislative behaviour consisted in prioritizing the interests of the Orthodox Church, by conferring it the highest hierarchical rank used in the Christian East and by developing a unitary regulatory framework for the organization and functioning of this church.⁶⁷ The first objective can be understood both as the fulfilment of an expected goal and in connection with the political events that occurred at that time and that affected the other two symbolical centres of eastern Orthodoxy: Moscow and Constantinople. In the former

⁶³ László Leslie, *Church and State in Hungary 1919-1945*, Budapest, Metem, 2004, p. 16.

⁶⁴ For a detailed presentation of the civil legislation in Hungary referring to the Catholic Church, see *ibidem*, pp. 16-69.

⁶⁵ Jean Bérenger, *Istoria Imperiului Habsburgilor 1273-1918*, translated by Nicolae Baltă, București, Editura Teora, 2000, p. 477; László Katus, "Il cattolicesimo nei secoli XVIII e XIX: giuseppinismo, liberalismo e rinnovamento cattolico," in Adriano Caprioli, Luciano Vaccaro (a cura di), *Storia religiosa dell'Ungheria*, Gazzada, Fondazione Ambrosiana Paolo VI, 1992, p. 235.

⁶⁶ Ilyés, *National Minorities in Romania*, p. 34; Sabin Manuilă, *Recensământul general al populației României din 29 decembrie 1930. Volumul II: neam, limbă maternă, religie*, București, Tipărit la Monitorul Oficial, Imprimeria Națională, 1938, p. XXIV.

⁶⁷ Alexandru Lapedatu, *Amintiri*, forword, edited, notes and commentaries by Ioan Opreș, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Alabastră, 1998, p. 204.

case, as the opponents of the intolerant Bolshevik regime were liquidated, the new political leaders ushered in a systematic anti-religious and anti-ecclesiastical vision, aiming to discredit the Russian Church and transform it into a hegemonic tool at their disposal.⁶⁸ Allegations of support to the pro-Tsarist White Armies and of incitement to anti-Bolshevik propaganda; the insertion, among the higher clergy, of individuals who were obedient of the new regime, in parallel with the arrests and deportations of inconvenient servants of the altar; the confiscation of church properties and the destruction of places of worship – all of these showed, without a shadow of a doubt, the fact that the Russian Orthodox Church was the victim of a terrible crisis, which strongly affected not only its internal life, but also the mission that it had assumed in the Orthodox world in general, ever since the founding of the patriarchate, in the 16th century.⁶⁹ In the latter case, even though the Treaty of Lausanne asserted the international status of the ecumenical patriarchate, Turkey having been required to ensure the respect and full protection of the person occupying that high dignity in the church, the government of the Young Turks continued to manifest their dissatisfaction with the presence on its national territory of a person considered to be foreign to the interests of the state, a situation that generated a lot of disputes in that period, resulting in threats and expulsions and creating a situation of instability for the patriarchal see of Constantinople.⁷⁰ In this turbid international context, also marked by a certain competitive relationship with the other branches of Orthodoxy in the area (especially with the Serbian one),⁷¹ the project for the establishment of the Romanian patriarchate gained strong roots in the Romanian society in the early 1920s, being embraced by the Romanian political elite as a top priority.⁷² The adoption, shortly thereafter, albeit after long negotiations, of the law and the statute governing the organization of the Orthodox Church unified, on the basis of the principles contained in the Organic Statute, the four different regimes whereby Romanian Orthodoxy had functioned in the provinces included in Greater Romania.⁷³

Of all the legislative acts issued in the post-war years, the one that caused the deepest rifts, by far, in the Romanian society was the Concordat.⁷⁴ While before the war the Romanian political class had not included such an agreement on the list of its

⁶⁸ Albert M. Ammann, *Storia della Chiesa russa e dei paesi limitrofi. Con tre carte geografiche*, Torino, Unione tipografica editrice torinese, 1948, pp. 523-547.

⁶⁹ Adriano Roccucci, "Impero e ortodossia nel mondo russo," in Adriano Roccucci (a cura di), *Chiese e culture nell'Est europeo. Prospettive di dialogo*, Milano, Edizioni Paoline, 2007, pp. 414-117.

⁷⁰ Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, *Le Chiese ortodosse. Una storia contemporanea*, Roma, Edizioni Studium, 1997, p. 35. For the Romanian reactions to this situation, see Antomie Plămădeală, *Contribuții istorice privind perioada 1918-1939. Elie Miron Cristea. Documente, însemnări și corespondențe*, Sibiu, f.e., 1987, pp. 366-368; *Unirea*, XXXV, no. 6/1925, pp. 1-2.

⁷¹ Morozzo della Rocca, *Le Chiese ortodosse*, pp. 88-89.

⁷² Maner, *Multikonfessionalität und neue Staatlichkeit*, pp. 198-199.

⁷³ For an extensive approach, see *Ibidem*, pp. 199-204; Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii ortodoxe române, vol. 3 (secolele XIX și XX)*, București, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii ortodoxe române, 1994, pp. 410-413.

⁷⁴ For a brief presentation of the debates surrounding the Concordat, from the standpoint of the Romanians' national identity, see Alzati, Evola, *Il dibattito confessionale nella Grande Romania*, pp. 650-652.

priorities,⁷⁵ after that moment it became obvious that such a treaty between the two parties could not be delayed for too long. The signs of change were visible. Firstly, there were demographic signs, as the number of Romanian citizens of Catholic confession neared 3,000,000, their vast majority representing a part of the “dowry” that the provinces which had declared their union with the Romanian Kingdom had transferred into the new state.⁷⁶ Secondly, the institutional network of the Catholic Church had experienced a significant diversification, generated by the same widening of the frontiers of the Romanian state, which now accommodated on its territory no less than 10 Catholic dioceses (6 of Latin rite and 4 of Greek rite), not to mention the extensions of various hierarchical authorities into certain areas and communities belonging to new Romania now. The union of Bukovina with Romania attached to the latter’s structure a territory that up until that time had been under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Austria, while the Union of Transylvania and Banat transposed into Romania an institutional network that had been a constituent part of the ecclesiastical system of the Catholic Church in Hungary.⁷⁷ However, the need to give coherence to the institutional architecture of the Catholic Church in Romania was just one of the reasons that demanded the conclusion of a Concordat between Romania and the Holy See. There was an obvious need to establish the coordinates of the relations between the ecclesial institutions and the state authority, the legal basis for the functioning of the Church, heritage-related issues, the regulation of the problems affecting the denominational schools, or the demarcation limits of civil control on the ecclesiastical activity, etc.

At the end of this brief overview of the denominational consequences of the Union of Transylvania with Romania, we can note that in the new confessional context, which was much more diversified after 1918, a twofold adaptation had become necessary: firstly, the Romanian state had to adjust to the pluri-confessional realities inside its territory, closely related not only the old religious horizon in which they had operated for decades or centuries, but also the traditions and the laws that had regulated their activity during that period; secondly, the religious denominations had to accommodate themselves to the new political, cultural and religious context of the Romanian state, in which not only was Orthodoxy numerically superior to any other denomination, but it was used to being the beneficiary of a distinct, privileged treatment on the part of the state.

⁷⁵ Ofelia Miloş, *Relațiile statului român cu Sfântul Scaun în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea*, București, Editura Expert, 2010, pp. 133-159.

⁷⁶ Upton Clark, *United Roumania*, p. 439.

⁷⁷ Amedeo Giannini, *I Concordati postbelici*, vol. II, Milano, Società editrice “Vita e pensiero,” 1936, p. 13.