
THE ROMANIAN VILLAGE ELITE AT 1900. INTELLECTUAL UNIVERSE AND SOCIAL CONDITION

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Abstract: In the Transylvanian society at the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth one, the priest and the teacher represented the elites of Romanian villages that modelled the rural world, participating, alongside the school, to the modernization of the village. The Romanian village at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century bears the imprint of its elites, priests and teachers.

Keywords: Romanians, rural world, elites, priests, teachers.

In the former Austro-Hungarian Empire's Romanian society, partly composed of farmers, the Church offered the only frame of community life, in which the priest represented for his parishioners the model of life, family relations, within the relationship with the political power and with the other institutions of the state. Through their cultural horizon and religious authority, priests constituted the villages' elite and the reference model for Romanian society values.

By their intellectual and, implicitly, theological training, most of the Romanian priests from the Austro-Hungarian Empire were theological institutes graduates. The Orthodox priests were formed in the theological institutes from Sibiu (established in 1811), Arad (1865) and Caransebeş (1885), eventually at Vrsac, Karlowitz, etc. At the "Andreas" Institute in Sibiu, the main preparation institution for future priests, between 1851 and 1918, 2,336 youths studied theology¹. Each institute had two sections; one theological to prepare future priests and a section to prepare schoolteachers. In the theological section of the Sibiu "Andreas Seminary" only highschool graduates were admitted for studies, while, the Arad and Caransebeş institutes also admitted graduates who only completed six grades or normal school. Among the seminary graduates, the most deserving were proposed for studies at the faculties in the Austro-Hungarian Empire or in Germany. A large part of the Orthodox elite followed their studies at the Chernivtsi Orthodox Theology Faculty for a year or for the entire course². In Chernivtsi, where the only Orthodox faculty in the Austro-Hungarian Empire functioned, 54 Transylvanian Romanians studied between 1775 and 1919. Among them were included professors from the theological institutes, Iosif Olariu, Vasile Lăzărescu, Nicolae Popovici, Gheorghe Dragomir, the great historian of the Orthodox Church, Silviu Dragomir, priest Ştefan Cioroianu et al. Other destinations for intellectual formation were the great Central and Western European universities: Ioan Petranu, teacher at the Arad Preparandia, after having finished his studies at the Arad Theological Institute, obtained a doctorate in

¹ Eusebiu Roşca, *Monografia Institutului Seminarial Teologic-Pedagogic „Andreas” al Arhidiecesei Greco-Ortodoxe Române din Transilvania (The Monography of the “Andreas” Seminarial Theologic-Paedagogical Institute of the Romanian Greek-Orthodox Archdiocese of Transylvania)*, Sibiu, 1911.

² Szögi László, *Studentii români din Transilvania la universităţile din Europa în secolele XVI-XIX (Transylvanian Romanian Students at Western Universities in the 16--19th centuries)*, Târgu-Mureş: Editura Universităţii „Petru Maior”, 2011, p. 164-167.

philosophy at the University of Budapest; Roman Ciorogariu, teacher at the Arad Institute, bishop of Oradea, studied theology in Arad, pedagogy in Leipzig, philosophy and psychology in Bonn. At the Sibiu Theological Institute, between 1786 and 1918, 43 teachers proposed courses, out of which 40 followed their studies at the Central and Western European universities: Ioan Popescu in Leipzig and Vienna, Ioan Stroia in Jena, Budapest and Leipzig, Onisifor Ghibu in Bucharest, Budapest, Strasbourg and Jena, Pavel Roșca in Chernivtsi, Berlin and Munich, etc.³

The Greek-Catholic priests were formed in the Blaj and Gherla theological institutes and in the seminaries of Oradea, Satu Mare, Ungvár (Ujgorod in Ukraine), etc. Blaj, where the oldest theological institute in Transylvania functioned, which was created in 1754, 1918 future priests studied between 1851 and 1918⁴. The Greek-Catholic elite – hierarchs, teachers – completed their studies in the Vienna, Budapest and Rome universities.

A teacher in Blaj, Iosif Pop, and then Ioan Pamfilie, teacher, member of the *bobian* capitul, Basilius Raț and dr. Ioan Rațiu, teacher in Blaj, canonic Ioan Micu Moldovan, Basiliu Crișan, Blaj teacher, priest in Șaulia, Bărboși and Pogăceaua in the Mureș County, teacher Alexandru Grama, archpriest of Reghin, Petru Uilăcan, teacher Octavian Banfi Bonfiniu, Victor Smilgeski, metropolitan canonic, Iuliu Montani - Roșia Montană archpriest, teacher dr. Victor Macaveiu, canonic, vicar capitular, bishop of Lugoj, Ioan Bălan, historian Zenovie Pâclișan, bishop of Oradea Valeriu Frențiu et al.

In Budapest, at the *Central Seminar*, between 1873 and 1918, as students at the Faculty of Theology of the Royal Hungarian University studied: Octavian Banfi Bonfiniu, canonic Victor Smilgesky, Emil Viciu, teacher at Blaj, Ambrozie Chețan, archiepiscopal vicar, Elie Dăianu, archpriest of Cluj, Ariton Popa, archpriest of Reghin, Alexandru Ciura, known writer, teacher at the “George Bariț” highschool in Cluj, dr. Iulius Florian, castrens chaplain, historian Petru Suci, who specialized in history at the Budapest and Berlin universities, naturalist Alexandru Borza, bishops I. Bălan, Traian Valeriu Frențiu and Alexandru Rusu, historian Coriolan Suci, the author of *The Historical Dictionary of Transylvanian Localities*, poet and publicist Teodor Murășanu, writer Ion Agârbiceanu, elected as canonic of the Gherla-Cluj Episcopate between the two world wars, et al. We mention that many of those who studied at the Budapest Central Seminary completed their studies at the University of Vienna, like the bishops I. Bălan, Tr. Valeriu Frențiu and Alexandru Rusu. At the Budapest Central Seminary about 220 future Romanian priests studied between 1873 and 1918⁵.

³ Cornel Sigmirean, „Elita ecleziastică românească din Transilvania în epoca modernă. Formarea universitară” (“The Transylvanian Romanian Ecclesiastic Elite in the Modern Era. Academic Formation”), in *Slujitor al Bisericii și al Neamului. Părintele Prof. Univ. Dr. Mircea Păcurariu membru corespondent al Academiei Române la împlinirea vârstei de 70 de ani (Servant of the Church and the People. Univ. Prof. Father Dr. Mircea Păcurariu Romanian Academy Associate in Celebration of his 70th Birthday)*, Cluj-Napoca: Renașterea, 2002, p. 600.

⁴ Idem, *Intellectualitatea ecleziastică. Preoții Blajului (1806-1948) (Ecclesiastic Intellectuality. The Priests of Blaj (1806-1948))*, Târgu-Mureș, Editura Universității „Petru Maior”, 2007.

⁵ Idem, *Istoria formării intelectualității românești din Transilvania și Banat în epoca modernă (The History of Romanian Intellectual Formation in Transylvania and Banat in the Modern Era)*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000, p. 344-355

Indisputably, the creation of the Greek-Catholic identity, especially the formation of the Latinity consciousness among the Romanians is greatly indebted to the contact which the Greek-Catholic Church elite established with Rome's spiritual and cultural patrimony. Following the Romanian culture's golden generation formed in Rome in the eighteenth century, a new generation was created in Rome beginning with the year 1854. Once the United Metropolitan Church was founded, Pope Pius IX created on account of the Greek-Catholic Church two scholarships for studies in Rome, out of which, five will be granted subsequently. Initially, as fellows, the Romanians were sent to the *St. Athanasius* Greek-Ruthenian College, studying at the *Urbaniana University* or at the *Gregorian University*. In 1898, the Romanian students were transferred to the *Propaganda Fide Urban College*. With a scholarship established by Pope Pius IX, the following scholars studied in Rome: the future count of Rome, pontifical assistant and metropolitan of the Transylvanian Greek-Catholic Romanians, Victor Mihaly de Apșa, bishops and metropolitans: Vasile Suciu, Alexandru Nicolescu, Ioan Suciu, Vasile Hossu, Iuliu Hossu, historian Augustin Bunea, canonic and historian Iacob Radu, canonic Augustin Tătar, teachers Alexin Viciu, Liciniu Pop, Vasile Sâmpălean, Coriolan Lupu, Celestin Cherebețiu, Nicolae Lupu, Vasile Cristea, Septimiu Todoran, Ioan Simion Crișan.

After four years of studies, or two in the case of "biennial" priests or "seminarists," the consecration for the priest life followed⁶. First, the fresh graduate could obtain the status of "cooperator" with his own father (if he was a priest), or with another priest. Obtaining a parish depended on the preparation and behavior during studies, on the metropolitan's, bishop's preference, on the existence of vacancies⁷. In the hopes of finding a richer parish, they would postpone the moment of ordination, meanwhile being content, especially the ones who pursued their studies in Rome, Budapest or Vienna, with petty metropolitan positions – copyists, chancellors, study prefects, pedagogues in boarding schools, etc. Through the Budapest government provision the theological seminary graduates were granted three years to get married and get ordained. During World War I this disposition was modified, reducing the time to one year. The designation of a parish would only come afterwards, marriage was well pondered (the wealth of the girl counting more in the election of a future wife), then they would receive the archdiocesan blessing *to be able to step in the name of God to the holy sacrament of marriage ...* Most would thus marry before ordination, but, there were also cases when they would be ordained as celibate priests. Those who selected their wives from the ranks of priests' daughters preferred the ones of the same confession as them, respectively Greek-Catholic or Orthodox, and from the same diocese. Otherwise, for example, Greek-Catholic priests paid certain taxes. If the girl's parents were not priests or not priests from the

⁶ There were many cases when some theologians due to the lack of priests or at their request were ordained before finishing their studies, as it was in the case of the 1848 tribune Isaia Moldovan, priest in Chirileu, ordained in his fourth year of studies. See *Memorialistica revoluției de la 1848 (The Memoirs of the 1848 Revolution)*, introductory study, edition, notes, and glossary by Nicolae Bocșan and Valeriu Sen, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1998, p. 240; Melinte Șerban, *Cultura mureșeană în memoria cărților (Mureș Culture in the Memory of Books)*, Târgu-Mureș, Editura Ardealul, 2006, p. 247

⁷ Abuses would also occur at parish appointments, there were cases when bishops or Consistory members were accused of receiving money in exchange for some parishes' attribution. See Pavel Vesa, *Episcopia Aradului. Istorie, cultură, mentalități (1708-1918) (The Ardeal Bishopric. History, Culture, Mentalities (1708-1918))*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2006, p. 256-257.

diocese, they paid 300 crowns in the “widow-orphan” fund, and the ones that got married with girls of another confession, 600 crowns. In the Greek-Catholic dioceses of Lugoj, Gherla and Oradea the taxes were higher. In the Oradea diocese 1,500 were paid when the future priest’s wife was not a priest’s daughter or the daughter of a priest from a different diocese. Those who took girls from other confessions paid 2000 crowns.

As for Orthodox priests the recommendations regarding marriage were also highly precise and severe. Priesthood candidates received recommendations to marry girls from Orthodox families. In case they took Greek-Catholic girls they paid the sum of 100 crowns to the Diocesan general fund. If they were of a different ancestry, the sum was “threefold”. This was followed by the priest’s installation in the parish, the young theologian being recommended to the churchgoers through a letter signed by the bishop or metropolitan. The installation ceremony would take place, usually, on Sundays or holidays after performing the Holy Mass.

For many young priests, the first years were charged with disappointments, since realities were much more painful than the life they had dreamed of as young seminarists. *From the light of an ethical hell, towards which you crave in your seminar years when you bathe with all the aspirations of your souls – priest Ion Agârbiceanu from Bucium-Sașa wrote – you suddenly wake up in the darkness that rules in the poor minds, souls and houses, in the prolonged diseases, in the fear of death of those who leave, in the even bigger fright of those who stay. You are surrounded by secrets on all sides, and at the age of twenty you are tormented by violent questions*⁸.

In search of a better parish, young priest addressed the bishop, metropolitan or Consistory, asking to be appointed in a new parish, vacant, closer to their native village, or even in their native village, closer to their parents, in parishes with higher incomes, that would allow them to support their family.

The priest condition, with all its shortcomings, was however well above that of the majority of Romanians. For a long while, it represented the social ideal of thousands of youths from Romanian peasant families in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. The priest career was a long-coveted profession in Transylvania, because of piety that characterized the majority of the population – the Church and the priest representing the spiritual center of the community – as well as due to the priest’s social standing, well above the average of a population that in a rate of over 80% assured their existence from agriculture, from cultivating the land. Then, there was the priest’s authority in the community, exercising an almost decisive influence in the village, regarding spiritual life as well as regarding administrative, juridical or school aspects.

The priests’ social standing was much diversified, conditioned by numerous factors, first by the size of their parish, the geographical area where it was situated. The largest Greek-Catholic parishes were the ones in the Transylvanian plain area. The “Transylvanian Canaan” on the Mureș and Târnave valleys, with 300-400 families each, with imposing stone churches, better organized schools, with wide ecclesial lands, with church funds, with a rich dowry of

⁸ Apud. Mircea Zăciu, *Ion Agârbiceanu*, București, Editura Minerva, 1972, p. 82.

books and liturgical objects⁹. Fortunes were acquired either from donations by feudal lords in the eighteenth century under the pressure of the emperors Maria Teresa and Joseph II, through repeated official dispositions emitted for this purpose, or by land donations and acquisitions, made by the village communities or wealthier families. There were cases in which some priesthood candidates, without Seminary studies, the so-called “moralist-theologians” (“biennial priests”) to obtain a certain parish from the bishop, they obliged themselves on a dowry from their own incomes, or with a parsonage, or with one or more plots of land. A part of the church fortune came from donations left by will, with which foundations were created. The Blaj Greek Catholic Church had hundreds of such foundations for the most diverse of purposes.

The vacancy of a rich parish, from larger villages or cities, unleashed a true avalanche of requests to the Metropolitan. There were poorer parishes in the Apuseni Mountains, in the Szecklerland, in mixed localities, both with Greek-Catholic and Orthodox communities, with 30-60 families or even less. In the Făgăraș district there were 206 Greek-Catholic subsidiaries in the nineteenth century, and on the Sibiu Seat there were parishes with less than 60 members. Sălișteea had 28 members, Aciliu 47, and Apoldul de Jos 59.¹⁰ In total in the archdiocese there were 675 subsidiaries.

Apart from the “canonic portion”, always in the exclusive use of the vicar, in some localities there were church lands, especially forests, meadows, also, a modest income of the cantor, a small plot, an arable, a meadow, etc. The usual parsonage was added, a construction similar to country houses, possibly with more rooms, sometimes a house for the cantor and one for the ringer. Other incomes that supplemented the fortune were a mill, a saw mill, or the right for inn-keeping.

The majority of Greek-Catholic priests’ houses, at a rate of 71.5%, were built in the latter half of the twentieth century: 158 of stone and brick, 399 of wood, 3 of unburnt brick and only 2 of clay. The homes of priests with higher incomes, especially the archpriests consisted of spacious houses, composed of a veranda, living room, bedroom, salon, guestroom, office, pantry, cellars, one with wine barrels, the other for the tub with cabbage. The house furniture consisted of, among others, couches, armchairs, massive sculpted wardrobes, some in Biedermaier style, toilet mirror, dining table, library, etc. Richer priests, very rare cases among Romanians, and prelates also had a piano. The yard and the garden were surrounded by fence plank, in front of the house they had parterres, and in the yard they had a kiosk, where they would usually serve their guests with coffee. During onomastic days or birthdays, possibly to mark their elite community status, they organized soirees, where they would invite all the local intelligentsia¹¹.

Churches, until after 1900, at a rate of 60%, were made of wood, modest, low, dark, but most of the times elevated on a high ground, on one of the village’s hills. In 1911 in the

⁹ See Simion Retegan, *Parohii și filii ale diecezei Blajului în timpul păstoririi lui Alexandru Sterca Șuluțiu (1850-1867) (Parishers and Sons of the Blaj Diocese during Alexandru Sterca Șuluțiu’s Shepherding)* in *Emlékkönyv Csetri Elek születé sévuk nyolk vanadik évfordulójára, Az Erdély mizeum-Egyesület kiadása, Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca: 2005, p. 402.*

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 403

¹¹ Ioan Chiorean, *Intellectualitatea din Transilvania în epocile premodernă și modernă. Studii și articole (The Transylvanian Intellectuality in the Pre-modern and Modern Eras. Studies and Articles)*, Târgu-Mureș: Editura Universității “Petru Maior”, 2008. 387.

Alba Iulia-Făgăraș Archdiocese were 383 stone churches and 402 of wood (parsonages were 217 of stone and 339 of wood, schools of stone were 289, and of wood 179).

In the Sibiu Archdiocese there were 2,101 churches. As style, they were of a great diversity: the bulwark ones, erected in the nineteenth century were influenced by the Saxon style; the ones erected around 1900 imitated the Byzantine style. Wooden churches were architecturally influenced by the style of churches from Moldavia or the Hungarian ones.

Priests' incomes were for a long time, for the most part of the nineteenth century, conditioned by the parishioner's contribution. From 1861 the tithe (quarta) was abolished, which the believers paid to the church. Priests, except for the archpriests who received small aids from the Archbishopric, did not benefit from a salary fund, being remunerated through the churchgoer's contribution. The salary was established according to the number of souls, of believers, each contributing annually with a florin¹². In this situation, the majority of priests, in relation to the population of the parishes, had salaries under 400 florins. Only one parish from the Alba Iulia and Făgăraș Archbishopric had an income of 800 florins. There were also parishes where the priest's salary ranged between 10-100 florins, less than the amount received by a postal clerk or a railroad worker.

In an article entitled *The Endowment of Our Clergy*, published in the *Unirea (Union)* newspaper on July 4th 1891, it was said that there were vicars without a parsonage, without a canonical serving and without clear provisions regarding work days established by the parishioners in the favor of the priest. *Whomever wants to convince himself of the truth of our assertion – the Unirea wrote – should go to the Olt country, where in most of the villages the priest may have only this as a reward from his parishioners, that they call him “father” and kiss his hand, and if the father would not inherit some land from his parents, or if he would not receive from his wife an insignificant property as dowry, he would surely be starving. In these villages until now we can still apply priests, as our people esteems the priestly status, so much, as there is no peasant with a better grip, who would not feel very happy, if one of his sons – after he has graduated 4-5 secondary classes – he can see him a priest in his village or even with the risk of supporting him with his own fortune, and there is no daughter of a wealthier farmer, who would not hold becoming a priest's wife with great happiness*¹³.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century the debates regarding the remuneration of priests from state funds was launched. Beginning with 1895 the government offered aid to priests, distributed on the basis of a list proposed by the Consistory. The distribution was made arbitrarily, some priests receiving aids of over 100 florins, even though the provisions stipulated a maximum of 100 florins for one priest. Such “aids” were granted from the *ministry of cults in concert with the president minister at the fișpan's proposal, who would at once express his wish, that the priest through his political posture would make himself worthy to be able to be imparted with state help in the future as well*¹⁴. Thus, state aids became a way of manipulation and constriction for priests, being in fact paid for their fidelity for government policy. Through the 1989 Law XIV the priests' remuneration from state funds

¹² Ioan Rusu Șirianu, *România din statul ungar (Romanians of the Hungarian State)*, 1904, p.282.

¹³ *Unirea*, Year I, Issue 27, 4 July 1991. 1.

¹⁴ *Idem*, Year VIII, Issue 12, 26 March 1998. 1.

was regulated¹⁵. According to the law's paragraph 4, priests' salaries were supplemented with 1600 crowns, for priests who had theological studies for less than three years and had eight secondary classes.

Priests who lacked this qualification, according to paragraph 5, only received supplement of 800 crowns. The law allowed priests with "inferior qualification" the possibility to later complete highschool to obtain the salary supplementation to 1,600 crowns. The salary was however not received entirely, the incomes obtained by the priest from the parish (after the "canonic portion", work days, parishioner's contribution in kind and funeral, house consecration and Epiphany incomes) were subtracted, the priest only receiving the difference to the sum of 1,600 or 800 crowns. In 1909, a new law article was published (XXII) aiming to add to the 1898 one, by stipulating that if a parish was covered by a priest with inferior qualification, to a possible appointment of a priest with superior studies, he would not receive the supplement ("congrua") of 1,600 crowns. Through law article XXXVIII from 1913, priests could benefit from gradations (cvincvenals). In the sense of this article, a priest could reach after completing twenty five years of seniority a salary of 3,000 crowns. The supplementation of state-provided salary was granted annually in two installments, by the Consistory, with the possibility of adjournment if the priest was found guilty of "conspiracy against the state." Under such circumstances, the contribution constituted an improvement of the priest's material situation, but, morally, it represented *a great burden, as it forced them to often go against their own will and neglect their national or political duties. It is an eternal "Damocles' sword"*¹⁶.

Archpriests enjoyed much greater incomes than priests. In the case of the Orthodox, the income was composed of the priest salary, of 1,600 crowns at the beginning of the twentieth century, to which the archpriest allowance was added, of 1,500 crowns each year and seniority gradations, of 10%, granted every five years. In the Arad and Oradea dioceses the *archpriest salary* was only of 600 crowns, and in the Caransebeș diocese it was of only 400 crowns, with the mention, that in these dioceses they received the so-called *Deanery tribute*. Each archpriest collected 50 crowns with the occasion of a priest's installation, then an allowance of 10 crowns per day and the reimbursement of transport expenses for canonic visits and school inspections¹⁷.

Both in the case of priests and archpriests, at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth incomes could be supplemented by founding Romanian credit institutes¹⁸. Among the Transylvanian priests and archpriests many became shareholders in banks. At the Aiud "Gorunul" Bank, in 1910, shareholders came from among the priests prevailed, five of which being among the foremost share owners¹⁹. At the Reghin

¹⁵ Onisifor Ghibu, *Viața și organizarea bisericească și școlară în Transilvania și Ungaria (Life and School and Church Structure in Transylvania and Hungary)*, 1915, p. 37-38

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 39

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 55-56.

¹⁸ See the phenomenon at large in Vasile Dobrescu, *Elita românească în lumea satului transilvan 1867-1918 (Romanian Elite in the World of the Transylvanian Village 1867-1918)*, Târgu-Mureș, Editura Universității „Petru Maior,” 1996.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 201.

“Muresiana” Bank, in 1897, from the total of 170 shareholders, 28 were priests²⁰. In 1910, the Greek-Catholic priest Pavel Boldea from Sibiu had 10 shares, the Greek-Catholic Petre Ciubotar from Reghin had 20 shares, and his wife Ecaterina had 10, the Orthodox priest Ioan Duma from Săcal (Mureș) had 5 shares, Iosif Popescu, Orthodox priest from Dumbrava (Mureș) had 20 shares, Galaction Șagău, Orthodox priest from Cuieșd (Bihor) had 40 shares, and his wife Maria another 81, etc. Most priests had 1-5 shares. About 184 Transylvanian priests in 1913 were part of surveillance Committees (Audit Commission), representing 24.24% from the total of “censors”²¹. Also, it is known in a proportion of 76.12% the situation of executive bank leadership. Thus, among the 153 persons who occupied in 1913 the director position, 33 were clerics, representing 16.42% from the total of bank leaders²². Certainly, these positions were remunerated, adding to the priests’ income.

The highest income was seen at the high clergy which included, for the Orthodox, the archbishop and bishops, vicars, consistorial assessors, as well as seminary directors, school inspectors, consistorial secretaries and permanent or substitute teachers. They benefited in 1913 from the following remuneration: Orthodox archbishop – 24,000 crowns, Arad and Caransebeș bishops – 12,000 crowns, Oradea episcopal vicar – 10,000 crowns, Sibiu archbishop vicar – 6,000 crowns, Sibiu consistorial assessors – 4,000 crowns, the ones from Arad – 3,000 crowns, from Caransebeș – 2,400 crowns, Sibiu consistorial secretaries 3,600 crowns each, and those from Arad 3,000 crowns each, Sibiu seminary teachers – 3,600 crowns, and those from Arad – 2,400 crowns, respectively 2,200 for the ones from Caransebeș²³.

The incomes of Greek-Catholic high clergy were substantially greater than the ones of Orthodox hierarchs. For example, in 1865 the Orthodox bishop had a salary of 4,000 florins, while the Gherla Greek-Catholic bishop had 10,000 florins, and in 1895 he had 10,250 florins²⁴.

The high hierarchs collected considerable fortunes during their lifetime. In this sense the incomes of Orthodox metropolitan Andrei Șaguna are extremely relevant, who at his death, which occurred on July 18th 1873, left a fortune of 600,000 florins.

Works on the “canonic portion”/ parish sessile occupied a lot of the priests’ time, managing to dedicate themselves to the church only on Sundays and holidays. *Reaching Galitii*, priest Iosif Pop confesses, *where I woke with a canonic portion of 32 acres, even though I gave the most part to the churchgoers to work, yet the worries of the household took most of my time and because of these worldly worries, then the caring for my three infants of mine, I ended up having almost no time for absolutely necessary, priestly business. Morning, evening prayers, services required by churchgoers, preparing the sermon, religion classes, Sunday services that are about all. For spiritual reading, meditation, study, adoration, church research during the course of the week, I had no more time. I was unhappy with this spiritual*

²⁰ Vasile Dobrescu, Maria Dan, „L'activite de la Banque”Muresiana” de Reghin de 1887 a 1948. Bleu Historique et financier” în *Studia Universitatis Petru Maior. Historia*, 2/3, 2013, p. 45.

²¹ Vasile Dobrescu, *Funcții și funcționalități în sistemul de credit românesc din Transilvania pînă la Primul război mondial. Studiu de caz, (Functions and Functionalities in the Romanian Credit System in Transilvania until World War I. Case Study)* Târgu-Mureș, Editura Universității “Petru Maior”, 2006, p. 53.

²² *Ibidem.*, p. 63.

²³ Onisifor Ghibu, *op. cit.* 55-56.

²⁴ I. Chiorean, *op. cit.* 387.

*state, but I was not undertaking anything to change it. A shock had to intervene, to place me on the correct path*²⁵. The visit of a number of Assumption monks from Blaj, former colleagues, challenges him to a severe conscience exam and a radical change of his vicar life, modifying his daily routine: *In the fixed program there were the following points: waking up at a fixed time, daily offer, morning prayer, meditation, celebration of the Holy Liturgy, adoration, spiritual reading, study, rosary, a standard of one canonic hour, reading the Holy Scripture, conscience examination, evening prayer, marking the control sheet every evening, spiritual exercises of five days per year, going to bed in good time, monthly confession. The next day I began the program. The predicted change occurred in both my particular priestly life, and in what the churchgoers and the church are concerned.*

Education during the study years, an entire theological literature, numerous circulars sent by bishops and metropolitans, magazines and newspapers, both of the Alba Iulia and Făgăraș Greek-Catholic Archbishopric (*Unirea/Union* and *Cultura creștină/ Christian Culture*, *Tinerimea nouă/ The New Youth*, *Calendarul de la Blaj/The Blaj Calendar*), and of the Sibiu Archbishopric (*Telegraful Român/The Romanian Telegraph*), transmitted advice regarding the pastoral life to the priest. A great responsibility was granted to the priest to care for the sick. *The priest had to examine the sick to soothe and help to the best of his ability in their situation of pain, but especially to renew and strengthen them spiritually by the dignified reception of the holy sacraments, that is, of Confession, Communion and Anointment*²⁶. Enormous duties also devolved upon the priest regarding the education of the youth in the spirit of Christian morals, a special care being granted to teaching religion in schools: *Morality, religion is not a science that could also be given a place in the courses partition.* On March 1st 1892 the *Circular Epistle of the Metropolitan and Bishops from the Alba Iulia and Făgăraș Church Province to the Entire Clergy and the Faithful People of the Province About the Moral-Religious Upbringing of the Youth*²⁷, signed by Metropolitan Ioan Vancea and Bishops Mihail Pavel from Oradea, Victor Mihaly, Bishop of Lugoj and Ioan Szabo, Bishop of Gherla. Greek-Catholic priests were reminded that abiding by the words Jesus addressed to his disciples, *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations*, the church not only did preach the word of God to all nations, but it also founded “public schools” to be able to teach people not only the truth of religion but also other useful knowledge. *Especially – the Circular stipulated – the Holy Church would also attend to founding the so-called popular or elementary schools, where the babes receive useful knowledge both for earthly life, and what lacks in obtaining heavenly bliss.* With these thoughts and great sacrifices, the Circular continued, hundreds of Greek-Catholic schools were created in Transylvania. As a result: *The salvation of our Greek-Catholic schools is for our church and for all our faithful people a matter of life, that it cannot leave any of the sons of our churches, to be uncaring ... With a word, instruction and rearing in our Greek-Catholic schools is seated on the un-rinsed basis of Christian-Catholic religion and moral, on which man’s entire spiritual life must rest, if he*

²⁵ Iosif Pop, *Credință și apostolat. Memorii (Faith and Apostolate. Memoirs)*, Preface by Liviu Sabău, Metropolitan canonic, Edited by Dimitrie Poptâmaș and Melinte Șerban, Târgu-Mureș, Fundația Culturală “Vasile Netea”, 2004, p.31

²⁶ Dr. Isidor Marcu, „Îngrijirea pastorală a bolnavilor” (“The Pastoral Care for the Sick”), in *Cultura Creștină (Christian Culture)*, Year XI, July-August 1922, Issue 7-8, p. 215

²⁷ *Unirea (The Union)*. Supplement to Issue 12, Year II, 1892, p. 1-3.

wants to be a useful member of human society and to be able to gain God's blessing in this earthly life and eternal bliss in the next. The hierarchs' epistle insisted on the importance of the pupils frequenting Greek-Catholic schools, because *in our Greek-Catholic schools, apart from the unwavering fidelity and annealing to the throne of His Highness All-Gracious our Apostolic King, apart from true love from the homeland and abiding by the country's laws, and apart from the consequences prescribed by the law, babes must learn, properly, the language of our church as well, which is at the same time also their mother tongue; which is a matter of great significance for our church and the wellbeing of our worshippers.*

The Epistle, as are the numerous circulars sent from Blaj, required priests to attract the flock to the Holy Church, to make sure every time that the church is clean and equipped with everything that forms its adornment, to hold the godly cult with all the gravity, dignity and piety worthy of the God of the sky and the earth, to whom you are all servants. There where the cantor office is separated from the one of the docent, the cantors proposed must be God fearing men, with an untainted life and good singers, who with their debut life and with their melodious singing to dulcify and edify, to unite our people to our churchly bosom, so that no worldly interest, and no contrary trial could alienate, unbind or remove him from the bosom of our Holy church, and through this to take him to perdition; that which our priests will do according to their calling, then they can be content, that they have accomplished their holy duty, for which they will greatly sense before God, and suddenly they suddenly also promoted the temporary and eternal bliss of the people they were assigned to shepherd.

Precise recommendations were imposed regarding social behavior and outfits. In the eighteenth century, at the ascent to the see of Arad, Vichentie Ioanovici (1725-1731) recommended that priests should walk dressed in priestly garments *not as until now, in shirts like the foolish people, priests had to be washed and combed ... to shave their heads as a coronet and trim their mustaches. They should not make new clothes before seeing the archpriest's, they should make them on that form: cloth mantle with which they have to go to church and when they go somewhere or in church business. At work they can walk dressed in a layperson way but with a skull-cup on their head, which in church as well they only remove when extolling*²⁸.

Orthodox priests, as an outfit, wore a beard, which they trimmed. As for clothing, they had the cassock, lined in blue, and a blue girdle. On their head they wore a priestly hat. However, they did not wear priestly garments permanently, only on certain occasions, when they would go to gathering, priestly conferences, deanery office or to the Consistory²⁹.

Greek-Catholic priests wore a black cassock, girdle and jacket, and above an overcoat or a coat. Deanery administrators wore a red girdle. Archpriests wore a red girdle and a jacket lined in red, a lanyard at the jacket, and on the hat a red braid. Canonics and Forana vicars wore certain "capitulary insignia," approved by the king himself. They also wore a decoration pending by a ribbon, whose color varied according to the diocese. Canonics and even some archpriests and priests wore a uniform similar to that of the catholic, with a short cape over the shoulders to the regular coat. Priests would not wear their priestly garments permanently,

²⁸ P. Vesa, *op. cit.* 292

²⁹ Onisifor Ghibu, *Viața și organizarea bisericească și școlară în Transilvania și Ungaria (Church and School Life and Organization in Transylvania and Hungary)*, 1915. 37-38

wearing civilian clothes, usually a redingote with a vest buttoned to the top over the hardened collar like the soldiers'. This outfit was called "civilian-canonical." The Metropolitan wore a kamelavkion in the church. He was the only Greek-Catholic hierarch, who wore a kamelavkion, according to the Orthodox custom.

As for the salutation, Greek-Catholic priests the adequate entitling for priests was *honored*, for archpriests, Deanery administrators and consistorial assessors, *much honored* for the Forana vicars and canonics, *very much honored*, for theology teachers *clarissime*. Archpriests and canonics, on many occasions were addressed as *Reverendissime*, bishops *Illustre*, and the metropolitan *Excellency*. The Metropolitan was mentioned in the asses from all dioceses, alongside the bishop and the Pope. He had the *proëdria* right in all ecumenical (provincial) synods, before all bishops, and also the right to wear the Pallium on the head of Saint Peter, as a sign of archiepiscopal jurisdiction. Bishops called themselves: *From God's guidance and the grace of the Holy Apostolic See of Rome*³⁰.

Priests, the Romanian elite's majority element in the modern society of the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries and the beginning of the twentieth century, represented the model for the Romanians' great religious and national ideals³¹. In the situation in which churchgoers could not always realize the difference between the Christian teaching and the way it is represented by the priest, his deportment in society was decisive for the representations of living faith. The private life of the priest and his family was permanently subject to public control, priests having the duty to offer churchgoers a living model for Christian life. The priest had to be the people's father and luminary. He had to hold alphabetizing courses, to spread culture among the people through public conferences, but also through sermons. Also through libraries, theatre and other activities he was called to give advice, to offer models, giving the devotees the possibility to attain basic elements of Christian and civic education. Priests mediated, alongside teachers, the churchgoers' relationship with the authorities. They were the peasant's "counselors" in problems regarding their children tuition, regarding the schools they should attend, they intervened to the authorities or foundations for scholarships, they involved the into the ASTRA cultural life, they founded libraries in villages, they mediated their understanding of political events transmitted through the press, etc. Undisputedly, the priest and the teacher represented the elites of Romanian villages that modelled the rural world, participating, alongside the school, to the modernization of the village. The Romanian village at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century bears the imprint of its elites, priests and teachers.

³⁰ Onisifor Ghibu, *op.cit.* 79

³¹ In 1910 in Transylvania and in Banat there were 2,414 Orthodox priests and 1,826 Greek-Catholic priests, in total 4,240 priests. See *Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv*, New Series, vol. 56, 1915, p. 626-641.