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A Contested Patriarchate

Establishing an autocephalous patriarchate in Greater Romania was far from a straightforward process. It involved five years of heated debate and negotiation to bring four churches with their own theological and political cultures together under a single umbrella. The Orthodox Church in the Old Kingdom had been firmly subordinated to the Romanian state before the war, while Orthodox believers in Bessarabia were members of the Russian Orthodox Church and Orthodox Christians had their separate metropolitanates in Bukovina and in Transylvania, each with its own history and approaches to church governance. Led by ambitious metropolitans and bishops, each region hoped to shape the new patriarchate in its own image. When Miron Cristea allied the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) with the policies of the Liberal dynasty from the Old Kingdom after the First World War, he cemented nation-building as the language which Church leaders had to speak if they wanted to see their plans succeed, but without placating the strong regional rivalries that festered within the Holy Synod.

Orthodoxy in Old Kingdom Romania

After being dominated by Greek bishops and theologians for several hundred years, the churches in Wallachia and Moldavia had slowly come under Romanian control from the beginning of the nineteenth century, along with politics and cultural life.¹ Enlightenment ideas about national independence and the importance of education penetrated the Romanian churches both through

¹ Constantin Iordachi, 'From Imperial Entanglements to National Disentanglement: The "Greek Question" in Moldavia and Wallachia, 1611–1863', in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans. Vol. 1: National Ideologies and Language Policies*, ed. Roumen Dontchev Daskalov and Tchavdar Marinov (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 67–148.

Greek scholars in Bucharest and Iași and through Moldavian church leaders educated in Kiev.² As metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia between 1819 and 1821, Dionisie Lupu encouraged young Romanians to study in the West. He worked with Gheorghe Lazăr and other Romanians from Transylvania to transform the Greek-dominated Princely Academy in Bucharest into Saint Sava College, an institute of higher education specifically for Romanians, as well as publishing a Romanian-language church newspaper and choosing Romanians instead of Greeks as church officials. In Moldavia, Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi led his own efforts to 'Romanianize' the Church, establishing the Socola seminary at Iași, publishing liturgical books in Romanian and electing only Romanian bishops.³ Church leaders believed that a strong church was the key to a strong Romanian society. Hieromonk Eufrosin Poteca wrote to the metropolitan in Bucharest from Paris in 1824, asking

Do you really want to raise the Romanian people out of ignorant darkness? Reward the clergy. Without asking a cent from the priests, give a stable position and an honest living to all priests who are able to teach children in the villages, provoking those without education into making themselves worthy of such an income. For so long as the priests remain in their current situation the people have no chance to become enlightened. The priests are the salt and light of the people; if they have lost their saltiness and live in darkness, what will the people be like?⁴

Romanian culture did not mean independence, though. Facing the restrictions placed on them by the Organic Regulation, Moldavian bishops struggled against the attempts of Prince Mihail Sturza to control the Church throughout the 1830s and 1840s.⁵ Romanian priests threw their support behind the revolutionary movements of 1848, praying

Holy liberty,
Who art in Heaven come down to earth,
Hallowed be your name,

² Ionuț Biliuță, "Agenții schimbării": Clerul ortodox din Principatele Române de la regimul feudal la statul național, in *"Ne trebuie oamenii!": Elite intelectuale și transformări istorice în România modernă și contemporană*, ed. Cristian Vasile (Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2017), 45–7.

³ Lucian N. Leustean, 'The Romanian Orthodox Church', in *Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Southeastern Europe*, ed. Lucian N. Leustean (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 104–6.

⁴ Letter, Eufrosin Poteca to Metropolitan Grigorie III, Paris, 15 September 1824. Reproduced in Nicolae Isar, *Biserica-stat-societate în România modernă (1821–1914): Sinteza și culegere de documente* (Bucharest: Editura Universitară, 2014), 82.

⁵ Leustean, 'The Romanian Orthodox Church', 106–11.

Your Kingdom come,
 Your will be done,
 In Romania as it is in France.
 Give us this day the brotherhood we desire,
 Together with justice and unity,
 And break our chains of slavery,
 As we also break the chains of our own slaves,
 And lead us not into quarrels,
 But rescue us from the Barbarian.⁶

The Moldavian Church turned decisively against Istanbul in the two years leading up to the unification of the Romanian principalities in 1859. Whereas the Greek clergy opposed unification and urged the Romanian metropolitans to submit themselves to the leadership of the ecumenical patriarch in Istanbul, Romanian bishops, priests and monks led by Metropolitan Sofronie Miclescu encouraged popular gatherings in support of a Romanian nation-state and argued that the new state deserved its own autocephalous church.⁷

Things did not always go the Church's way after the two principalities united in 1859 into a single Romanian nation-state under the rule of Alexandru Ion Cuza. The government passed a 'Law for the Secularization of the Monasteries' in 1863, declaring that 'all the property of the monasteries of Romania are and remain the property of the state'. It limited salaries of the monks and insisted that the Church could not administer its own funds without going through state officials.⁸ Cuza further marginalized the Greek clergy by making Romanian the official language of the Church and united the metropolitanates of Ungro-Wallachia and Moldavia into one church under a single synod. As Lucian Leustean points out, one implication of making the ROC independent of the ecumenical patriarch was that it was now under Cuza's control.⁹ Cuza decreed that 'the metropolitans and bishops of Romania will be appointed by the ruler following their presentation at the Ministry of Denominations [Ministerul Cultelor], [and] after deliberations by the Council of Ministers'.¹⁰ A handful of bishops protested

⁶ 'Rugăciunea românilor', *Pruncul român* (1848). Reproduced in Isar, *Biserică-stat-societate*, 104.

⁷ Biliuță, 'Agenții schimbării', 49–59; Leustean, 'The Romanian Orthodox Church', 113–15; Isar, *Biserică-stat-societate*, 107–77.

⁸ 'Lege pentru secularizarea averilor mănăstirești (15 Sept 1863)'. Reproduced in Paul Brusanowski, *Stat și Biserică în Vechea Românie între 1821–1925* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2010), 249.

⁹ Lucian N. Leustean, 'The Political Control of Orthodoxy in the Construction of the Romanian State, 1869–1914', *European History Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (2007): 64–5.

¹⁰ 'Lege pentru numirea de mitropoliti și episcopi eparhioți în România (1865)'. Reproduced in Brusanowski, *Stat și Biserică*, 252.

strongly against Cuza's control of the synod. In one pamphlet Neofit Scriban attacked Cuza's supporters 'who all shout: *we have no other emperor than Caesar* and he must be the President of our Church Synod'. 'Not true,' Scriban wrote, 'we have another Emperor – Christ our Lord, the one who brought true liberty and brotherhood'.¹¹ Accused of promoting 'foreign propaganda', Scriban refused his appointment to the synod and retired to a monastery. With a few exceptions, most other Church leaders accepted the changes.¹²

The ROC also supported Cuza's successor, Prince Carol I, who declared in the Constitution of 1866 that 'the Eastern Orthodox religion is the dominant religion of the Romanian state'. Carol's constitution kept Cuza's synod, and the metropolitan-primate was still appointed by the monarch.¹³ Further legislative reforms continued to reduce the autonomy of the ROC during Carol's reign. In 1872 the government limited the number of people eligible to become bishops and metropolitans and decreed that they would now be appointed by an Electoral College that included members of parliament.¹⁴ The result, Leustean notes, was the creation of 'a small circle of people who could be controlled more easily by the regime'.¹⁵ More regulations followed in 1873, reminding priests that they were subject to the civil legal system, introducing new administrative requirements, including an insistence that priests keep a record of their parishioners, preventing lay people from speaking in church and requiring bishops to ensure that 'the clergy preach the word of God in church and teach the people the Orthodox faith, piety, and Christian morals at every appropriate opportunity'.¹⁶ The journal *Biserica Ortodoxa Română* (*The Romanian Orthodox Church*) established by this law became the authoritative voice of the Church in matters of doctrine and politics throughout the twentieth century.¹⁷

Orthodox military chaplains were first introduced by Cuza in 1860, and by 1870 every regiment had its own priest. In 1877 priests were replaced by chaplains permanently attached to specific garrisons and required to accompany soldiers during their campaigns.¹⁸ The ROC threw its support behind the

¹¹ Neofit Scriban, *Apologia Prea Sfințitului Arhiereu D. D. Neofit Scriban, față cu clevetitori Săi din Iași și București: Său răspunsu aceloră ce fac Apoteosa nenorocitului de dinșii Cuza-vodă, pentru falșa independință a Bisericeî Române* (Bucharest: Theodorescu, 1867), 9.

¹² Leustean, 'Political Control of Orthodoxy', 65–7.

¹³ 'Constituție din 1 iunie 1866', *Monitorul oficial*, 1 June 1866, Article 21.

¹⁴ 'Legea sinodală (December 1872)'. Reproduced in Brusanowski, *Stat și Biserică*, 257–60.

¹⁵ Leustean, 'Political Control of Orthodoxy', 70.

¹⁶ 'Regulament pentru disciplina bisericească (1873)'. Reproduced in Brusanowski, *Stat și Biserică*, 267–72.

¹⁷ Alexandru Stănculescu-Bârda, *Bibliografia revistei 'Biserica Ortodoxă Română' (1874–1994)* (Bârda: Editura Cuget Românesc, 2000).

¹⁸ Ursul, 'From Political Freedom to Religious Independence', 222.

Romanian campaign in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 and was rewarded when the ecumenical patriarch recognized it as an autocephalous church in 1885.¹⁹ The declaration of autocephaly represented international acknowledgement of the country's new status as a kingdom (rather than a principality) and followed the Romanians's own symbolic declaration of independence three years earlier when they celebrated the Holy Chrism themselves rather than receiving it from the ecumenical patriarch.²⁰ Autocephaly did little to improve the Church's finances, though, and parish priests struggled to survive only on voluntary contributions from their parishioners. According to a report drawn up by Partenic, the Bishop of Dunării de Jos, 'the Church and our clergy have been left to fate and forced to live off offerings and Christian pity. Poverty and destitution have overwhelmed the Church and hit the family of the priest most heavily, impacting their religion and Christian morals as well as their prestige and honour'.²¹ In 1893 a new law addressed the ROC's financial crisis while bringing it further under state control. Priests now received a monthly state salary of between 50 and 200 lei, depending on their education and whether the parish was urban or rural. The same law restricted the number of urban parishes to 368 and the number of rural parishes to 3,326. New parishes could only be established by royal decree. Priests had to be ethnic Romanians with advanced degrees from Orthodox institutions.²² When the metropolitan-primate objected to the level of state control introduced by this law, he was dismissed.²³ The decision to make parish priests into state employees reflected a firm conviction among politicians that church and state were now inseparable and that the church deserved state funding.²⁴ Another law in 1902 placed the administration of church property under the control of newly formed 'Church Houses' which reported directly to the Minister of Denominations.²⁵ This was followed in 1909 by a law which further regulated how bishops were elected, once again ensuring secular control over church appointments.²⁶

¹⁹ Isar, *Biserică-stat-societate*, 226–41.

²⁰ Leustean, 'Political Control of Orthodoxy', 71.

²¹ Petru Gârboviceanu, *Biserica Ortodoxă și cultele străine din regatul român* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice, 1904), 1.

²² 'Legii clerului mirean și a Seminariilor (1893)'. Reproduced in Brusanowski, *Stat și Biserică*, 273–9.

²³ Leustean, 'Political Control of Orthodoxy', 74.

²⁴ Miron Cristea, 'Biserica Ortodoxă din România și anteproiectul Domnului Ministru S. Haret referitor la reforma sinodală', *Țara noastră*, 15–28 February 1909, 1.

²⁵ 'Lege pentru înființarea și organizarea Casei Sfintei Biserici Autocefale Ortodoxe Române (1902)'. Brusanowski, *Stat și Biserică*, 294–6.

²⁶ Isar, *Biserică-stat-societate*, 271–328.

With the exception of Greece, no other Orthodox church experienced the level of subordination to the state that existed in Romania.²⁷ Contemporary observers such as Nicolae Iorga argued that the Church had entered a period of 'decadence' from the moment it was subordinated to the new nation-state. 'From 1860 until the turn of the century', he claimed, 'our church has been in a period of continual decline because it was not left to fulfil its ecclesiastic functions but was interfered with by the state'.²⁸ Church leaders felt that they had been short-changed by the government despite having done everything possible to accommodate the state and to support the cause of Romanian nationalism. A parish priest by the name of Sebastian Pârvulescu typified this feeling when he argued that 'the Church cannot be accused of any wrong-doing in our national past. ... The representatives of the Church have been permanently submitted and obedient to the rulers of this world whenever those rulers served the popular good'. Nonetheless, Pârvulescu was proud of Orthodoxy's position as the 'state church'. It was, he said, 'a just recognition' of Orthodoxy's role in 'raising and nourishing our people like a small child' until Romania was ready to become a nation-state.²⁹

The problems facing the Church at the beginning of the twentieth century can be seen by counting its priests. Whereas there were 9,702 priests in the Old Kingdom in 1859, by 1904 this number had dropped to 4,998.³⁰ Nor were all of them particularly capable, with many too old to do their jobs but lacking pensions that would allow them to retire. More than ten years after the law required all new priests to have completed higher education, still only 8 per cent of parish priests were properly qualified.³¹ Older priests further complained that introducing diplomas as the primary requirement for the priesthood meant that the Church was attracting individuals who were spiritually unprepared for their role and had only joined the Church for material gain.³² The declining number of priests was particularly obvious because churches were now standing empty. Of the 6,766 church buildings in Romania in 1913, only 56.3 per cent had a priest to hold services in them.³³ Hopeful that things would change after the

²⁷ Brusanowski, *Stat și Biserică*, 99–108.

²⁸ Nicolae Iorga, 'Discursul rostit în Adunarea Deputaților la 23 martie 1909', quoted in *ibid.*, 142.

²⁹ Sebastian Pârvulescu, *Biserica noastră națională în raport cu celelalte confesiuni* (Vălenii de Munte: Tipografia Neamul Românesc, 1911), 34, 39.

³⁰ Lucian N. Leustean, *Orthodoxy in the Cold War: Religion and Political Power in Romania, 1947–65* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 34.

³¹ Gârboviceanu, *Biserica ortodoxă și cultele straine*, li.

³² Un preot de mir, *Chestiuni de discutat* (Pitești: Tipografia Transilvania, 1909).

³³ Brusanowski, *Stat și Biserică*, 244.

First World War, in 1919 the Church asked that the state support its mission, guarantee that the ROC could keep its property and autonomy, provide material and moral support for the education of priests, establish it as a core cultural institution, protect it from political interference and support Orthodox confessional schools.³⁴ In the words of Bishop Ghenadie Niculescu of Buzău, the vision of the Church in the Old Kingdom was of a 'Romanian people', living in a 'standardized state' with 'one church'.³⁵

The Orthodox Church in Transylvania, Bukovina, Bessarabia and the Banat

Other Orthodox churches ministering to Romanian speakers had quite different histories. Transylvania was incorporated into the Habsburg Empire in 1683 following the Ottoman defeat at the Battle of Vienna, profiting from internal squabbles among the nobility and a strategy of compromises designed to win over the Hungarian nobility.³⁶ Although Transylvanians were predominantly Calvinist or Orthodox, the Habsburgs relied on Catholicism to unite their empire. Following several years of negotiations, in 1698 Emperor Leopold I persuaded Metropolitan Atanasie to form the Greek Catholic, or Uniate Church. Greek Catholic priests were to receive the same constitutional status as their Catholic and Protestant counterparts, in return for which they had to recognize the Pope as the head of the Church, use unleavened bread for the Eucharist, acknowledge the existence of purgatory and accept the 'Filioque' clause of the Nicene Creed which stated that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son.³⁷ Not all Orthodox priests agreed with the emperor's proposal, and Transylvania found itself with two very similar churches, only one of which had imperial support. Whereas a clerical elite enjoyed the benefits brought by the Union with Rome, the majority of Romanians clung to Orthodoxy. The Emperor insisted that Transylvanian Romanians now had their own church – a Greek Orthodox one – so he refused to appoint an Orthodox bishop from 1700 until 1761. As Keith Hitchins argues, the discovery that their clergy had changed their religion hit Romanian peasants particularly hard because priests were responsible

³⁴ Maner, *Multikonfessionalität*, 61.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

³⁶ R. J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1550–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 235–72.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 419–24.

for policing the very practices and rituals which bound them together as a community and differentiated them from 'outsiders' such as the Habsburgs. When the 'betrayal' became known, peasants responded with violence. Two of the three peasant rebellions in Transylvania during the eighteenth century were led by monks. The first was triggered by the preaching of a monk from Serbia named Visarion Sarai, whose popularity demonstrated widespread support for Orthodoxy against the Greek Catholic Church. Peasants told imperial officials sent to investigate that they had not known that their priests had converted to Greek Catholicism and they resented it deeply.³⁸ One old man from Sibiu reportedly said,

This coat, which I have on, is mine. But if the empress wished to take it from me, I would give it gladly. I have worked day and night with these old arms and legs and with my whole body to pay the tithe. They belong to the empress, and if she wished to take them from me, I could do nothing. But I have only one soul, which I am keeping for God in heaven, and no earthly power may bend it.³⁹

The Empress Maria Theresa reorganized Transylvanian Orthodoxy in 1779 through a law known as the *Rescriptu declaratoriu*. She placed the Church firmly under state control, limited the number of priests allowed in each region, demanded higher education for all clergy and introduced lay participation in church governance.⁴⁰ These reforms also gave bishops greater independence from their metropolitans, which turned out to be a blessing for Romanian nationalists when Emperor Joseph II subordinated the Orthodox Church in Transylvania to the Metropolitanate of Karlowitz in 1783. The rise of modern nationalism increasingly encouraged the Karlowitz metropolitanate to see itself as a vehicle for Serbian national interests, even if secular Serbian nationalists still believed that the church was too closely allied with the emperor to be an effective advocate for their cause.⁴¹ The first two Orthodox bishops of Transylvania under the new system were Serbian, and the first Romanian to hold the position was Vasile Moga, who was appointed in 1810 after the office had been vacant for fourteen years. Moga worked steadily to represent Romanian interests to the

³⁸ Keith Hitchins, 'Religion and Rumanian National Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century Transylvania', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 57, no. 2 (1979), 234.

³⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*, 229.

⁴⁰ Nicolae Bocșan, 'Nation et confession en Transylvanie au XIXe siècle. Le cas de la Métropole roumaine', in *Ethnie et confession en Transylvanie (du XIIIe au XIXe siècles)*, ed. Nicolae Bocșan, Ioan Lumperdean and Ioan-Aurel Pop (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Fundația Culturală Română, 1996), 103–4.

⁴¹ Aleksov, *Religious Dissent*, 37–41.

emperor. He encouraged his priests to preach regular sermons and to build schools and churches. A chronic lack of money hindered his efforts, which were redoubled by his successor, Andrei Țaguna.

Romanians had no constitutional status within the empire and Habsburg law stated that only the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic bishops could represent them before the emperor. As the spokespeople for the Romanian people, Țaguna as the Orthodox bishop, and his Greek Catholic counterpart, Archbishop Alexandru Țterca Șuluțiu, found themselves catapulted to the forefront of the Romanian national movement when revolution broke out in 1848. Țaguna distinguished himself as a talented politician and a tenacious advocate for the Romanian cause despite constant tensions with the lay intellectuals who chafed at having a bishop at the head of what they thought should have been a secular movement. Țaguna consistently argued in favour of a Romanian alliance with the emperor against Hungarian ambitions, a conservative stance that won him few friends inside the national movement and ultimately failed when the court in Vienna abandoned the Romanians in order to compromise with the Hungarians. His efforts to promote Romanian interests nonetheless encouraged many to view the Orthodox Church as a core part of the national movement and of Romanian national identity.⁴²

Țaguna also fought to improve the reputation of his Church. He wrote to his superior that 'our Church is completely disorganized and drags everyone down with it because the priests (and even more the protopopes) are completely blinded by personal interests.'⁴³ As bishop he increased the education levels of his parish priests, reorganized the seminary at Sibiu and established a church newspaper known as *Telegraful român* (*The Romanian Telegraph*). Lay involvement became a central pillar of the Transylvanian church following the *Organic Statute of the Romanian Orthodox Church of Transylvania* of 1868, which built on the *Rescriptu declaratoriu* by enshrining synods as the core feature of church government. Synods were introduced at every level of the church hierarchy, and a third of their members were clergy while two-thirds

⁴² Keith Hitchins, *Orthodoxy and Nationality: Andrei Țaguna and the Rumanians of Transylvania, 1846–1873* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977); Johann Schneider, *Der Hermannstädter Metropolit Andrei von Țaguna: Reform und Erneuerung der orthodoxen Kirche in Siebenbürgen und Ungarn nach 1848* (Köln: Böhlau, 2005), 34–114.

⁴³ Andrei Țaguna to Joseph Rajačić, quoted in *Rumänisch-orthodoxe Kirchenordnungen 1786–2008: Siebenbürgen—Bukowina—Rumänien*, ed. Paul Brusanowski, Ulrich A. Wien and Karl W. Schwarz (Köln: Böhlau, 2011), 19.

were laymen.⁴⁴ This model continued to evolve over the following decades. It ensured that parish priests had a viable income and placed the administration of local churches under parish committees and synods which were required to keep detailed financial accounts. A strong believer in the importance of lay participation in the church, Șaguna also oversaw the printing of an updated Romanian translation of the Bible and encouraged the British and Foreign Bible Society to distribute literature within Transylvania.⁴⁵ The church he left behind upon his death in 1873 was one that placed great importance on the education of priests, which had its own distinctive voice in public affairs, and which was proudly associated with the Romanian national movement.

When Liviu Stan articulated a theology of lay Christianity in 1939 he evoked a tradition of lay leadership in the Transylvanian Orthodox Church dating back to the late 1860s, in which laypeople made up two-thirds of every ecclesiastical administrative body.⁴⁶ The Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna had intended lay involvement in the Church as a way of providing political representation to the otherwise disenfranchised Transylvanian Romanians, and Ionuț Biliuță argues that Șaguna's reforms represented the beginning 'of a consciously shaped nationalistic "political Orthodoxy" in order to mobilize the Orthodox intellectuals and clergymen around the same nationalist ideas.'⁴⁷ Stan was an active member of the Legion of the Archangel Michael during the 1930s, and he explicitly drew on both Șaguna's heritage and the example of Catholic Action as the inspirations for involving laypeople in a politicized, nationalist approach to Orthodoxy in a way that resonated with Vartolomeu Stănescu's version of Social Christianity.⁴⁸

Șaguna campaigned for several decades to establish Transylvania as a separate metropolitanate independent of Serbian control and finally achieved his goal in 1864, also incorporating two related dioceses – one in Arad and the other in Caransebeș.⁴⁹ The bishopric of Bukovina followed suit in 1873, becoming

⁴⁴ 'Verfassung der Griechisch-Orientalisch-Romanischen Kirche (1868)', in *Rumänisch-orthodoxe Kirchenordnungen*, ed. Brusanowski, Wien, and Schwarz, 40–97.

⁴⁵ Schneider, *Der Hermannstädter Metropolit*, 115–41.

⁴⁶ Schneider, *Der Hermannstädter Metropolit Andrei von Șaguna*, 200–4; Paul Brusanowski, *Reforma constituțională din Biserica Ortodoxă a Transilvaniei între 1850–1925* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2007), 15–34, 194–207.

⁴⁷ Ionuț Biliuță, 'Rejuvenating Orthodox Missionarism among the Laymen: The Romanian Orthodox Fellowship in Transylvania', *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai. Theologia Orthodoxa* 62, no. 2 (2017): 24.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 21–38.

⁴⁹ Andreea Dăncilă-Ineoan, Marius Eppel and Ovidiu-Emil Iudean, *Voices of the Churches, Voices of the Nationalities: Competing Loyalties in the Upper House of the Hungarian Parliament (1867–1918)* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2019), 78–9.

its own metropolitanate with its seat in (Austrian) Czernowitz despite Șaguna's insistence that it should have been incorporated into (Hungarian) Transylvania. The Habsburgs had formally annexed Bukovina in 1775 and introduced an Episcopal Council in 1786 to oversee church matters.⁵⁰ The Episcopal Council was reorganized in 1869, after Bukovina became part of Cisleithania, the Austrian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Whereas the Transylvanian church was heavily shaped by lay governance and enjoyed a relative degree of autonomy, the Metropolitanate of Bukovina was under the direct control of the bishop, and above him the emperor, without significant input from protopopes, parish priests, or lay people.⁵¹ A protest meeting of 2,000 leading Romanians in 1870 demanded that the government stop using Romanian taxes to subsidize other churches, stop postponing the Church Congress and allow lay Christians to elect their own bishops. Their requests were opposed by the Bishop of Bukovina, Eugenie Hacman, who disapproved of democratizing the Church, and the emperor used Hacman's opposition as an excuse for even listening to the demands of the Romanian delegation when it tried to present its demands.⁵² Hacman was rewarded for his loyalty to the empire by becoming the first metropolitan of Bukovina three years later. Bukovinian Orthodoxy also included large number of ethnic Ruthenians. Moga and Șaguna had seen the Church as a vehicle for Romanian national ambitions because almost all Orthodox Christians in Transylvania were ethnic Romanians, but the multi-ethnic character of Bukovina meant that the national movements there took on a more secular character.⁵³

Ethnic Romanians in Bessarabia mostly worshipped within the Russian Orthodox Church after Tsar Alexander I annexed the region in 1812, and its hierarchy was dominated by Russians until the late nineteenth century. It, too, was effectively a branch of the state, with parishes functioning as state administrative units, and lay people being expected to attend church without involving themselves in its business in other ways.⁵⁴ The Russians in Bessarabia did allow some Romanian features to continue and provided the Bessarabian church with its own administrative structure. The archbishop's word was law, however, and when he carried out a series of ecclesiastical reforms in 1872,

⁵⁰ *Rumänisch-orthodoxe Kirchenordnungen*, ed. Brusanowski, Wien and Scharzet, 208–59.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 197, 260–77; Maner, *Multikonfessionalität*, 44.

⁵² Paul Brusanowski, *Autonomia și constituționalismul în dezbaterile privind unificarea Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (1919–1925)* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2007), 43.

⁵³ Maner, *Multikonfessionalität*, 45.

⁵⁴ Shevzov, *Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of Revolution*, 16–27.

Archbishop Pavel Lebedev explained to the congress that it was 'obliged to implement my proposals precisely'.⁵⁵

Romanians increasingly received more freedom to worship in their own language towards the end of the nineteenth century. In 1900 the Orthodox Missionary Brotherhood of the Lord's Birth, established by Bishop Iacob Piatnițki of Chișinău and Hotin, began distributing religious brochures and pamphlets in Romanian, which helped cultivate Romanian national identity as much as it did souls. Piatnițki's successor Vladimir introduced Romanian as the language of instruction at the seminary in Chișinău. Nonetheless, Orthodox priests still complained that limited access to religious services in Romanian was encouraging people to turn to Inochentism and Repenter Christianity.⁵⁶ The Russian revolution of 1905 helped spread democratic and national ideas within the Bessarabian church, which became increasingly decentralized, with parish priests playing a greater role in its governance than they ever had before. Change was slow, however, and when Gurie Grosu began advocating for the Romanian national movement by establishing a printing press and a church newspaper in Romanian he was sent to a monastery in Smolensk – almost 700 miles away.⁵⁷ The legacy of 1905 nonetheless endured and bore fruit in wide-ranging democratic reforms in 1917. The Russian Sobor of 1917 involved large numbers of lay people in church governance for the first time. Led by their ethnically Russian archbishops, most priests in the region did not want their church to join the ROC in March 1918.⁵⁸

In Transylvania Șaguna's immediate successor as metropolitan, Miron Romanul, struggled against a strong opposition in the Synod led by a vicar named Nicolae Popea who played a leading role in the Romanian National Committee. Romanul responded to attempts by the Romanian National Committee to use the Church for its own ends by establishing the more moderate Romanian Constitutional Party and by staunchly defending the Church's autonomy from the national movement. A stalemate developed with Popea's supporters controlling the Synod and the Archdiocesan Council, and the metropolitan dragging his feet to implement their decisions.⁵⁹ Romanul was replaced by Ion Mețianu in 1899, who demanded sweeping reforms of the church administration and used a heavy hand to ensure professionalism among the clergy.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Brusanowski, *Autonomia și constituționalismul*, 63.

⁵⁶ Vasile Pocitan, *Biserica românească din Basarabia* (Bucharest: Tipografia Albert Baer, 1914).

⁵⁷ Brusanowski, *Autonomia și constituționalismul*, 71.

⁵⁸ Veronica Boldișor, *File din viața unei biserici și a unui mitropolit* (Chișinău: Pontos, 2014), 38.

⁵⁹ Hitchins, *Orthodoxy and Nationality*, 232–7.

In addition to the demands of the Romanian national movement, Romanul and Mețianu had to deal with repeated attempts by the Hungarian state to control church affairs. A civil marriage law passed in 1895 moved authority from the Church to the state. While the Catholic Church was able to mount a vehement opposition to the legislation, the Orthodox had to repeatedly back down to avoid accusations of irredentism.⁶⁰ Orthodox interpolations in Hungarian political debates were consistently framed in terms of loyalty to the state. In a speech from 1894, for example, Mețianu opposed a law on the free exercise of religion on the grounds that

Not all the citizens of the homeland live in well regulated conditions, not all of them are blessed, grateful and thankful. There are citizens, maybe even the majority of citizens, who are unhappy with their fate, who are poor, and needful and embittered, people who are heavily tried and who no longer know where to seek help and relief, and thus they seek the empathy of the Church, they appeal with faith to the mercy of God, faith which alone is capable of encouraging people to accept their own mortal fate.⁶¹

Only the Church, Mețianu suggested, had the moral authority to keep Romanians loyal to the Hungarian state, so the government would do well to agree to its demands. Despite the Transylvanian clergy being better educated and better organized than their counterparts in Romania, low salaries made the priesthood an uninviting career choice and many parishes found themselves without priests.⁶² The Hungarian state began paying Orthodox clergy a regular stipend from 1898 onwards, but administered these salaries in ways that many priests considered discriminatory and unfair, including reserving the right to deny salaries to priests suspected of promoting Romanian nationalism.⁶³ 'While the government offers a small financial allowance with one hand', Mețianu noted, 'with the other hand it claims for itself the right of great interferences into the autonomy of the confessions.'⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Dăncilă-Ineoan, Eppel, and Iudean, *Voices of the Churches*, 91–106.

⁶¹ Ioan Mețianu at the House of Magnates assembly meeting, 3 October 1894, quoted in *ibid.*, 125.

⁶² Brusanowski, *Reforma constituțională*, 15–34, 194–207.

⁶³ Mircea Păcurariu, *The Policy of the Hungarian State Concerning the Romanian Church in Transylvania Under the Dual Monarchy 1867–1918* (Bucharest: Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1986), 82–8; Keith Hitchins, *A Nation Affirmed: The Romanian National Movement in Transylvania 1860/1914* (Bucharest: The Encyclopaedic Publishing House, 1999), 186–9.

⁶⁴ Ioan Mețianu at the House of Magnates assembly meeting, 7 June 1898, quoted in Dăncilă-Ineoan et al., *Voices of the Churches*, 135.

Dissatisfaction about the Orthodox Church's treatment by the state also extended to confessional schooling. Whereas most schools in Transylvania had been run by churches in Şaguna's day, three reforms between 1876 and 1907 demanded higher qualifications for teachers and introduced Magyar language and literature as core subjects in all schools. They brought ever-increasing state control over Church schools with them. More than half of the Romanian Orthodox schools closed in the wake of the 1907 reforms because they were unable to sustain themselves without government funding and the Hungarian government would not pay for schools that did not teach Hungarian.⁶⁵ Romanian demands for greater autonomy were tightly policed during the late nineteenth century and priests were among those tried and imprisoned for engaging in 'anti-state' propaganda.⁶⁶ Their trials and tribulations bolstered popular support for the Church, which thus became strongly associated with the national cause.

Nation-building in Greater Romania

Ion Meţianu died in January 1916, shortly before Romania entered the First World War as an enemy of Austria-Hungary. He was succeeded by Vasile Mangra, who distinguished himself during his two years as metropolitan by collaborating closely with the Hungarian government. Metropolitan Vasile Mangra was on his deathbed when the war ended in November 1918. The National Romanian Central Council, which represented Transylvania's Romanians at this time, included the Bishop of Arad, Ioan I. Pop, the Bishop of Caransebeş, Miron Cristea, and the Greek Catholic Bishop Iuliu Hossu. The Council called for a National Assembly and Cristea was among those who presented the Resolution of the Assembly to King Ferdinand I, incorporating Transylvania into Romania on 1 December 1918.⁶⁷ In a prayer during the ceremony at Alba Iulia, he prayed:

Lord our God. You are our Father. You saw the distress of our parents and you heard their cries, for they had become as flowers covered in frost – their souls bent waiting to be crushed and their bodies pressed against the earth. You have fulfilled among us that which you promised in ages past: I will break your yoke and I will burst your bonds, I will gather you from the peoples, and assemble you

⁶⁵ Hitchins, *A Nation Affirmed*, 197–220; Paul Brusanowski, *Învăţământul confesional ortodox din Transilvania între anii 1848–1918: Între exigenţele statului centralizat şi principiile autonomiei bisericeşti* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2005).

⁶⁶ Păcurariu, *The Policy of the Hungarian State*, 88–212.

⁶⁷ Constantin I. Stan, *Patriarhul Miron Cristea: o viaţă, un destin* (Bucharest: Editura Paideia, 2009), 145–72; Petcu, *Guvernarea Miron Cristea*, 124–131.

out of the countries where you have been scattered. I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Yes Lord, you who loose those bound with fetters and raise up those who are cast down, with your help we have won the war with rejoicing and driven out the children of insolence. You have saved us, your people, and the salvation of our God is seen to the ends of the earth.⁶⁸

Cristea saw Romanians as God's chosen people, to whom all of the promises made to the people of Israel now applied.⁶⁹ He believed that they were oppressed and that the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was a divine judgement. As he reminded his listeners, 'the way of sinners is paved with smooth stones, but at its end is the pit of Hades.'⁷⁰ He outlined an expansive vision that involved the extension of Romanian territory as far as Romanian speakers could be found: 'Remind us Lord of our brothers [still] in slavery, show them mercy and give them compassion for those who enslaved them.' Romanian control of Transylvania was not internationally recognized at this time, and the country was still waiting anxiously to learn how its claims to the Banat, Crișana, Bukovina and Bessarabia would be received at the peace conferences. The implication that Romanians had now come into possession of their Promised Land caused Cristea to pray that God might 'make straight our paths and our actions that we might live in this land'. We shall never know whether he had in mind the other injunction to given to the people of Israel when they entered Canaan – 'as for the towns of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, you must not let anything that breathes remain alive' (Deuteronomy 20:16) – but over the next twenty years Cristea pursued a consistent policy of denying rights to any who were not Romanian Orthodox and at the end of his life he presided over the initial stages of the destruction of Romanian Jewry.⁷¹

Appointed metropolitan-primate of the Romanian Orthodox Church in February 1920, Cristea threw his support behind the state's nation-building projects. Inflation was a major problem after the war and the government issued bonds in 1920 to help rebuild infrastructure destroyed by the war.⁷² Cristea

⁶⁸ Quoted in Stan, *Patriarhul Miron Cristea*, 155.

⁶⁹ In addition to numerous Biblical allusions, Cristea here quoted directly from Isaiah 1:26, Jeremiah 2:20 and Ezekiel 11:17.

⁷⁰ Here Cristea was quoting from Sirach 21:10.

⁷¹ Ion Popa, 'Miron Cristea, the Romanian Orthodox Patriarch: His Political and Religious Influence in Deciding the Fate of the Romanian Jews (February 1938–March 1939)', *Yad Vashem Studies* 40, no. 2 (2012): 11–34.

⁷² Bogdan Murgescu, *România și Europa: Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500–2010)* (Iași: Polirom, 2010), 223.

ordered that 'it is the duty of all Very Reverend Deans and Priests and all church organs to carry out the most extensive patriotic propaganda in support of this loan.'⁷³ State- and nation-building took pride of place in Cristea's writings during this period. He instructed priests to

use every opportunity to awaken and develop healthy thinking in the minds of the people about communal obligations and citizenship. [To] make the pastorate into an element of order, submission, love for country and throne, a force for the cultivation of the soil, for the exercising of trades, ready to give to the country all the tributes and sacrifices necessary for ensuring its existence and continual progress.⁷⁴

Worried about the spread of communism, he issued circulars calling on people to support the government and not to listen to those 'false prophets' who had already brought revolution to Russia.⁷⁵ The state took full advantage of the Church's support and asked priests to teach their parishioners to stop stealing telephone wires and vandalizing the electrical boxes 'because it is costing the state a lot of money'.⁷⁶

As Irina Livezeanu has shown, the process of integrating the new provinces involved standardizing and centralizing state administration, imposing the norms and values of the Old Kingdom on to the new provinces, each of which had its own traditions and functionaries.⁷⁷ The government turned to Orthodox priests as potential agents in the state's centralization efforts. The Church responded enthusiastically, offering a 'cultural programme' and promising to collaborate closely with teachers in promoting official policies.⁷⁸ One article from *Biserica și școala* (*Church and School*) argued that 'without its cultural mission, the Romanian Orthodox Church, like many of the Oriental churches, becomes a contemplative, purely dogmatic institution eternally involved in the consecration of its denomination [*cult*] in the most perfect forms, but without any connection with real life. But Christ's church is a living institution, and Christianity is a real part of the culture.'⁷⁹ Involvement in education also

⁷³ Miron Cristea, 'Către iubitul cler și popor din Arhiepiscopia Ungro-Vlahiei', in ANIC, Fond Miron Cristea, Dosar 3/1920, f. 11.

⁷⁴ Miron Cristea, Circular 642/7 February 1922, in ANIC, Fond Miron Cristea, Dosar 3/1920, f. 67.

⁷⁵ Circular 1461/1920, in ANIC, Fond Miron Cristea, Dosar 3/1920, ff. 12–15.

⁷⁶ ANIC, Fond MCA, Dosar 2/1921, f. 52.

⁷⁷ Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

⁷⁸ Letter, Consistorul Eparhial Ortodox, Cluj, to the Minister of Education, 22 August 1922, ANIC, Fond Ministerul Instrucțiunii, Dosar 29/1922, f. 60.

⁷⁹ 'Școala confesională, *Biserica și școala*, 1919, 1.

allowed the ROC to influence what was being taught in schools. In an address to the Romanian Orthodox Society in 1911, the renowned geographer Simion Mehedinți had argued that the Church must be given control of public education lest young people believe that science and religion were incompatible.⁸⁰ In 1922 the archdiocese of Alba-Iulia and Sibiu published a circular instructing 'all teachers of every specialty to work harmoniously and consistently to develop theist ideas – Christian and Orthodox – in students.' 'Religion,' they explained, 'should be the primary focus of all education.'⁸¹

Standardizing education was particularly difficult in the new territories, and state-building was simultaneously a nationalizing process aimed at imposing the culture of the Old Kingdom on ethnic minority populations.⁸² Teachers from minority groups in Bukovina who had taught under the Austro-Hungarian system, for example, found it hard to adapt to Romanian requirements, sometimes refusing to celebrate Romanian commemorations for war heroes or Orthodox religious holidays when both they and their students were Roman Catholics who had fought against Romania during the war.⁸³ Ethnicity was not always clear-cut. Slovak students attended Polish schools and German students attended Hungarian schools depending on which had been more easily available under the Austro-Hungarians. The state was quick to reduce teaching staff as soon as the number of students at any given minority school dropped.⁸⁴ School inspectors from the Old Kingdom found much to criticize in schools from the provinces. A school inspector in Târnava Mare county reported in 1922 that 'Romanian education is as bad as possible. The old oppressive spirit dominates the atmosphere.' He recommended that 'to bring the new current of spiritual regeneration into these schools, to bring new ideas of education and teaching we will need new people, young and well-qualified teachers.'⁸⁵ The Ministry of Education agreed, sending both books and personnel to the provinces to replace existing staff.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ Simion Mehedinți, *Pentru biserica noastră* (Bucharest: Tipografia Gutenberg, 1911).

⁸¹ ANIC, Fond Ministerul Instrucțiunii, Dosar 310/1923, ff. 207–9.

⁸² Mariana Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung der Bukowina: Die Durchsetzung des nationalstaatlichen Anspruchs Grossrumäniens 1918–1944* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001), 12, 344.

⁸³ Report, Directoratul General pentru Bucovina to the Minister of Education, Cernăuți, 26 December 1922, ANIC, Fond Ministerul Instrucțiunii, Dosar 310/1923, ff. 4–6.

⁸⁴ ANIC, Fond Ministerul Instrucțiunii, Dosar 310/1923, ff. 4–6, 33–7.

⁸⁵ Report, Revizor Școlar to the Minister of Education, August 1922, ANIC, Fond Ministerul Instrucțiunii, Dosar 29/1922, ff. 61–2.

⁸⁶ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, 35–48; Alberto Basciani, *La Difficile Unione: La Bessarabia e La Grande Romania, 1918–1940* (Rome: Aracne, 2007), 166–7.

Seminaries were just as susceptible to regional chauvinism as primary schools. When the University Senate in Iași approved the application for a new theological faculty in Chișinău, for example, it noted that 'Bessarabia needs a superior cultural institute which is not to be only a centre for theoretical learning but also a place which radiates Romanian culture to the great masses of Moldavian people beyond the Prut River'.⁸⁷ The hiring committee argued that no one currently teaching in Bessarabia was sufficiently qualified and insisted that the new professors be 'elements of national propaganda'.⁸⁸ At the same time, however, the ROC was willing to bend the rules about qualifications when it came to other provinces. When it was discovered that most priests in Dobruja were ethnic Bulgarians they passed a special law dropping the qualification requirements for any Romanian priests willing to move there.⁸⁹

Part of the ROC's willingness to concede the closure of confessional schools despite strong opposition from Nicolae Bălan can be attributed to Cristea's close relationship with the National Liberal Party. Most of the prominent Romanian politicians from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire organized themselves into the Romanian National Party after the war, establishing themselves as the representatives of Transylvania in Greater Romania. In 1919 they entered into an alliance with Ion Mihalache's Peasant Party to form a government, thus breaking the National Liberals' long-standing monopoly on power. The shaky alliance held sporadically until 1926 when the two parties officially merged.⁹⁰ Transylvanian politicians thus placed themselves in clear opposition to the established political elite from the Old Kingdom, represented by the National Liberal Party. Confident that Cristea would support their cause, they requested his presence in the Senate whenever an important vote was about to take place.⁹¹ The relationship did not last long. Cristea attracted the ire of his old supporters when he formed a close working relationship with the Liberal Prime Minister Ionel Brătianu in 1921 with the intention, he said, of helping the Liberals gain support in Transylvania.⁹²

Over the next few years the government consistently appointed hierarchs with Liberal sympathies and who were embedded in Liberal patronage networks.⁹³

⁸⁷ Meeting of the University Senate of Iași, 10 October 1926, ANIC – Iași, Fond Universitatea A. I. Cuza, Rectoratul, Dosar 1122/1926, f. 37.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 27.

⁸⁹ ANIC, Fond MCA, Dosar 9/1924, f. 13, and Dosar 109/1925, ff. 115–16.

⁹⁰ Keith Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866–1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 386–95.

⁹¹ ANIC, Fond MCA, Dosar 2/1921, f. 63v.

⁹² Miron Cristea, *Note ascunse: Însemnări personale (1895–1937)* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1999), 55.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 147.

The National Peasantists, in turn, came to be seen as a party affiliated with the Greek Catholic Church.⁹⁴ Angry at what he saw as Cristea's betrayal, his former patron Octavian Goga turned against him, writing that Cristea

lacked first and foremost a clear religious belief. In every one of his roles his life betrayed not only a complete absence of any thirst for God, but also an incontestable frivolity that is profoundly disagreeable. He lacks any serious cultural orientation which might have allowed him to cover up his moral failings through intellectual aptitude. His only saving graces were a good-looking appearance and an undeniable aptitude as a provincial orator.⁹⁵

Brătianu's patronage nonetheless paid dividends. When Cristea moved into the metropolitan's residence he found it dirty and dilapidated, so he donated the building to the Society for the Graves of War Heroes and convinced the government to build him a new official residence.⁹⁶

Regional tensions and a new patriarchate

The ROC now had to incorporate the other Orthodox churches from the new provinces, each with its own customs, traditions and laws, into a central administration.⁹⁷ The challenge, as Valer Moldovan pointed out in 1921, was that

the Metropolitanate of Ardeal as it is organized today under Șaguna's *Organic Statutes*, is an example of the more advanced autonomous and constitutional organizations, while the Church of the Old Kingdom is a model of a state church [*o biserică etatizată*], of a church subjugated to the state, completely lacking any sort of constitutional organization in a democratic and representative sense.

The Church in Bukovina was 'a state church ... subordinated to a foreign state power', and in Bessarabia the Church was 'under foreign control as a nation and country but of the same Orthodox laws'.⁹⁸ As a Transylvanian, Moldovan's

⁹⁴ Maner, *Multikonfessionalitate*, 106, 121.

⁹⁵ Octavian Goga, 'Însemnări zilnice. Jurnal politic, 31 March 1931', quoted in Gheorghe I. Bodea, 'Cuvânt înainte', in Elie Miron Cristea, *Note ascunse: Însemnări personale (1895–1937)* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1999), 23.

⁹⁶ Cristea, *Note ascunse*, 84–5.

⁹⁷ *Proiect de Statut Organic pentru organizarea Bisericii Autocefale Ortodoxe Române* (Bucharest: Tipografia Cărilor Bisericești, 1921) in ANIC, Fond MCA, Dosar 2/1921, ff. 81–106.

⁹⁸ Valer Moldovan, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română și problema unificării: Studiu de drept bisericesc* (Cluj: Ardealul Institut de Arte Grafice, 1921), 6, 130, 146.

solution was that the ROC as a whole adopt the organizational model of the Transylvanian church.⁹⁹ Florian Kühner-Wielach has noted that the idea that the Old Kingdom should follow Transylvanian leadership was widespread among Transylvanian elites. They believed, he writes, that although 'national freedom gave the Old Kingdom the potential for a higher level of *cultural* development, this was compensated for by the *civilizational* head start of the former Habsburg regions'.¹⁰⁰

The government attempted to unilaterally write the unification of the Church into law in February 1920 but was forced to withdraw the proposal a few days later in the face of spirited protests from representatives of the new provinces.¹⁰¹ Led by Nicolae Bălan, the Transylvanians had advocated for importing their ecclesiastical model into the ROC since 1919, and they now elected Bălan as Metropolitan of Ardeal on a platform of resisting any centralization of the Church that did not preserve the Transylvanian model.¹⁰² In early 1921 the Transylvanian legal expert Lucian Borgia declared that the autonomy the Church had enjoyed in Austria-Hungary was still legally binding and that therefore the Romanian state had no legal right to impose a new structure on the Church. With the support of the Bessarabians, the Transylvanians insisted that they should maintain their own governmental structures unchanged, effectively declaring their autonomy to govern themselves within the ROC.¹⁰³ In Bessarabia the Church elected its own archbishop in an extraordinary congress that included both clerical and lay representatives but which did not have the legal backing of the ROC. The new archbishop, Gurie Grosu, declared that this level of democracy should characterize the Bessarabian church from this point on. 'We want to keep these institutions and practices and to introduce them into Greater Romania as well', he promised.¹⁰⁴ Few politicians or church leaders from the Old Kingdom agreed. They insisted on shaping the entire ROC in their own image, just as they had the schools, the military and other state institutions. Miron Cristea explained that the ROC needed a 'tempered autonomy' unlike the more democratic Transylvanian and Bessarabian systems.¹⁰⁵ For their part, the

⁹⁹ Ibid., 155–6.

¹⁰⁰ Kühner-Wielach, *Siebenbürgen ohne Siebenbürger?*, 353.

¹⁰¹ Brusanowski, *Autonomia și constituționalismul*, 113–16; Nicolae Bălan, *Chestiunea bisericească din România și autonomia bisericii noastre* (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, 1910); Nicolae Bălan, *Cuvântări rostite cu ocazia alegerii, sfințirii și investiturii* (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, 1921).

¹⁰² Brusanowski, *Autonomia și constituționalismul*, 73–92, 117–43.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 217–55.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 16–19.

¹⁰⁵ Brunsanowski, *Reforma constituțională*, 287.

Bukovinians advocated a slow process of integration that preserved both local autonomy from the Holy Synod and kept the state from interfering in church business, but were quite willing for the metropolitan-primate in Bucharest to dominate church governance.¹⁰⁶

After months of tense negotiations, church-state relations were ultimately defined by the 1923 constitution. Ionel Brătianu appointed Cristea to the committee that drafted the constitution, along with Vartolomeu Stănescu, the Bishop of Râmnicului Noului Severin, who was there at Cristea's request. Stănescu had been Cristea's rival for the position of metropolitan-primate in 1919 and the two men did not always get along, but he was the only Church leader who openly argued for 'removing the church from under the administration of the state'.¹⁰⁷ Whereas Church leaders such as Cristea preferred to speak of Tradition when negotiating Church-state relations, Stănescu was a sociologist by training, having studied under Émile Durkheim in Paris. Stănescu characterized the state as an arena for political squabbles, but believed that the Church's mission was 'to lay the foundations of the Kingdom of God in this part of the visible world'. That involves, he said, 'refashioning each and every Christian through the power of faith and the moral purification of his life, building the true faith and the most sublime virtues in the spiritual man, which involves ... self-control and denying oneself for one's neighbour'.¹⁰⁸ He argued that the Church needed to be free 'from the tutelage of a state which, through its natural incompetence in holy things takes the clergy away from the service of Christ and places them entirely in the service of moral opportunism and of deviant modern materialism such as party politics'.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, Stănescu thought that an English-style separation of Church and state was impossible in Romania, where 'the two are united as in one being', such that 'the state represents the body for the nation, with its organic needs and strengths, and the Orthodox Church the soul'.¹¹⁰ Although he claimed to dislike the idea that one church might be 'privileged' over others by having its leaders sit in parliament and being represented at official occasions, he argued

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 145–58.

¹⁰⁷ Vartolomeu Stănescu, 'Principiile pe cari va avea să se întemeieze autonomia Bisericii Ortodoxe de Răsărit în Regatul Român', *Arhiva pentru drept şi politică* (1919), reproduced in Stănescu, *Puterile sociale*, 220.

¹⁰⁸ Vartolomeu Stănescu, 'Rostul în lume al Bisericii lui Hristos: Cuvântare rostită cu prilejul Congresului Preoţesc Oltean al Societăţii "Renaşterea" ţinut la Turnu Severin în ziua de 7 Octombrie 1930', in Vartolomeu Stănescu, *În lumina cuvântului* (Râmnicu Vâlcea: Editura Sfântul Antim Ivireanul, 2013), 14.

¹⁰⁹ C. 'În jurul alegerii mitropolitului primat. Convorbire cu P. S. Arhiepiscopul Vartolomeu Băcăoanul', *Dacia* 2, no. 27 (1920): 1, quoted in Raiu, *Democraţie şi statolatrie*, 98.

¹¹⁰ Stănescu, 'Principiile pe cari va avea', in Stănescu, *Puterile sociale*, 199.

that Orthodoxy was so deeply embedded in the Romanian nation-state that the dominant status of the ROC was there to stay.¹¹¹

Miron Cristea, on the other hand, was comfortable with state oversight of the Church. In a seminal pamphlet from 1920, he argued that 'the Romanian Orthodox Church has the duty not only to recognize, but to allow and even require that the state and the crown have the right to control and oversee all church administrative affairs in all contexts regardless of their nature and importance'.¹¹² According to Cristea, his main disagreement with Brătianu over the constitution was that, whereas the prime minister wanted to say that 'the Orthodox Church is the religion of the majority of Romanians', Cristea insisted on the phrase 'the dominant church'. Brătianu then suggested describing both the Romanian Orthodox and the Greek Catholic Churches as 'dominant', but Cristea replied that to call the Greek Catholic Church a national church was impossible so long as they acknowledged a foreigner, the Pope, as their head. The ROC also asked to be allowed to regulate its own activities and administer its own businesses, cultural activities and foundations just as the other major churches in the country did. Brătianu objected that this would mean 'autonomy', and pointed out that Archbishop Gurie Grosu had been allowing his priests to speak Russian and had been using Church funds inappropriately.¹¹³ Cristea promised that he would discipline his subordinates properly, and with these promises the ROC was given more autonomy in its own administration.¹¹⁴

Article 22 of the Constitution read:

Freedom of conscience is absolute. The state guarantees this freedom and protection to all denominations so long as its exercise does not affect public order, good behaviour, and the laws of the state. The Christian Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches are Romanian churches. The Romanian Orthodox Church, being the religion of the great majority of Romanians, is the dominant church in the Romanian state; and the Greek Catholic Church has primacy over other denominations. The Orthodox Church is and remains autonomous of any

¹¹¹ Raiu, *Democrație și statolatrie*, 300–24.

¹¹² Miron Cristea, *Principii fundamentale pentru organizarea unitară a BOR din regatul român* (1920), quoted in Brusanowski, *Autonomia și constituționalismul*, 102.

¹¹³ Grosu was actually an ardent Romanian nationalist and 97 per cent of priests in the episcopate were Romanian speakers, but Bessarabian churches had maintained elements of the Russian liturgy because of their musical appeal to the population. *Anuarul Episcopiei Chișinăului și Hotinului (Basarabia)* (n.p.: n.p., 1922), iv; Simion Moraru, 'Organizarea slujbelor și a cîntării bisericești în timpul Mitropolitului Gurie al Basarabiei', in *Mitropolitul Gurie: Misiunea de credință și cultură*, ed. Silvia Grossu (Chișinău: Epigraf, 2007), 96.

¹¹⁴ Cristea, *Note ascunse*, 67–78.

foreign hierarchy, while retaining unity with the Eastern Ecumenical Church in matters of dogma. The Christian Orthodox Church will have a unitary organization in the entire Kingdom of Romania, with the participation of all its constitutive elements, lay and clerical. A special law will establish the fundamental principles of this organizational unity, including how the church will regulate, run, and administer its religious, cultural, foundational, and episcopal activities through its own departments and under the control of the state. The spiritual and canonical matters of the Romanian Orthodox Church will be regulated by a single central synodal authority. Metropolitans and bishops of the Romanian Orthodox Church will be chosen according to special laws. The relationships between different denominations and the state will be established by law.¹¹⁵

A law organizing the ROC was eventually passed on 5 May 1925, recognizing Cristea as the new patriarch.¹¹⁶ According to Cristea, the idea of a patriarchate originally came from the historian Nicolae Iorga and was supported by ‘the Bessarabians’, but he was hesitant to promote it himself until he received the instruction from the prime minister, Ionel Brătianu.¹¹⁷ A congress of the Bessarabian Church had actually voted for establishing a patriarchate in March 1921, but it is symptomatic of Cristea’s centralizing outlook that he saw this move as an indication of support rather than as a policy the ROC needed to implement.¹¹⁸ A new cathedral, the Church of the Salvation of the Nation, was proposed as the seat of the new patriarchate, but it was not built until 1918.¹¹⁹

The process of creating an autocephalous Romanian patriarchate thus embedded a number of festering sores within the Church. Miron Cristea’s refusal to incorporate elements of lay church governance from Transylvania and Bessarabia alienated clergy from those regions who were already upset at being treated like second-class citizens by state officials from the Old Kingdom sent to ‘Romanianize’ them. The Church in Transylvania and the Banat had championed the national cause for decades, only to find itself pushed aside in Greater Romania. Cristea’s alliance with the National Liberal Party further put him at odds with the Transylvanian wing of the Church, which maintained close ties first with the Romanian National Party and then with its successor, the

¹¹⁵ ‘Constituția României din 28 martie 1923’, *Monitorul oficial*, 29 March 1923.

¹¹⁶ ‘Lege pentru organizarea Bisericii Ortodoxe Române’, *Monitorul oficial*, 4 May 1925.

¹¹⁷ Cristea, *Note ascunse*, 94–5.

¹¹⁸ Boris Buzilă, ‘Patriarhie pentru țara întregită, Mitropolie pentru provincia revenită la sînul Țării’, in *Mitropolitul Gurie: Misiunea de credință și cultură*, ed. Silvia Grossu (Chișinău: Epigraf, 2007), 19.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 101.

National Peasantist Party. Church support for the state's nation-building project undermined the potential for the ROC to bring Ruthenian and Russian believers in Bukovina and Bessarabia into its fold as they became targets of concerted Romanianization campaigns. Orthodox Christians in both Bukovina and Bessarabia had long watched their churches submit to any and every demand of the state, and discovering that the ROC planned to continue that tradition in order to maintain its position as the 'dominant church' must have been a bitter disappointment.