

# THE RECRUITMENT OF AN ECCLESIASTICAL ELITE: THE CANONS OF THE CATHEDRAL CHAPTERS IN ORADEA AND BLAJ\*

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**Abstract:** *This study proposes a comparative approach to an institution and to the persons that were the heart of the ecclesiastical administration of the Romanian Church United in the XIX-th century: the canons of the Chapters of Cathedral Churches. The study is one of the first results of the direction of analysis assumed within a larger research project dedicated to the staff involved in the ecclesiastical administration of the Romanian Church United, whether canons, foraneous vicars or teachers. This paper has three parts: the first two were devoted to the analysis of the Chapter of Canons in the dioceses of Oradea and Făgăraș in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, so as we should ultimately make a comparative analysis of the two institutions, the element of originality of which lies precisely in the absence of such approaches in the literature.*

**Keywords:** *Cathedral Chapter, Canons, Ecclesiastical Elite, Formation, Transylvania.*

„The institution of Cathedral Chapters, the members of which are called canons, has entered very little the Romanian public consciousness”<sup>1</sup>. This remark of Nicolae Brînzeu, a canon of the diocese of Lugoj, served in 1942 as the introduction of a comprehensive study dedicated to Cathedral Chapters and canons of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church. Through the years, the quote does not lose anything of its power, by so much the more as it opens another study the aim of which is to make known the important contribution of a relatively small group of the Romanian united ecclesiastical elite: the canons.

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<sup>1</sup> Nicolae Brînzeu, *Capitlurile catedrale – Notițe despre drepturile și datoriile canonicilor*, „Cultura Creștină”, 1942, no. 10-12, p. 539.

„Anuarul Institutului de Istorie «George Barițiu» din Cluj-Napoca”, LII, Supliment, 2013, p. 115-138.

This study proposes a comparative approach to an institution and to the persons that were the heart of the ecclesiastical administration of the Romanian Church United in the XIX-th century: the canons of the Chapters of Cathedral Churches. The study is one of the first results of the direction of analysis assumed within a larger research project dedicated to the staff involved in the ecclesiastical administration of the Romanian Church United, whether canons, foraneous vicars or teachers. This paper has three parts: the first two were devoted to the analysis of the Chapter of Canons in the dioceses of Oradea and Făgăraș in the second half of the XIX-th and early XX-th century, so as we should ultimately make a comparative analysis of the two institutions, the element of originality of which lies precisely in the absence of such approaches in the literature.

The sources that were the basis of this research have been highly variable, gathering mainly data from the Schematisms of the two dioceses of the study, published in the period that we focused upon. An extremely valuable source was represented by the anniversary Schematisms of the mentioned dioceses – the one published in Blaj in 1900 and the one belonging to the Diocese of Oradea, in 1927 – both of them bringing together biographies of the most important characters in the history of Romanian dioceses united and data on the way of functioning of the chapter institution. These are added information in the press of the time, mainly the insets arising on the appointment of a canon or the panegyrics published on their deaths, the last being real *curricula vitae* prepared at the end of lives dedicated to the church. An equally important source we have been given by the archival material, mainly represented by protocols of chapter meetings, held in various county divisions of National Archives, while the Vatican archives gave us equally valuable material, such as the Chapter Constitutions of Oradea. All these have been complemented by a rich literature that supports and complements the interpretive approach.

As to the methodology discussed, we tried to combine methods characteristic of the historical research to methods characteristic of the sociological approach; so, apart from the positivist reconstruction, essential in some situations that were missing basic information about different characters or historical moments, we turned to the prosopographic analysis, while trying to reconstruct the key points of the formation and affirmation of the canons of the Romanian Church United. These are added the comparative analysis, that enables us an attempt to theorise about the formation of this ecclesiastical elite, an intellectual and professional formation, seen as a prerequisite for social promotion and ascent. Thus, we do not intend to limit our approach to the education and training of canons, but rather, we want to extend this expression to all that means setting the Chapter with its written and unwritten rules, and those aspects that have ensured its particularity in the form enshrined in the late XIX-th century.

### About the Chapter Canons: A Brief Introduction

According to the First Provincial Synod of the Greek Catholic Mitropoly of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș (1872), the Chapter was nothing but a different presentation of the ancient institution of presbyters: "Bishops, even in early church times, in governing their churches used presbyters and deacons in their departments, who formed the senate or the bishop's presbyterate, without the advice of whom S[aint] Cyprian did not undertake any work of great importance"<sup>2</sup>. The old institution of cathedral presbyters was a permanent presence in the first centuries of Christianity; information about it can be found in the Acts of the Apostles, the canons of ecumenical councils and in the Epistles of Holy Fathers. The Institution of the Chapter, Radu Iacob said, was the old institution of the presbyter, and the etymology of the word canon means "existing – in the sense of living – by the rule"<sup>3</sup>.

Hierarchically, chapter canons were situated immediately after the bishop, having the role to advise and assist<sup>4</sup> him in diocese business, from purely spiritually ecclesiastical<sup>5</sup>, to administrative, educational activities. In the constitutional and institutional organization of the United Church, chapter canons formed a stand-alone body, an institution in itself, the Cathedral Chapter, with its own leader – the preposytus (the archpresbyter or the provost)<sup>6</sup>, with a budget payroll, with the right of "self-generation". Chapter canons had the right and obligation to manage the public funds and foundations of the diocese. They were the connection between the lower clergy and the mass of the faithful on the one side and the bishop, on the other side. During bishop holidays, canons exercised the whole executive power, under the restriction of not making renewals and the obligation of choosing among them an unmarried<sup>7</sup> capitulary vicar, within 8 days. It should be noted that they were not just ordinary followers of the bishop in the governance of the diocese, but also those who were intended, rather tacitly and indirectly, to limit its power, to avoid a discretionary management.

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<sup>2</sup> *Conciliul provincial prim al provinciei bisericești greco-catolice Alba-Iulia și Făgăraș ținut la anul 1872*, 2nd Edition, Blaj, 1886 (hereinafter *Conciliul provincial prim...*), p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Iacob Radu, *Istoria diecezei române-unite a Orăzii-Mari. Scrisă cu prilejul aniversării de 150 de ani de la înființarea aceleia 1777-1927*, Oradea, 1932, p. 200.

<sup>4</sup> Ioan Geț, *Administrația bisericească*, Oradea Mare, 1912, p. 179.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 179-180.

<sup>6</sup> See the constitutions of the Greek Catholic Chapter of Oradea of 1883 in Archivio della Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali (hereinafter A.C.C.O.), found *Scritture riferite nei congressi*, vol. III:1875-1883, f. 1139r; also, the constitutions of the Metropolitan Chapter of Alba-Iulia and Făgăraș, National Archives, Directorate of Alba County, Found *Mitropolia Română Unită Blaj* (hereinafter A.N.D.J.A., M.R.U.B.) – *Cabinetul mitropolitului. Inventar suplimentar*, D. 3/1886, ff. 1-14

<sup>7</sup> Ioan Geț, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

The right of establishment, alteration and suppression of the Chapter is an exclusive privilege of the Holy See. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the political authority (i.e. Vienna, and after 1867 Vienna in collaboration with the Hungarian government) was recognized the right to intervene in the internal structure of the Chapter, but only in the Greek Catholic structure of the Romanian Church United<sup>8</sup>. We are talking, for example, about the right to appoint the canons of Oradea or to appoint the three "royalist" canons in the Metropolitan Chapter of Blaj, as we will show in the second part of our research.

### 1. Recruitment of Canons in the Diocese of Oradea Mare in the Second Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

The Romanian Greek-Catholic Diocese of Oradea was born in the shadow of Latin hierarchy, namely of the Roman Catholic diocese of Oradea<sup>9</sup> and of the Apostolic Vicarage of Muncaci, and it was later on formally subordinated to the Catholic Archdiocese of Strigoni<sup>10</sup> under the jurisdiction of which it remained until 1853. Note that, although the diocese of Oradea was established after the diocese of Făgăraș, the Romanians of Bihor had joined the religious union with Rome before the union synods in Alba Iulia. The recently religionised Greek Catholic parishes in the region were employed, since the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in an early church structure known as the deanery of Oradea<sup>11</sup>. Later, the arch-presbyterian church of Bihor was created and it was led by Demetriu Paulin, placed in the jurisdiction of the Latin diocese of Oradea.

Gradually, under the rush proselytizing actions of the Orthodox Serbs, but also under the need to increase the number of believers in order to balance the influence of Hungarian Calvin dioceses, in imperial circles the idea of establishing a united Romanian diocese based in Oradea crystallized. Moreover, in order to strengthen the religious union in this area of the Empire and to stimulate the progress of this phenomenon, in 1771 the Apostolic Vicarage of Muncaci was elevated to the position of diocese<sup>12</sup>. During the following years, under the

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<sup>8</sup> Giacomo Martina, *Storia della Chiesa da Lutero ai nostri giorni*, II, *L'età dell'assolutismo*, Brescia, Terza Ristampa, 2006, p. 49; Leslie László, *Church and State in Hungary 1919-1945*, Budapest, 2004, pp. 25-26 sqq; *Studi sul Concordato austriaco del 18 agosto 1855. Prima versione del tedesco*, Verona-Milano, Dallo Stabilimento di G. Civelli e C., 1856, p. 138; Ana Victoria Sima, *L'istituzione del capitolo nella chiesa romena greco-cattolică. Nelle discussioni dei fori pontificali e imperiali*, "Ephemeris Dacoromana, Annuario – seria nova", XI/2000, Roma, pp. 242.

<sup>9</sup> Silviu Sana, "...pentru sufletele credincioșilor săi". *Structuri bisericești și școlare în Eparhia greco-catolică de Oradea-Mare (1850-1900)*, Oradea, 2011, pp. 47-50.

<sup>10</sup> See Iudita Călușer, *Episcopia greco-catolică de Oradea. Contribuții monografice*, Oradea, 2000, p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> Silviu Sana, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>12</sup> Iudita Călușer, *op. cit.*, p. 51; Ana Victoria Sima, *art. cit.*, p. 245.

influence of the same spirit of Aulic reformism, the constitution of several Greek Catholic smaller and more functional dioceses was proposed in the region<sup>13</sup>.

From the dawn of its existence, the Greek Catholic diocese of Bihor took the Latin organizational model, a model that was strengthened over time, never being challenged by the local ecclesiastical elite<sup>14</sup>. The Latin model<sup>15</sup> is reflected in the internal (rules, canon law) and external structure (the organization and operation model of ecclesiastical institutions) of the diocese of Oradea, from the way of establishment of the bishop and of canons, to the way the chapter worked, to the conduct of the clergy, either higher, or common etc.. Regarding the bishop establishment, we should note that in the diocese of Oradea the king – as the "supreme patron"<sup>16</sup> – named and recommended the pope for confirmation, bishops and canons<sup>17</sup>.

The Decree of 1776 to found the diocese of the Greek Catholic Episcopacy of Oradea also institutionalized the Bishop's diocesan Chapter, as it was from the beginning a Latin institutional loan<sup>18</sup>. It originally consisted of five canonical stalls, as follows: preposytus (archpresbyter), archdeacon (lecturer), primicerius (cantor and scholar), eclesiarch (custodian) and chartophylax (chancellor), this structure being also confirmed by the imperial diploma of Joseph II of February 16, 1781<sup>19</sup>. The number of canons was to grow to 6 in 1791, following the requests made in this respect by Bishop Ignatie Darabant<sup>20</sup>. Thus, by separating the teaching duties

<sup>13</sup> Ovidiu Ghitta, *Baia Mare – locul unde n-a mai ajuns să rezideze un episcop greco-catolic acum 150 de ani*, "Studia Universitatis "Babeş-Bolyai", series "Theologia Catholica", year XLIX, no. 1, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, p. 92.

<sup>14</sup> We have to mention that in the Greek Catholic Transylvanian area, over time, two models of institutional and ecclesiastical organization were enforced: the Latin one, resulted in the model of Oradea and the oriental one materialised in the model of the Episcopacy of Făgăraş. Ana Victoria Sima, *Vizitele nunțiilor apostolici vienezi în Transilvania (1855-1868)*, vol. I, Cluj-Napoca, 2003; Mirela Andrei, *La granița Imperiului. Vicariatul greco-catolic al Rodnei în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea*, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, pp. 96-98.

<sup>15</sup> Silviu Sana, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-44.

<sup>16</sup> The title of apostolic king was won by Hungarian kings since the Middle Ages as a symbolic recognition came from the Holy See for the involvement of the Hungarian crown in the Christian crusade, thereby understanding also the contribution of the Hungarian kings to the conquest and "Christianising" of the schismatic Orthodox space. Austrian emperors inherited this title at the same time with the Hungarian crown. In this quality, of an apostolic king, the Habsburg king enjoyed "ius supremi patronatus", being the patron of the Catholic Church, with all the consequences resulted: the obligation to materially support the church, and also the right to appoint bishops.

<sup>17</sup> Iudita Călușer, *op. cit.*, p. 52 apud Octavian Bârlea, *Spre o nouă față a Bisericii Române Unite*, "Perspective", 1991, nr. 51-52, pp. 65-67.

<sup>18</sup> In this respect Iacob Radu said that, although „chapters, in the form they are today in our church, are of Western origin, but, in fact, they are not foreign to the discipline of the Eastern church”. See Iacob Radu, *op. cit.*, p. 200 and Iudita Călușer, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>19</sup> Iacob Radu, *op. cit.*, pp. 58, 200.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 200.

from the cantor duties cumulated by the primicerius, two canonical stalls were formed: the cantor (primicerius) and the academic. This structure remained unchanged until the abolition of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church (1948).

Regarding the course of establishment of the canons of the Greek-Catholic diocese of Oradea, we stated above that they were appointed by the king, under his privilege of an apostolic king (resulting from the principles of *ius supremi patronatus*)<sup>21</sup>. The Bishop of Oradea was given the right to make proposals for the appointment of canons<sup>22</sup>, the possibility to appoint two or three candidates for each post of canon being left to him. Jacob Radu, a canon himself, but also one of the renowned researchers of the Greek Catholic church institutions allows us to understand that, with the time, the procedure that worked in the Hungarian kingdom in the establishment of canons has become established in the Diocese of Oradea, too. Thus, the bishop proposed three candidates (the so-called “ternarium”) for each post, and the king appointed one of them<sup>23</sup>.

In conclusion to the above, we can say that the first Chapter consisting of a secular clergy, that worked within the Romanian Church United was the one in Oradea<sup>24</sup>. In Blaj, there was a chapter that worked since 1738, but it consisted only of monks from the order of Saint Basil<sup>25</sup>, while the Greek Catholic chapter model, which prevails in the Catholic churches of Eastern Rite created outside the Austrian monarchy in the second half of the XVIII-th century (dioceses of Muncaci, Crisia and Oradea Mare)<sup>26</sup>, was the model consisting of secular priests.

The six canons are joined the honorary canons, sometimes only one, sometimes counting six or seven canons<sup>27</sup>. Among the holders of this quality there was the archdeacon of Sătmar, a function usually held by the priest and the dean of Carei<sup>28</sup>. Receiving the title of honorary canon was a recognition of the

<sup>21</sup> A.C.C.O., found *Scritture riferite nei congressi*, vol. III:1875-1883, f. 1139v.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>23</sup> Jacob Radu, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>24</sup> Nicolae Brânzeu, *art. cit.*, p. 548; Ana Victoria Sima, *art. cit.*, pp. 244-247.

<sup>25</sup> Victor Macavei, *Capitulul metropolitan din Blaj. Întemeierea și rolul lui în trecutul nostru*, “Cultura creștină”, 1937, XVII, No. 4-5 (April-May), p. 232. These advisor monks bore the title of consistorial episcopal advisors, the Court of Vienna forbidding them to be called canons.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 231.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Schematismus venerabilis cleri dioecesis Magno-Varadinensis G.R.Cath.* pro anno MDCCCLXVII, Magno-Varadini, 1867, pp. 16-17; *Schematismus venerabilis cleri dioecesis Magno-Varadinensis G.R.Cath.* pro anno MDCCCLXXI, Magno-Varadini, 1871, pp. 16-17.

<sup>28</sup> The archdeaconate of Sătmar had under its jurisdiction approximately half the territory of the diocese of Oradea and about half of the believers, so that this title of an honorary canon was a natural recognition of the efforts that the archdeacon of Sătmar had to make to manage the assigned territory. Note that the Diocese of Oradea was divided into six archdeaconates, each made of a number – variable – of deaneries. Each of the chapter canons, except for the preposytus, had to manage one of these archdeaconates. . See Hof- und Staats-Handbuch der Österreichisch Ungarischen Monarchie für 1877, Wien, 1877, pp. 799-800; Idem, für 1894, pp. 925-926; Idem für 1898,

administrative and ecclesiastical merits of a priest and also announced the opening of the way to hierarchically promote the canon concerned. There were also cases of honorary canons that have never been promoted to full canons. About the appointment of honorary canons we should note that only the bishop had this right, and the appointment was made after prior consultation with the Chapter<sup>29</sup>. Honorary canons could be part of the diocese, or not, and canons belonging to other dioceses could be appointed only with the consent of their bishop. The same canon 405 of *Codex Juris Canonici* on the appointment of honorary canons stipulated that the Bishop "only rarely and with caution should make use of this right". The number of these canons could not be more than a third of the number of canons of law (current). According to canon 407, honorary canons were allowed to wear canonical badges and have a seat in the choir.<sup>30</sup>

In 1868 the chapter, whether metropolitan or diocesan, generally assumed a similar structure and similar skills, as the Vienna nuncio Falcinelli noted during his visit to Transylvania. The only difference that he noticed referred to the number: the Metropolitan consisted of 10 members, while the same diocesan institution was formed of 6 members. Falcinelli noticed that the best organized and, as a consequence, the most functional was the Chapter of Oradea. Its members had been trained, overwhelmingly, in the prestigious universities of the kind in Vienna and Rome, being therefore characterized by a real devotion to the Holy See and the Catholic Church. Based on this finding made at the time and since the institution of the Chapter of Oradea was true nursery of bishops<sup>31</sup>, we feel entitled to say that the process of selection and promotion of the higher clergy in the Diocese of Oradea had for a main criterion the solid intellectual and professional formation of candidates.

In the following, we intend to address some specific aspects of the functioning of the Chapter of Oradea, focusing our attention on the staff of the institution. In Oradea, as in the Archdiocese, the process of promotion of canons

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pp. 958-959; Idem für 1905, p. 1011; Idem für 1908, pp. 1081-1082 etc. The schematisms of the Episcopacy of Oradea of 1854, 1857, 1867, 1871, 1881, 1900 can also be seen. The sixth archdeaconate, of Sătmar, was established later than the other five and thus the function of archdeacon of Sătmar has not been included in the chapter cathedral. Furthermore, between 1827 and 1847 this position was vacant. In all the *Schematisms* of the age (mentioned above) it is made clear that the Archdeacon of Sătmar is "extra gremium Capituli", enjoying only an honorary canonicate. Yet, at a time, there was an idea spread about raising the status of this archdeaconate to the status of a foraneous vicarage, which occurred only in the interwar period (1934). See Silviu Sana, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-94.

<sup>29</sup> In absence of the holder bishop this right was transferred neither to the general, nor to the chapter vicar.

<sup>30</sup> Nicolae Brînzeu, *art. cit.*, p. 565.

<sup>31</sup> 25% of the canons of Oradea in the second half of the XIX-th century were admitted to bishoprics, and for the entire period under research, the percentage is of 17.8%.

was gradual. Promotion only occurred in certain situations: in general, following the death of one of the canons in office<sup>32</sup> or in a situation often encountered in Oradea Mare, by the promotion of one of them on the proposal of the bishop. Employment of canonical stalls was always upward. Thus, if one of the stalls became free due to one of the situations mentioned above, all the other canons, were promoted one or more steps in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the institution of the Cathedral Chapter, vacancies being held by other newly appointed canons<sup>33</sup>.

In a careful analysis of the Schematisms of the time for the diocese of Bihor, the Bishop's Chapter appears as one with great mobility, also proving continuity and stability in terms of the domestic policy promoted by it<sup>34</sup>. In the area of the Diocese of Oradea, in the second half of the XIX-th century, the context was conducive to faster promotions to the higher clergy, than in the rest of the ecclesiastical Greek Catholic province of Transylvania. In the period considered, five canons were promoted to the status of bishop, and two to the status of preposytus (of Lugoj), so they released seven positions<sup>35</sup> that allowed the rise of other priests who were professionally and intellectually ready to be promoted. These are also added 14 deaths of the chapter canons<sup>36</sup>, both cases leading to a total of 21 promotions, which raises the level of promotion to a higher proportion

<sup>32</sup> Ana Victoria Sima, *art. cit.*, p. 248.

<sup>33</sup> For example, according to the Schematism of 1864 the last two canonical stalls (scholar and chancellor) were vacant (following the death of Ioan Pák, lecturer and the promotion of cantor canon Iosif Papp-Szilágyi to the office of bishop, both events taking place in 1863). In 1866 Ioan Vancea (cantor cantor according to the Schematism of 1864) was appointed bishop of Gherla, which meant the release of another post, a total of three vacant stalls, which provided the chance of accession to 3 new meritorious priests to the Chapter of Oradea. Moreover, the Schematism of 1867 mentions three new names among the chapter canons: Ioan Korhány, Basilius Nisztor, Ioan Szabó. acc. *Schematismus venerabilis cleri dioecesis Magno-Varadinensis G.R.Cath. pro anno MDCCCLXVII, Magno-Varadini, 1867*, pp. 16-17; *Schematismus venerabilis cleri dioecesis Magno-Varadinensis G.R.Cath. pro anno MDCCCLXXI, Magno-Varadini, 1871*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>34</sup> In the sense that this mobility, this rapid internal movement of personnel did not affect the character of stability as there were some canons who were part of the Chapter for decades – some even in the position of preposytus – helping to promote a policy of continuity, of stability of this institution, e.g. preposytus Nicolae Borbola, 1850-1877, or preposytus Teodor Kőváry, 1881-1906.

<sup>35</sup> Of the canons of Oradea for the time segment in question, 5 have reached the episcopal stall: Ioan Alexi, Alexandru Dobra (1854), Iosif Papp-Szilágyi (1863), Ioan Vancea (1866), Ioan Szabó (1879) and other 2 have been transferred to the Chapter of Lugoj, Teodor Aaron being appointed a preposytus in 1857, and Corneliu Bulcu in 1914.

<sup>36</sup> In 1863 Ioan Pák died (lecturer canon). Somewhere between 1868-1870 Gr. Kőváry died (lecturer canon), in 1871 Ioan Papp (lecturer canon). In 1877 Nicolae Borbola (preposytus), than in 1879 Basilius Nisztor (cantor canon). In 1881 Ioan Korhány died (preposytus) and in 1884 Nicolae Vulcan (custodian). In 1888 Ioan Kuuk died according to *Schematismus venerabilis cleri dioecesis Magno-Varadinensis G.R.Cath. pro anno MDCCCLXXXI*, pp. 130-133 and to *Şematismul istoric al Diecezei Române Unite a Orăzii Mari 1777-1927*, Oradea (hereinafter *Sematismul istoric...*), pp. 211-216.

reported to a total of 28 canons occupying the canonical stalls in the Chapter of Oradea between years 1853-1918.

We should also mention that not everyone could lay claim to the dignity of a canon. Selection of future canons was generally made among young people of higher education graduating from Vienna or Rome, then canons educated in Trnava, Ungvari or Oradea were preferred, provided that they wore the clothes of celibacy. Thus of the 28 canon holders who were part of the Chapter of Oradea in the period under research, 8 had theological studies in Vienna, 7 in Pest, 4 in Rome, 2 in Trnava and 7 in Oradea<sup>37</sup>. Nine of them took a doctorate in theology or philosophy: 4 in Rome (Ioan Szabó, Augustin Luran, Corneliu Bulcu and Iacob Radu) and 3 in Vienna (Alexandru Dobra, Ioan Vancea and Iosif Papp-Szilágyi), one in Oradea, Florian Stan, and one more in Budapest (Gheorghe Miculaş). So, we can say once again that, undeniably, studies were the main criterion for selection and then promotion, the civil status being on second place, priority in appointment to ecclesiastical dignities being given to celibate priests, followed by the widowed<sup>38</sup>.

A certain supereminence is therefore apparent in the recruitment and promotion of staff, of the graduates of Rome, followed by those who studied in Vienna and Pest, accounting for greater chances of those who had not only a university degree, but also a PhD. Higher instruction was to a young cleric the springboard into a promising ecclesiastical career, which first provided the entry to the system of religious education or employment of functions within the Diocese and Consistory. Future recruitment was generally done either among church officials attached to the ward or among teachers.

Many of the graduates with higher education upon their coming back to their home country became teachers at the middle school in Beiuş, at Preparandia or at the Major Gymnasium in Oradea. The best of them became directors of the gymnasium of Beiuş, of Preparandia or vice-rectors of the diocesan Greek Catholic Seminary in the Diocese residence, school inspectors. Their professional activity, curriculum vitae and particular behaviour gradually recommend them to social

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<sup>37</sup> In Vienna studied I. Alexi, I. Korhány, Papp-Szilágyi, I. Vancea, I. Papp, P. Vela, N. Vulcan, Ilie Stan; in Pesta N. Borbola, A. Teodor, Al. Dobra, Gr. Kóváry, T. Kóváry, Coriolan Ardelean and Gh. Miculaş; in Rome I. Szabó, Aug. Luran, Coriolan Bulcu and Iacob Radu; in Trnava Gr. Juhász and I. Kuuk, and in Oradea I. Pák, B. Nisztor, Art. Sarkádi and M. Nyes, Stan Florian, I. Buteanu and S. Ciceronescu. See *Şematismul istoric...*, pp. 211-220 and the Schematism of the Diocese of Oradea for the period under research (1854, 1857, 1864, 1867, 1871, 1881, 1900, 1909).

<sup>38</sup> In a brief presentation of the members of the Chapter of Oradea in 1890, sent to the Holy See by Augustin Luran, referring to Arthemiu Sarkádi, who, in fact, was appreciated for his sufficiency, the author let it be known that despite his qualities, Sarkádi could not become a canon until after widowed. See Archivio Segreto Vaticano, found *Archivio Nunziatura di Vienna*, vol. 641, f. 159v.

affirmation. Many of those who later held important canonical stalls or even dioceses began their work in schools, holding the quality of teachers, school inspectors for the religious schools in the diocese and of vice-rectors of the Seminary or of Preparandia. This practice is found since the days of Moise Dragoș, who, as a dean of Oradea, also managed the denominational schools within the territory of Bihor "united with Rome". Later, Ignatie Darabant (1788-1805) held for a long time the position of prefect of the united schools in Transylvania. And Iosif Papp-Szilágyi took care for more than a decade of the religious schools in the diocese, by his quality of a scholastic canon<sup>39</sup>. In this capacity he presided on February 6, 1851 the conference of the teaching staff in Beiuș, where they decided the new organization of the local gymnasium, which, by the addition of classes up to 8, became a highschool with teaching in Romanian<sup>40</sup>. Also, like his predecessor, V. Erdelyi, Iosif Papp-Szilágyi held for several years (1852-1856) the position of rector of the Greek Catholic Seminary<sup>41</sup>. Ioan Szabó, the future Bishop of Gherla and Augustin Lauran, one of the most learned canons of Oradea, both with studies and doctoral studies in Rome held in parallel administrative offices to episcopal bodies (defensors in the Matrimonial Court, consistorial notaries, episcopal secretaries) and one chair at Preparandia or at a major Catholic Gymnasium in Oradea. Later, they became directors of Preparandia and rectors of the domestic Greek Catholic Seminary of Magno-Varadini<sup>42</sup>.

Other young clerics attended a different "cursus honorum". According to their education, consistorial advisors (usually, they were also honorary archdeacons) were then charged with different clerk responsibilities to the episcopal institutions. Generally, the first sign announcing the possibility of promotion was the assignment of some duties within the Consistory (notary, tax, member of the Treasury or of the Matrimonial Court) or to the Episcopal Office (secretary, director). This was the case of Ioan Vancea, of Iosif Papp-Szilágyi, Ioan Szabó or Augustin Lauran and examples could continue. Often, these assessors were even very young, but their education and the status of celibate priests recommended them to hierarchical ascent. It should here be noted that, generally, advisors who benefited from higher education, enjoyed a much faster rising than

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<sup>39</sup> Also see the Schematism of 1854. Iacob Radu, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

<sup>40</sup> Iacob Radu, *op. cit.*, p. 149

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 109-110, 148.

<sup>42</sup> Hof- und Staats-Handbuch der Österreichisch Ungarischen Monarchie für 1877, Wien, 1877, pp. 799-800; Idem, für 1894, pp. 925-926; Idem für 1898, pp. 958-959; Idem für 1905, p. 1011; Cf. *Schematismus venerabilis cleri dioecesis Magno-Varadinensis G.R.Cath.* pro anno MDCCCLXIV, Magno-Varadini, 1864, p. 20; *Schematismus venerabilis cleri dioecesis Magno-Varadinensis G.R.Cath.* pro anno MDCCCLXVII, Magno-Varadini, 1867, pp. 21; *Schematismus venerabilis cleri dioecesis Magno-Varadinensis G.R.Cath.* pro anno MDCCCLXXI, Magno-Varadini, 1871, pp. 20-21.

older advisors, even praiseworthy, who remained for the rest of their lives only parish priests, assessors and possibly vice-archdeacons or honorary archdeacons.

So, according to a practice that has become established over time, a young man educated in Rome or Vienna, and sometimes even in Pest, upon his arrival back to his home country, was ordained<sup>43</sup>, and then he was able to take a teaching position or was established in an office of less importance within episcopal bodies: consistorial notary, bishop secretary, then appointed a consistorial assessor, then he could soon get an honorary canonicate, and when a canonical stall was released, he was advanced from the status of an honorary canon to the status of a full canon. Regardless of the professional way taken, the fact is that the first stage of a long and sometimes difficult process of promotion was to enter the Episcopal Consistory, as recruitment of future canons was necessarily made among consistorial assessors<sup>44</sup>.

The second criterion, in order of importance, commonly used in the selection and promotion of canons referred to civil status, as they were generally appointed from among celibate priests. The motivation of preferring them was simple: as celibates they had more time available, which meant that they could achieve longer periods of time as practitioners or officials at the Bishop's Court, they had more time to study and improve their work – a particularly important feature for a canon. Secondly, their salaries were modest, so they could hardly afford to care of a family ("especially in a big city such as Oradea was"<sup>45</sup>).

That the access of a married priest to the Chapter was much more difficult than for a celibate, regardless of his education and demonstrated sufficiency, and that only after becoming a widower he entered calculations in view of promotion, was demonstrated by a simple analysis of the age of admittance to the Chapter. Thus, if the average age of the canons of the Diocese of Oradea when starting their activity within the Cathedral Chapter was 49.5 years<sup>46</sup>, we can see that in the case of those who were married this age was much higher. For example, Nicolae Vulcan was recruited as a full member of the Chapter at the age of 74 years, Gh. Juhász at 71 years, Ioan Kuuk at 61 years<sup>47</sup>. Although their theological studies were appropriate and they had performed a remarkable ecclesiastical and administrative

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<sup>43</sup> Some other times ordination could take place before leaving the country. This was the case of the future bishop Alexandru Dobra, who, after graduating from high school and theology in Oradea, was ordained and then sent to Vienna where he perfected his studies, acquiring a doctoral degree.

<sup>44</sup> We have to emphasize that chapter and honorary canons, all holder deans, and some clerics performing administrative functions for the episcopacy, sometimes receiving a more like symbolic honorary title of archdeacon were part of the Episcopal Consistory. Of course, most consistorial advisors have not reached above this position of the church hierarchy.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 204.

<sup>46</sup> The analysis was based on historical data provided by *Şematismul istoric...*, pp. 211-220.

<sup>47</sup> *Acc. Şematismul istoric...*, pp. 214, 216.

work, being married they could only hold the position of consistorial assessors or, at most, honorary canons. Instead, Ioan Korhány and Artemiu Sarkádi, widowed at younger ages, became Chapter Canons at the age of 55, and 51, respectively<sup>48</sup>.

Therefore, once become widowed, the deserving priests of Oradea Diocese could rapidly promote to the local ecclesiastical hierarchy, some of them reaching the highest position, as was the case of Ioan Korhány who was the preposytus of the Chapter of Oradea during 1879-1881. Regarding the age of recruitment of canons, we have to mention that it generally varied between 42 and 55, with the partially mentioned exceptions. The above-mentioned examples are added several other cases. These situations are quite different from those mentioned, as they refer to the promotion to the Chapter of young priests, such as Iosif Papp-Szilágyi who was admitted to the Chapter at only 32 years and 9 years after ordination, of Ioan Vancea, become a canon at 35 years and 10 years after ordination. The record was held by Ioan Szabó, admitted among canons at just 31 years and 8 years after ordination. Therefore, we can see that, in general, young people with a doctoral degree have advanced the church hierarchy much faster than their brethren. In fact, of the five theologians of the Diocese of Oradea who have achieved their doctorate before 1900, four reached the very top of the ecclesiastical pyramid, holding bishopric positions and one Metropolitan position (Ioan Vancea)<sup>49</sup>.

But, in order to be promoted, it was just not enough for a priest to be very well prepared professionally and intellectually and possibly equipped with administrative skills. From our analysis so far, another very important condition for the promotion among the ecclesiastical elite of Oradea was the political non-engagement. Thus, it is not difficult to see that those clerics who were involved in the national-political movement, for example Iustin Popfiu<sup>50</sup> or Moise Sora Noac were not welcomed by church superiors to be accepted between canons and, despite their indisputable intellectual capacities and their training which recommended them in this respect, they could not accede to the Chapter.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, 213, 216. Acc. *Schematismus venerabilis cleri dioecesis Magno-Varadinensis G.R.Cath.* pro anno MDCCCLXIV, Magno-Varadini, 1864, p. 122, Ioan Korhány was already a widower, and acc. *Schematismus venerabilis cleri dioecesis Magno-Varadinensis G.R.Cath.* pro anno MDCCCLXXI, Magno-Varadini, 1871, p. 122 Artemiu Sarkádi was a widower too, which allowed him, along with his qualities of a very good administrator, to access the Chapter of Oradea at a suitable age.

<sup>49</sup> *Şematismul istoric...*, pp. 211-220.

<sup>50</sup> An intelligent young man, educated in Vienna, a celibate, who started soon enough a career that promised to be brilliant, becoming within short a consistorial assessor, performing the functions of notary consistorial, Bishop's secretary, who was entrusted with the Romanian language department of the Catholic Gymnasium of Oradea, which previously belonged to Al. Roman, but who, because of his deep involvement in the Romanian movement for national liberation was not accepted among the canons, despite his request to this purpose. See National Archives, Department of Cluj County, found *Episcopia greco-catolică Oradea*, dos. 135/1848-1871, f. 29r-v.

In this respect, a new direction that our research might turn to, would be that of the "refused" or "marginalized", of those clerics or teachers, who, although they fit a personality profile that would have made an ecclesiastical career, they did not confirm expectations or were marginalized by the political power or the ecclesiastical hierarchy, be it from Oradea or Rome.

## 2. Recruitment to the Chapter of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Blaj

The second part of the study focuses on the Archdiocese of Alba-Iulia and Făgăraș and on the Chapter of the Metropolitan Cathedral, and is an attempt to summarize and theorize the developments that have marked this institution over the seven decades of existence. Our research is aimed at long term, because the number of characters studied is relatively small, a few dozen people, our attention stopping on 34 of the canons who worked in Blaj. The period chosen for study is bounded by the years 1853-1918, being the period when the Cathedral Chapter of Blaj became a Metropolitan Chapter, acting within the Austrian Empire and then within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In our analysis we followed two directions: a chart of the normative framework that ensured the proper functioning of the Chapter in the XIX-th century, followed by a prosopographic interpretation of the information on the staff who worked in the Metropolitan institution.

In the normative approach, we considered some moments that marked the evolution of the institution: its founding in 1807, its reformation in 1853 and the adoption of its statutes in 1886. The Cathedral Chapter in Blaj was founded long before the period we focused on. In 1807, Bishop Ioan Bob ordered the creation of this institution, the purpose of which was to offer it help in the administration of the diocese of Făgăraș; canons were to handle the functions performed by the monks of Blaj in the XVIII-th century, and later, after the dissolution of monastic orders, by part of the secular clergy of the diocese<sup>51</sup>. In the founding act, Bishop Bob drew the portrait of the future canon of Blaj, who was to be elected from among the celibate secular clergy, who had proven outstanding merits in his pastoral work and was recommended by his special morality<sup>52</sup>.

By the foundational documents they determined that this Cathedral Chapter of Blaj was to be composed of 7 canonical stalls, namely: the preposytus, the lector canon, the cantor canon, the curator canon, the scholar canon, the chancellor canon and the theologian canon<sup>53</sup>. The canonical office was lifelong and a stall became vacant only after the death of one of the canons. In this case, the founder had prescribed even the alternative of employment of the vacant position: the Bishop

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<sup>51</sup> For more details, see Daniel Dumitran, *Un timp al reformelor. Biserica greco-catolică din Transilvania sub conducerea episcopului Ioan Bob (1782-1830)*, Bucharest, 2005, pp. 265-266.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 266.

<sup>53</sup> Ana Victoria Sima, *art. cit.*, p. 247.

proposed the king the approval of gradual promotion, all canons going to occupy the stall immediately following the stall owned by that date. In this case, the position of the latter canon – that of the theologian – became vacant, so that all the canons, together with the Bishop, were to choose a colleague among the celibate secular clergy of the diocese, stating that the Bishop's vote counted as two votes<sup>54</sup>. In order for the promotion to be valid, the imperial endorsement was necessary for the proposed list of the Bishop, the king of Vienna being the holder of *ius supremi patronatus*, whereby it also exercised the right of *ius nominandi* of the ecclesiastical hierarchy<sup>55</sup>. This was the procedure provided even for occupying the most important stall of the Chapter: that of the preposytus (provost). Thus, theoretically, all the canons would have had a chance to access the preposytus stall, higher education and moral qualities, but also good health being essential.

The only exception to this imperial confirmation referred to the election and appointment of the theologian canon. In connection with the occupation of this canonical stall, founder Ioan Bob had reserved, on his and his successors behalf, the privilege of direct appointment, no imperial confirmation being required any more<sup>56</sup>. This provision was, in our opinion, one way by which the Bishop could control who would enter the Chapter, but it was also a means of reward. The stall of the theologian was the last of the seven stalls set by the founder, who opened the *cursus honorum* in the Chapter, i.e. the possibility of acceding to a canonical higher stall or, later, even to the Diocese. But for all the high offices imperial confirmation was necessary, which somewhat narrowed the access of those who were considered as undesirable by the civil authority, even if the Church appreciated their work as exemplary. The Bishop's privilege to appoint the theologian canon of Blaj was formed in the second half of the XIX-th century by the chance to promote to the canonical offices leading figures of the Romanians united.

The first four decades of operation of the Chapter provided some clues about certain incompletely covered aspects, especially those related to the inclusion in the composition of this institution of married / widowed priests. The main objection to the prescriptions of Bishop Bob was that the number of celibate priests was much lower than the number of the priests belonging to the married or widowed clergy. The most fervent advocate of promoting married or widowed priests to canonicates was the Bishop himself, and then Metropolitan Alexandru Șterca Șuluțiu. The problem came into the discussion of imperial and pontifical forums in 1853, when the question of establishment of the Metropolitan Province of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș was posed<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 247-248.

<sup>55</sup> See above note no. 8.

<sup>56</sup> D. Dumitran, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

<sup>57</sup> For more details, please see the negotiations and projects referring to this issue: Ana Victoria Sima, *art. cit.*, pp. 248-250.

Following the discussions and negotiations with the Holy See and the Emperor in Vienna, they decided to broaden the Chapter of Blaj by three more canonical stalls, called "of royal foundation", as their salaries were to be paid by Vienna. Thus, the Chapter outlined by Bishop Bob became a Metropolitan Chapter and was to be composed of ten people: the seven Bob canons being added the penitentiary, the referendary and the prebendary canons. The three new canons were to be elected from among the clergy married or widowed, thus answering the wishes of most clergy of the Archdiocese of Alba-Iulia and Făgăraș. These three locations within the metropolitan Chapter were to have a somewhat special status as compared to the status of Bob canons because of their broad spectrum of recruitment, because their salary was to be provided by the state, but also because they did not enjoy the privileges designated on account of Bob canons. In fact, the ascendancy of celibate canons was very evident by the very number of places they had, compared with the three stalls of royal foundation.

Under these conditions even the way of establishment of these three canons was somewhat different from that of establishing Bob canons. As these canonicates were lifelong, the procedure of establishment was initiated after the death of one of the canons of royal foundation. It consisted of the proposal of the archbishop of a list of three candidates, from which the king was to appoint a canon. We thus find the ternary proposal so characteristic of imperial appointments in vacant high ecclesiastical offices, which had been formalized in the Romanian Church United. The three candidates had to meet the same qualities that characterized the rest of canons: high education and a good knowledge of church administration, all of these crowned by an exemplary moral<sup>58</sup>.

All these prescriptions on the Metropolitan Chapter were discussed in the provincial synods of 1872 and 1882. In the case of the first provincial synod, held in 1872, the issue of the Metropolitan Chapter was devoted less attention, some of its internal operating principles being drawn<sup>59</sup>. This explains the fact that a full regulation took place in 1882, by the decrees of the Second Provincial Synod. They outlined the characteristics of the Metropolitan Chapter within Title II, entitled *Constitution of the Metropolitan Chapter* [*Constituția Capitulului Mitropolitan*]. The first section of Title II deals with the composition of the Metropolitan Chapter, indicating the number of stalls and their names. Also, in this section unity of canons in matters related to the Chapter is specified, the only exception being the separate meeting of Bob canons when they had to discuss issues of interest for Bob Foundation<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 253.

<sup>59</sup> *Conciliul provincial prim ...*, p. 37.

<sup>60</sup> *Conciliul provincial secund al provinciei bisericești greco-catolice Alba-Iulia și Făgăraș ținut la anul 1882*, 2nd Edition, Blaj, 1886 (hereinafter *Conciliul provincial secund...*), pp. 82-84.

From the information that we have<sup>61</sup>, these prescriptions were subject to review by the Holy See, but the decrees passed in this provincial synod were considered incomplete, being sent to Blaj for recovery. Their complete version was approved by the Holy See in 1886<sup>62</sup>. The comparison of the decrees passed in the provincial council of 1882 and these Constitution Chapters of 1886 shows that the latter were much more detailed, more specific in defining some tasks and in drawing some rights. In fact, the version of 1882 can be considered only an outline, which was then developed to the maximum within the Constitutions of 1886.

There were some aspects that we have remarked, as they served as the basis for our subsequent analysis. Among them, a drawing of the characteristics of a future Metropolitan canon: secular clergy priest, well educated, with an irreproachable moral, "who worked in *cura animarum* or in church administration or on matters of theological discipline for 10 years, being recommended by his work"<sup>63</sup>. One more statement confirmed those prescribed in 1807 by Bishop Bob: in order to access to one of Bob stalls, the priest had to be celibate<sup>64</sup>.

For royal foundation stalls they resorted to the appointment by the king of a canon from a list of three names, proposed by the Metropolitan. However, as royal foundation canons were to be part of the peer corporation of the Chapter, given these conditions, the need to consult by the Metropolitan of the other canons on the three names that were to make the list sent to Vienna was prescribed. The possibility of gradual promotion for royal foundation canons was also provided, but it had no effects of the similar possibility occurred among the Bob canons. The main benefit of the gradual promotion of Bob canons was the salary increase, but the canons of royal foundation had all the same salary. Promotion to these three stalls might have been also honorary, because the tasks of the penitentiary were superior to those of the prebendary, for example. For this type of promotion only the consent of the Metropolitan was required, no other royal confirmation being needed<sup>65</sup>.

All these prescriptions were strictly meant to ensure the smooth running of the Metropolitan Chapter as a standalone corporation. Bob canons had more extensive powers, requesting their involvement in a greater degree in the administration of the archdiocese, unlike the canons of royal foundation. This is probably explained by the nearly five decades that separate the creation of stalls of Bob foundation from the stalls of royal foundation. In this period many of the tasks of canons were marked out, so that the transformation of Bob Chapter into the

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<sup>61</sup> See more in *Protocolum (Chapter Protocole)*, Blaj, 1856-1891, Cluj Branch Library of the Romanian Academy, Found of Romanian Manuscripts, Ms. Rom. 56, ff. 72-74.

<sup>62</sup> A.N.D.J.A., M.R.U.B. – *Cabinetul Mitropolitului. Inventar suplimentar*, D. 3/1886, f. 14.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 3<sup>v</sup>.

Metropolitan Chapter could only bring an extension of staff, but not of duties. The fact that among the tasks of foundation canons there was the prescription for them to constitute as aids or alternates of Bob canons could only have beneficial effects because of the offices of the latter were fully extended, as shown by the list of essays assigned to consistorial assessors.

The Constitutions of the Metropolitan Chapter were the defining moment of the institution founded in 1807 by Bishop Bob. Its developments reflect all the steps that marked the defining identity of an Oriental church united with Rome. Born as a body of Latin origin and promoted in order to get an appearance that should be closer to that of a Catholic Church, the Metropolitan Chapter completed in 1886 was, in fact, on a smaller scale, the image of the Romanian Church United. In its composition, it combined Latin with Oriental elements, but it was the reversed image of the realities of the Archdiocese, where the married clergy was clearly dominant over the number of celibate priests.

In the second part of the study devoted to the Archdiocese of Făgăraș, we would like to focus on the people who occupied the canonical offices of Blaj. We retrieved the main information from the anniversary Schematism published in 1900<sup>66</sup>, which used as a source a protocol of autobiographies of canons, but this has not been preserved to this day.

As noted above, we limited our study to 34 people<sup>67</sup>, also including here those canons occurring in function in the Schematism of 1842 and who were still alive at the end of 1850, and those who were active in 1918, too, still not including those who substituted them in the interwar period. In total, we deal with 25 Bob canons and 9 canons of royal foundation, which correspond to the percentage of  $\frac{3}{4}$ , and  $\frac{1}{4}$ , respectively, of all; the large number of Bob canons is perfectly explained by the fact that they held 7 positions in a Chapter of 10 people.

Next, we shall consider some specific aspects that characterized the formation of canons: their social origins, their theological training, ordination and the positions they occupied before their admittance to the Chapter of Blaj, and their subsequent promotions. All these give us the image of the formation of a superior clergy and of the operation of an ecclesiastical institution in the second half of the XIX-th century.

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<sup>66</sup> *Șematismul veneratului cler al arhiecezei mitropolitane greco-catolice române de Alba-Lulia și Făgăraș pe anul 1900, de la sfânta unire 200*, Blaj, 1901 (hereinafter *Șematism 1900*).

<sup>67</sup> Simeon Crainic, Vasile Rațiu, Constantin Alutan, Ștefan Boeriu, Timotei Cipariu, Teodor Șereni, Constantin Papfalvi, Ioan F. Negruțiu, Ioan Chirilă, Grigore Mihali, Antoniu Veștemean, Ilie Vlasi, Ștefan Manfî, Ioan Pamfilie, Ioan Antonelli, Leonțiu Leontean, Ioan M. Moldovan, Ioan Rațiu, Alesandru Micu, Simeon Pop Matei, Iosif Hossu, Gavrilă Pop, Alexandru Grama, Augustin Bunea, Vasile Hossu, Victor Szmigelski, Alexandru Uilăcan, Izidor Marcu, Ioan V. Rusu, Ștefan Pop, George Muntean, Vasile Suci, Ambroziu Chețianu, Alexandru Nicolescu. *Ibidem*, pp. 64-93.

The analysis of their social origin – as it results from the anniversary Schematism supplemented with press data on the appointments of canons that have occurred after 1900 – showed us that 12 of them came from families of priests, other three growing up in an environment with a similar religious load, as their parents were cantors. Only three of the canons had a noble origin (S. Crainic, V. Rațiu și Șt. Boeriu, the last with a priest father, but originating in a noble family), all the three of them activating in the period after the revolution of forty-eighters, probably the last of those who had access to the Chapter, due to their noble origin<sup>68</sup>. However, for 13 of them we do not own this information, as in their biographies only the names of their parents was mentioned; the explanation may lie in the fact that those canons which came from families with a more significant social origin felt the need to emphasize this aspect, while the others, who came from families with more humble origins, sons of peasants, were content to record their parents' names. For the period studied, a tendency to some dynasties of priests begins to become apparent, the sons carrying on the mission of their fathers, only at a higher level, as they were already sufficiently prepared to assume leadership roles.

Reviewing the theological education of the 34 canons studied, we note that their range of choice had already become the classic one in the studies dedicated to the education of the Romanian clergy united: they had either studied in Transylvania, in Blaj, or Oradea, or they went to Budapest, Vienna or Rome<sup>69</sup>. Among them, 19 performed their theological studies in centres of Transylvania, especially in the seminary in Blaj.

They were also joined by five other canons who either started their studies in Blaj and achieved them in centres outside Transylvania, or, being forced to withdraw from Vienna and Budapest on the grounds of health, returned and graduated from Blaj Archdiocesan theological seminary<sup>70</sup>. However, especially towards the end of the XIX-th century the number of those who went to theological studies outside Transylvania, first to Vienna and then to Rome, increased. This trend should be correlated with the scholarship program which was envisaged in the XIX-th century in both centres, on which even C. Sigmirean<sup>71</sup> provided details. They felt the need for a properly educated upper clergy, who could meet the

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<sup>68</sup> 1/3 of the canons who activated in Blaj before the revolution of forty-eighters had noble origins. *Vezi Ibidem.*

<sup>69</sup> For more details please see Cornel Sigmirean, *Intellectualitatea ecleziastică. Preoții Blajului (1806-1948)*, Târgu-Mureș, 2007, pp. 50-60.

<sup>70</sup> This was the case of Ioan Micu Moldovan, who studies theology one year in Budapest and another one year in Vienna, so that he should achieve his studies at the domestic seminary in Blaj. See *Șematism 1900.*

<sup>71</sup> Cornel Sigmirean, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-60.

challenges of a church facing a society where secularization and modernism earned permanent territory.

Data analysis shows that theological studies carried out abroad were an asset to the clergy decided to follow an ecclesiastical career. However, in the mid-XIX-th century, the lack studies abroad was not in the way of promoting a well-trained people. For those who wanted to study theology, the seminary of Blaj could offer an equally valuable curriculum of studies, even if it did not offer a doctoral degree. Under these circumstances we cannot condition a promotion to the highest ecclesiastical stalls by the theological studies carried out abroad. However, towards the end of the period of our research, the situation is somewhat nuanced, the theological studies abroad being those that made the difference between Bob canons and royal foundation canons. In the late XIX-th and early XX-th century it was clear that most of the clerics elected to be promoted to Bob canonical stalls were educated abroad, some even getting doctorates from European universities.

From the available data that we dispose of, of the 9 canons who earned a doctoral degree in theology and / or philosophy in the period studied, only one – Ambroziu Chețianu – was a canon of royal foundation, and the all rest were Bob canons. We can then ask ourselves how did the fact that he married in 1892, just a few months after obtaining the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Cluj, carried Ambroziu Chețianu away<sup>72</sup> from a rapid rise to Bob Chapter. Under the new circumstances, the possibility of access to the Chapter was given to him after two and a half decades of service within the Archdiocesan administration and within the department. By comparison, all the other eight canons, holders of a doctoral degree<sup>73</sup>, had a relatively rapid rise within the ecclesiastical administration, being elected to Bob Chapter after having served for 15 years on average the Romanian Church United. But what is evident by comparing the biographical elements of the canons of Blaj in the second half of the XIX-th century was a tendency to select promising young people, to send him to study and to enlist them to the ecclesiastical administration after returning to Blaj. At this point in our approach we considered another indicator in the analysis: the age at which the investigated priests assumed canonicate. The youngest canon was Vasile Hossu, chosen to be a theologian at 32 years and the oldest was Ioan V. Rusu, appointed prebendary canon at 75 years. The average age of election of a Bob canon to Bob Chapter was 44 years old and of canon of royal foundation, 55 years, with variations for each. But as we approach the end of the researched period, this trend seems to emphasize: the age of recruitment of a Bob canon gradually descended below 40 years, while in the first decades of the XX-th century Ioan V. Rusu, 75 years, and George Munteanu, 66 years, two of the oldest canons of Blaj,

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<sup>72</sup> *Unirea*, 1915, nr. 105-6, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> I. Rațiu, Al. Grama, A. Bunea, V. Hossu, V. Szmigelski, I. Marcu, V. Suciuc, Al. Nicolescu.

were appointed royal foundation canons. But correlating the recruitment age of canons with their studies we get an interesting result: all those who were appointed Bob canons before the age of 40 had a doctoral degree from a university from outside, specifically Vienna or Rome<sup>74</sup>. In their case, doctoral studies had been assimilated to the experience acquired in the church service, especially since they were accompanied by a rapid promotion to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. We cannot refrain from asking ourselves what would have been the further development of Ioan Rațiu, Alexandru Grama or Augustin Bunea, all the three of them died in the prime of life, if we were to compare their upward trajectory with that of the other three Bob canons, Doctors of Theology: Vasile Hossu, Vasile Suciu and Alexandru Nicolescu, all three arrived high hierarchs of the Romanian Church United. Therefore, a certain staff policy is perceptible even in the Archdiocesan and Metropolitan administration: by recruiting talented young men and by "sending them" on scholarships at European universities, so that, later on, on return, they should integrate them in ecclesiastical administration, they practically ensured an inexhaustible reservoir of labour, well prepared for the requirements of ecclesiastical administration, and a recruitment base for management positions.

We are offered equally interesting information, once quantified, by the data related to the ordination and the years of service performed by canons in different offices, correlated with the date they were appointed Metropolitan canons. Thus, Chapter Constitutions prescribed a 10 year period in *cura animarum*, in ecclesiastical administration or Blaj departments. We aimed to investigate the veracity of this statement, and the analysis performed on the 34 canons revealed that 19 (56%) of those who were appointed canons had performed between 10-20 years in various Archdiocesan offices of ecclesiastical administration before being appointed canons, 6 (18%) has performed between 20-30 years, and 7 (20.5%) 30-40 years of activity. Again, two exceptions, normally held by the two nominees to be the youngest, and the oldest canon, respectively: Vasile Hossu was promoted a canon at 10 years and a few months, succeeding to meet to the limit the prescriptions of the Chapter Constitutions, and Ioan V. Rusu counted 51 years in church service when he was appointed a canon. Given these conditions, we calculated the number of years in church ministry for the two categories of canons, obtaining the following averages: those elected to Bob Chapter had performed on average just a little more than 20 years, while in royal foundation canons the average was 30 years of ecclesiastical activity previous to the selection in the high office. Again, royal foundation canons were at a disadvantage to Bob canons: in the late XIX-th century, the married / widow clergy of the Archdiocese could not

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<sup>74</sup> This was the case of Ioan Rațiu, a theologian canon at 38 years; Alexandru Grama, a theologian canon at 39 years; Augustin Bunea, a theologian canon at 38 years; Vasile Hossu, a chancellor canon at 32 years; Vasile Suciu, a theologian canon at 37 years; Alexandru Nicolescu, a theologian canon at 33 years.

hope to entering the highest ecclesiastical office he was allowed to, before performing at least two decades of exemplary work.

There were of course exceptions to this rule: the younger canons of the Chapter, for the period under research, were Vasile Hossu, chosen a theologian canon at 32 years, after 10 years of activity, and Iosif Hossu, appointed a prebendary canon at 38 years, after 15 years of activity. The two had in common, apart from the rapid promotion, another aspect: the name, well known and highly respected in the period, both of them coming from a large family that had given the Romanian Greek Catholic Church many priests and deans. In this case, we consider that an additional factor with an equally important impact in the ecclesiastical promotion, was also created by the sphere of relationships in society that ensured the rapid ascent of the two young priests, an aspect that we intend to address in our future research.

### 3. A Comparative Approach of Two Cathedral Chapters

The first two parts of this study have been devoted to highlighting the features of the two Chapter institutions of Oradea and Blaj. The two steps of reconstruction have used relatively similar sources, the results being compatible to some extent, enough to allow some attempts to theorise. Thus, we are going to focus our attention on the celibacy of canons, on the correlation between education, celibacy and promotion, and on some obvious features of each diocese, such as the propensity for the appointment of a significant number of Oradea canons as Greek Catholic bishops or the existence of the theologian in the Chapter of Blaj.

The issue of the celibacy of canons raises an interesting problem: in Blaj, the Chapter founded by Bishop Bob unquestionably included only celibate clergy, and this situation remained unchanged for four decades. Only after the establishment of the Metropolitan Chapter in 1853 and the creation of the three offices of canons of royal foundation the married / widowed clergy was admitted to one of the most important institutions of the ecclesiastical administration of the diocesan level. However, no representative of the married clergy had the chance of promotion to the highest office of the Chapter, that of the preposytus or provost, because the preposytus was appointed only among Bob canons, as prescribed in 1807. Similarly, in the diocese of Oradea, the discrimination of the married or widowed clergy (in most cases they were already widowed when acceding to a canonical stall<sup>75</sup>) in the Chapter was related only to the number, not to the status: it was desirable that more celibate clergy should access these offices, but there was no prescription about the maximum position to which widower canons could promote.

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<sup>75</sup> Ana Victoria Sima, *art. cit.*, p. 248.

Thus, the Chapter of Oradea was led between 1879-1881 by the Preposytus Ioan Korhany, one of the widowed canons<sup>76</sup>.

Therefore, despite some prejudices existing in the history of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church, who went on the idea that the episcopacy of Oradea wore the Latinising signs more evidently, the specific study on sources, at least on canons, shows – with surprise for us, a reality that we would have expected less. If we consider that the promotion of the married sacerdotal clergy to the Chapter was accounted for as a way to affirm and preserve the Romanian Greek-Catholic religious identity against the levelling policy developed by the Roman Catholic Church, would it be an argument that could revive the debate of the idea that the large diocese of Oradea promoted (or was) a Latinising tendency?

The next aspect that we consider in this comparison is represented by the relationship between theological studies and the promotion within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The connection is obvious, sustained by percents, in both dioceses studied, especially in the late XIX-th century and early XX-th century. The chances of recruitment of the clergy for the Chapter grew exponentially when theological studies were completed by a doctoral degree; this trend is evident in Bob canons of Blaj, as we demonstrated above. But this connection is much more evident in the case of the canons of Oradea, since of the nine canons doctors of theology, five became bishops of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church<sup>77</sup>.

Next, we stop on the above observation. In the first three decades after the establishment of the Greek-Catholic Bishopric of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș, the Chapter of Oradea offered the chance of promotion to the rank of bishop for five canons (Alexandru Dobra, Ioan Alexi, Ioan Vancea, Iosif Papp-Szilágyi and Ioan Szabó); moreover, Canon Ioan Vancea was promoted in less than a decade to the highest ecclesiastical office of the Romanian Church United – Archbishop and Metropolitan – after a brief but significant halt in the bishop stall of Gherla. The most relevant explanation, otherwise stated in other titles of the historiography of the Romanian Church United, was that the model of Oradea was considered by the Holy See as one closer to the official, Latinizing line of Rome, while the archdiocese was the exponent of the Eastern tradition. Under these circumstances, those clerics who have gone in the Chapter of the Cathedral of Oradea through the selection requirements, through the filter of civil authorities, who have even received the approval of Rome, but also had the required higher education, had a chance to be considered and promoted to the hierarchy of a Metropolitan province in search of ecclesiastical leaders.

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<sup>76</sup> Although it does not fit the period addressed in this study, even the case of Ioan Radnoti is worth mentioning, as he was ordained after marriage, he became a canon and then a preposytus of the Chapter of Oradea between 1825-1842. Iacob Radu, *op. cit.*, pp. 204, 208.

<sup>77</sup> The five names listed above are added Florian Stan, appointed an auxiliary bishop in Oradea by the holder bishop, Valeriu Traian Frențiu, in 1922.

However, it should be noted that the available data that we have so far indicates an interesting situation, that deserves to be further investigated: in the early XX-th century, the nursery of bishops seems to have moved from Oradea to Blaj.

This trend can be connected including to the postgraduate theological studies, but data accuracy we must also take into account the situation of the canons of the other two dioceses of the Romanian Church United: Gherla and Lugoj. We also need to quantify other related matters, such as the system of relations, political involvement, directives of Rome, all of them essential in any ecclesiastical appointment.

Finally, we come back on a canonical office insufficiently addressed, we consider: that of the theologian of the Chapter of Blaj. As noted by Nicolae Brânzeu, except for Blaj, none of the Chapters of the Romanian Church United at that time had a theologian canon, although it was a significant role and its presence in the institution of the Chapter was prescribed by the Council of Trent<sup>78</sup>. In the act establishment of the Chapter of Blaj, Ioan Bob took care to include the provision that the appointment of the theologian should be the prerogative of the hierarch of Blaj. Under these circumstances, all the other documents that have regulated the development of the Chapter of the Cathedral of Blaj reconfirmed this provision. Metropolitan Victor Mihályi of Așsa made full use of this privilege in 1896. That year, the filling of vacant positions of the Metropolitan Chapter<sup>79</sup>; was initiated by the newly installed bishop; however, the minister of religions, rejected the two names submitted by the Metropolitan (Vasile Rațiu, Vicar of Făgăraș for the office of Chancellor Canon and Augustin Bunea, Secretary Metropolitan, for the office of theologian). Under these circumstances, on the advice of Bunea, the Metropolitan used the right set by Bishop Bob on choosing the theologian canon<sup>80</sup>; as to the appointment of Vasile Rațiu in the Chapter, it was unequivocally rejected by the ministry of church in Budapest, an apparently unprecedented situation in the ecclesiastical establishments of the Chapter of Blaj.

That situation described illustrates the increasingly striking mixture of civil authority in ecclesiastical establishments and the desire to control the access to these offices of desirable individuals. This episode draws our attention to the fact that at least in the access among Bob canons, the Archbishop of Blaj retained the final decision. Therefore, it is worth mentioning that of the six theologian canons elected under Metropolitan Victor Mihályi, five had doctoral degrees and all six had served less than 20 years in other church offices before joining the

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<sup>78</sup> N. Brânzeu, *art. cit.*, pp. 548-549.

<sup>79</sup> See more details in Diana Covaci, *Completarea scaunelor vacante din Capitulul mitropolitan de Alba-Iulia și Făgăraș*, in Nicolae Bocșan, Valeriu Leu, Ion Munteanu, Ion Pârnu (Eds.), *Biserică și comunitate în Transilvania și Banat*, I, Timișoara, 2007, pp. 71-80.

<sup>80</sup> A.N.D.J.A., *M.R.U.B. – Cabinetul Mitropolitului*, D. 1063/1896, ff. 7-8.

Metropolitan Chapter<sup>81</sup>, thus making clear the line of promotion sustained by the Archbishop of Blaj.

### Instead of conclusions

Through this study we tried to put face to face two versions of the same ecclesiastical institution that played a leadership role in the Romanian Church United: the Cathedral Chapter. The Chapter of Oradea and the Chapter of Blaj were the first of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church, as they represented two models to follow for the sister institutions created after the establishment of the Romanian Cathedral United and the creation of two new dioceses: Gherla and Lugoj. However, in historiography, the dioceses of Făgăraș and Oradea were considered representative of the patterns of ecclesiastical organization of oriental and Latin type; however, in our analysis we have shown that there are many insufficiently explored issues, many theories to be refined, which indicates that such labels should be used with caution in the future. An interesting aspect that we intend to pursue it in future research is the model chosen by the two dioceses established in 1853. The question whether the Chapters of Gherla and Lugoj have chosen a consecrated formula or a dedicated direction of development awaits the answer, which, in its turn, could provide surprises.

Our study revealed two sides of the same institution, obtaining interesting information related to personnel selection procedures; the prosopographic study clearly demonstrates the importance of higher theological studies and the link between them and a quick promotion within the ecclesiastical institutions. Celibacy was essential, although not necessary for all those who became canons, but the world of Blaj it was a condition of access to the select club of Bob canons, the place where many of the hierarchs of the Romanian Church United were chosen. However, the mechanisms of recruitment and promotion demonstrate the influence of some factors considered as secondary, but the impact of which can sometimes be crucial, such as the existence of a circle of strong relationships in society, the lack of obvious connections with the Romanian national movement or a favourable circumstance for promotion. All these should be quantified in their turn in order to provide an overview of the formation of an ecclesiastical elite.

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<sup>81</sup> For more details also see D. Covaci, *Aspecte din activitatea Capitulului mitropolitan de Alba-Iulia și Făgăraș în vremea mitropolitului Victor Mihályi de Apșa*, in Alexandru Buzalic, Ionuț Mihai Popescu (Eds.), *230 de ani de la Înființarea Eparhiei Române Unite de Oradea-Mare – Trecut, prezent și viitor. Oradea, 9-11 mai 2007*, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, pp. 331-349.