

## OLD CALENDARISTS' RELIGIOUS MINORITY IN ROMANIA – CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF THE HISTORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

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### Minoritatea religioasă a vechilor calendariști din România – o contribuție la studiul istoriei și al patrimoniului cultural

(Rezumat)\*

Timp de secole, România a fost centrul a numeroase comunități naționale, etnice și religioase, cu propriile organizații culturale și religioase. Grupul de credințe creștine care se găsește în această țară include comunități religioase protejate legal, marcate de trăsături specifice, cum ar fi percepția timpului, simbolismul spațiului, modele, precum și credințe, ritualuri și obiceiuri. Lucrarea prezintă minoritatea religioasă a calendariștilor vechi din România, apărută în cadrul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române la începutul secolului al XX-lea ca urmare a disputelor privind utilizarea calendarului liturgic. Sunt abordate probleme fundamentale asociate calendarelor gregoriane și iuliane, istoria calendariștilor vechi din România și bisericile care folosesc în prezent calendarul iulian în practica lor liturgică din România. În articol, sunt prezentate, de asemenea, artefacte-cheie ale patrimoniului cultural tangibil al calendariștilor vechi. Analiza se bazează pe metodologia calitativă, inclusiv pe rezultatele studiilor de teren realizate în România în perioada 2010–2020.

**Cuvinte cheie:** minorități religioase, calendariști vechi, România, teologia patrimoniului cultural, timp și locuri sacre.

### Introduction

Although seemingly unambiguous and universally clear, the issue of time and space discussed in the context of heritage and cultural memory is undoubtedly one of the nascent areas in interdisciplinary scientific research. Despite the fact that time and space are commonly believed to be

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straightforward, in fact they are some of the most challenging cultural categories to define<sup>1</sup>. Even though representatives of different cultures typically believe that these categories are perceived by everyone in a similar way, they are, in fact, subject to intercultural differences – the way they are experienced and evaluated and the associated notions vary significantly depending on one's culture and religion. Furthermore, there are often differences in how these categories are experienced within individual cultures. As for the notion of time, these differences primarily stem from various calendars (secular and religious ones) and so-called local traditions that, over the centuries, have developed their own time-related beliefs, rites, and customs. In the case of space, these differences may stem from urban or rural lifestyles, the sacred – profane dichotomy, or symbolic places and non-places. Anthropological research on time reveals the diversity and symbolism of time, describes different time-related traditions and sources, and at the same time shows how time exists in a given cultural space by permeating into the beliefs, rites, and customs of a given community. Such studies also pay attention to the minorities who use other-than-official calendars in their religious life, which often triggers many social and religious conflicts. The time is the central notion around which the cultural and religious identity of such minorities is often shaped. They form their own semiosphere, which can include places of worship and religious spaces (e.g. temples, chapels, roadside crosses, cemeteries, and holy springs), old religious books, religious artefacts (e.g. paintings, icons, portable crosses, banners, and flags), ceremonies, rites, and rituals (e.g. making the sign of the cross, religious holidays), and sites of memory (e.g. locations of the Holocaust, battles, pogroms, and martyrdom). Other factors influencing how individual cultures perceive the notions of time and space include their heritage and cultural memory. It is particularly visible in so-called difficult areas of research on cultural heritage and memory – one in which both space and time are experienced by traumatic memories of the community. In the collective mind a given community, such entire semiosphere might lead to the emergence of an alternative world of heritage and cultural memory, to which I refer as underground, i.e. the one that exists in parallel to the mainstream heritage.

In this paper, we are analysing the history of national, ethnic, and religious minorities in Romania which live according to so-called old calendar, i.e. the Julian calendar. My particular focus of interest is the efforts made in the early days of the independent Romanian state, which in 1918 managed to unite the three principalities, to unify the calendar and the resultant problems that arose in terms of reception of time-related heritage and cultural memory in this multicultural society. I want to shed light on the socio-religious groups that have not accepted the official time reform and still live according to their own tradition, where *tempus*, i.e. time they experience differently than the Romanian majority, is one of the symbols.

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<sup>1</sup> Z. Kijas (ed.), *Czas i kalendarz*, Kraków, 2001, p. 117.

I treat the history of these minorities as a difficult and forgotten cultural heritage whose memory and semiosphere should be highlighted in the public space and, consequently, as an inspiration for broader interdisciplinary research on this subject in the future. Only in this way can these minorities feel at home in Romania and in the space of European culture. As the history and space in which they live show, they cannot always count on understanding and tolerance on the part of majority communities. As a result, they have found it difficult to preserve their cultural heritage, which was often destroyed and doomed to oblivion. There are many examples of this type in the space of Central and Eastern Europe, to which some refer as “the land bathed in blood”.

### Julian and Byzantine calendars

I will start my considerations by pointing out that there are two different calendars officially used in liturgical life of the Orthodox Church in Romania: the Gregorian calendar, also known as the Revised Julian calendar, and the Julian calendar.

Just like in the entire Orthodox Church, until early 20<sup>th</sup> century Romania officially used the Julian calendar (‘old style’), which determined the rhythm of both religious and secular life. This calendar had an ancient provenance – it is believed to have been designed with the aid of astronomer Sosigenes of Alexandria, who, in 46 BC, modelled it on the Egyptian calendar at the behest of Julius Caesar (100–44 BC). The calendar was 365 days long plus a leap day every four years and was divided into 12 months varying in the number of days. Due to the loss of synchronisation with the seasons, Emperor Caesar Augustus had the calendar modified in 9 BC (63 BC – AD 14)<sup>2</sup>. The civil year began on January 1, and the liturgical year – on March 1. In 312, Emperor Constantine the Great (282–337) slightly modified the Julian calendar by starting the New Year on September 1 and introducing a 15-year cycle of periodic reassessments of taxation, so-called *indictions* (Latin: *indictio* – ‘impost’)<sup>3</sup>. At that time, the calendar was also divided into seven-day weeks, already used in the Babylonian and Jewish traditions. In addition, in 321, Constantine the Great ruled that Sunday, then known as *dies Solis*, should be a day off from work, similar to the Jewish Sabbath<sup>4</sup>. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, on the orders of Pope John I (d. 526), monk Denis the Little introduced

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<sup>2</sup> See also: B. Włodarski (ed.), *Chronologia polska*, Warszawa, 2007, pp. 35–39; H. Wąsowicz, “Kalendarz juliański i gregoriański”, in Z. Kijas (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 117–158; idem, “Kalendarz chrześcijański”, *ibidem*, pp. 77–115; E. G. Richards, *Odmierzanie czasu*, Warszawa, 1999, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> J. Naumowicz, *Geneza chrześcijańskiej rachuby lat. Historyczno-teologiczne podstawy systemu Dionizego Mniejszego*, Kraków, 2000, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> For more on the cult of the Sun (*Sol invictus, dies Solis*) and on the attitude of Emperor Constantine the Great and the Church towards it, see: J. Miziołek, *Sol verus. Studia nad ikonografią Chrystusa w sztuce pierwszego tysiąclecia*, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków, 1991, pp. 11–30.

the date of Jesus's birth into the Julian calendar and included it in his new Paschal tables, modelled on the Alexandrian tradition. This is how the Christian period, also known as the Dionysian period, came to be. It is counted from 1 AD, which was then mistakenly believed to be the year of Jesus's birth.

The 7<sup>th</sup> century was an important period in the history of the Julian calendar. This is when Christian writers and astronomers introduced further changes in it, which gradually began to dominate the tradition of the Byzantine calendar for several centuries to come. A new method of counting year one was implemented: year 753 BC (the foundation of Rome), considered year one in the Julian calendar, was replaced following the Hebrew tradition, with the year of the creation of the world, calculated based on the Old Testament (Septuagint) descriptions<sup>5</sup>. According to various complex calculations, the starting date was originally set to be March 21, 5509 BC – it was the Proto-Byzantine period. During the reign of Emperor Justinian (483–565), these calculations were modified, and the date of the creation of the world was transferred to September 1, 5508 BC. This time-counting method was called the Byzantine period and was applied in the state and church records and historical literature of the Byzantine Empire<sup>6</sup>. Starting from the 10th century onwards, this period was particularly common in the Empire and the Eastern Orthodox regions under its influence, where it was adhered to until the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, if not longer<sup>7</sup>.

### Disputes over the calendar. East vs. West

As the centuries passed, the discrepancy between the Julian calendar and the astronomical year grew wider. For this reason, the paschal cycle of Christianity was increasingly delayed in relation to the spring solstice, leading to a violation of the provisions of the First Council of Nicaea of 325, which strictly defined the Passover date. Furthermore, the Byzantine method often turned out to be impractical. After the decline of the Byzantine Empire, certain Orthodox regions ceased counting the time “since the creation of the world” and returned to the Julian calendar, modified by Denis the Little in the 6<sup>th</sup> century<sup>8</sup>. In practice, however, there still existed different

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<sup>5</sup> ks. J. Naumowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–30.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 109–112.

<sup>7</sup> M. Rautman, *Daily Life in the Byzantine Empire*, Westport 2006, pp. 3–14, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=hs3iEyVRHKsC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Daily+Life+in+the+Byzantine+Empire#v=onepage&q=Daily%20Life%20in%20the%20Byzantine%20Empire&f=false> (07.08.2021).

<sup>8</sup> In Russia, the Balkans (Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia), and Romania, the Byzantine period, often adhered to in parallel with the Julian and then Gregorian period, could be found in various cultural texts (in the semiotic sense) almost until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, this method of dating is still used in many Orthodox countries, mainly by clergy, but also by certain researchers associated with the Orthodox Church.

ways of measuring time, and therefore it was necessary to use different methods of conversion. As a result, there was an increasing need to make adjustments in this field<sup>9</sup>. The reform of the Julian calendar and the elimination of its divergence from the astronomical cycle were taken into consideration both in the East and in the West of Europe (e.g. Nicephorus Gregoras, Matthew Blastares, Argyros, or Georgios Gemistos – 14<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>10</sup>; ultimately, however, the calendar reform in the Byzantine Empire was never introduced.

In late 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Catholic Church, which had also noticed the problem, decided to modify the calendar. The special commission, established in 1576 to work on the new calendar, used the design prepared by brothers Aloysius and Antonio Lilius. Finally, on February 24, 1582, Pope Gregory XIII reformed the Julian calendar with his bull *Inter gravissimas*. As part of the correction, 10 days were skipped once (October 4, 1582 was to be followed by October 15, 1582), and the system of calculating leap years changed (centennial years which cannot be divided by 400 ceased to be leap years; in addition, a leap day was introduced permanently as an additional last day of February). The adjustment of dates introduced by the Gregorian calendar did not cover the entire period of the Julian calendar, but only the period from the First Council of Nicaea (AD 325). With this reform, the concurrence between the astronomical equinox and the date of Easter established by the Second Council of Nicaea was restored. The reformed calendar was called Gregorian. It allowed for a large convergence between the calendar (Gregorian) year and the tropical year. Since then, the deviations from the actual equinox date have not exceeded more than one day (the real equinox occurs between March 20 and 22).

Due to the introduction of the Gregorian calendar, its relation to the Julian one became very dynamic. In the following centuries, the difference between the Julian and Gregorian calendars grew annually. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was 10 days, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century – 11, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – 12, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries – 13 days.

It is worth pointing out that this was not a brand-new liturgical calendar but a reform of the old Julian calendar that had stemmed from the gap between it and

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<sup>9</sup> Gheorghe Pungă, *Studiul izvoarelor. Științe speciale (Științe speciale ale istoriei. Paleografia româno-chirilică)*, Iași, 2010–2011.

<sup>10</sup> E. Th. Theodossiou, V. N. Manimanis, M. S. Dimitrijević, E. Danesis, “The great byzantine astronomer Nicephoros Gregoros and Serbs”, în “Publications de l’Observatoire Astronomique de Belgrade”, 80 (2006), pp. 269–274, <http://publications.aob.rs/80/pdf/269-274.pdf> (11.08.2021); I. Rămureanu, M. Șesan, T. Bodogae, *Istoria bisericească universală pentru Institutetele teologice (1054–1982)*, București, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1993, p. 164; A. Jevtić, “Istorija raskola «starokalendaraca» u Grčkoj», [http://www.svetosavlje.org/biblioteka/Izazovi/Zablude/Lat\\_zablude04.htm](http://www.svetosavlje.org/biblioteka/Izazovi/Zablude/Lat_zablude04.htm) (11.08.2021); E. Braniște, D. Radu, I. Mircea, “Calendarul bisericesc și Stilismul”, <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/liturgica/calendarul/calendarul-bisericesc-stilismul-70736.html>; D. Bădulescu, “Calendaristic reforms”, [http://www.hexaimeron.ro/pdf/calendar/Calendaristic\\_reforms.pdf](http://www.hexaimeron.ro/pdf/calendar/Calendaristic_reforms.pdf) (11.08.2021).

the astronomical cycle. For this reason, some researchers argue that the Gregorian calendar cannot be referred to as new in the strict sense of the term. The reform did not entail breaking with the past and creating a different calendar from scratch but only updating the former Julian calendar. Nevertheless, modifying the calendar, particularly the date of Easter, sparked great controversy, especially in the Orthodox and Protestant churches, which initially refused to accept the changes put forward by the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Due to the schism in Christianity, which had already grown very strong on both sides, the reform was not accepted by the Orthodox East. What is more, it only became another factor widening the gap between the two Churches, and thus between their followers. Because the envoys of Pope Gregory XIII were urging the Orthodox churches to adopt the new calendar, in November 1583 the Council of Constantinople issued a pan-Orthodox sigillion to anathematise, among others, the Pope (anathema VI), the Paschalia, and the new calendar (anathema VII)<sup>11</sup>. This document was signed by the ecumenical patriarch Jeremias II (1536–1595), Sylvester of Alexandria (1590–1601), Sophronius IV of Jerusalem (1579–1608), and the bishops attending the synod. These anathemas were confirmed in the Tomos at subsequent synods in Constantinople in 1587 and in 1593. During the latter, an important role was played by Meletius I Pegas, Greek Patriarch of Alexandria (1590–1601). The Gregorian calendar was rejected by the Orthodox Church until the 1920s<sup>12</sup>.

In early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the calendar issue was debated throughout the Orthodox Church. As early as 1919, during the synod of the Greek Orthodox Church, the then Archbishop of Athens Meletios Metaxas (1871–1935) proposed the appointment of a specialised commission that would deal with reforming the calendar. He stuck with the idea of this reform also after he was elected Meletios IV, Patriarch of Constantinople, in 1921 (1871–1935, as patriarch from 1921), narrating a dialogue with autocephalous Orthodox Churches aimed at unifying the calendar between them and the countries of Western Europe and America, which used the Gregorian calendar. In 1923, Meletios IV called a synod to Constantinople, later known as the “Pan-Orthodox” Congress, which appointed a special commission tasked with organising the calendar and adjusting it to astronomical reality. It debated from May 11 to June 8, 1923. Apart from the Patriarch of Constantinople, the commission members included Metropolitan Callikos of Kizik, layman V. Antoniadis (Professor at the Halki Theological Institute), Metropolitan

<sup>11</sup> “The Sigillion of the Council in Constantinople in 1583”, <http://www.orthodox.net/ecumenism/sigillion-council-constantinople-1583.html> (11.08.2021).

<sup>12</sup> Bishop Ciprian of Orehoi, “The «Sigillion» of 1583 Against «the Calendar Innovation of the Latins»: Myth or Reality?”, [http://www.synodinresistance.org/pdfs/2011/07/04/20110704aSigillion/20110704a Sigillion.pdf](http://www.synodinresistance.org/pdfs/2011/07/04/20110704aSigillion/20110704a%20Sigillion.pdf) (11.08.2021); T. Kałużny SCJ, “Kalendarz liturgiczny w rycie bizantyńskim”, in Z. Kijas (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 173; L. Pięropielkina, *Juliański kalendarz prawosławny*, Hajnówka, 1997.

Basil of Nicea from Cyprus (later Ecumenical Patriarch, 1925–1929), Metropolitan Gabriel of Montenegro (later Serbian Patriarch, †1952), laymen Milutin Milankovitch (professor of mathematics and mechanics at Belgrade University, Greek Metropolitan James of Drach, Archimandrite Jules (Scriban) from Romania<sup>13</sup>, and Archbishop Alexander Nomolovsky of North America and the Aleutian Islands, who at that time did not represent any Church. The Romanian representative was supported by Gheorghe Demetrescu, mathematician and astronomer, Professor at the Astronomical Observatory in Bucharest, and Petru Drăghici, astronomer from Sibiu, who, similarly to the Serbian delegation, presented their own idea of solving the calendar issue<sup>14</sup>. The first session of the commission was also attended by Archbishop Anastassy (Gribanovsky, later Metropolitan) of Kishinev and Hotinsk, who represented the Russian Orthodox Church abroad (Russian: Русская Православная Церковь Заграницей); however, with no clear instructions concerning the calendar reform, he soon abandoned the meeting. The key patriarchs of the pentarchy (Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem) as well as the representatives of the Russian Church, the Archbishop of Sinai, and the Bulgarian Church protested against the change and refused to take part, referring to the non-canonical activity of the congress as threatening the unity of orthodoxy<sup>15</sup>.

The reform-related decisions of the congress were based primarily on the resolutions of the First Council of Nicaea of 325 regarding the Jewish Passover. As early as 1924, the 13 days which delayed the Julian calendar in relation to the tropical year were removed, and the spring equinox was moved from March 8 to March 21, which, in fact, meant aligning the dates with the Gregorian calendar. From then on, all fixed holidays in the liturgical calendar were to be celebrated in accordance with the Gregorian calendar, while the movable Passover and related holidays were to fall as decided by the Council of Nicaea of 325, i.e. on the first Sunday after the first spring full moon at the earliest<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> M. S. Dimitrijević, E. Th. Theodossiou, P. Z. Mantarakis, “Milutin Milanković and the reform of the Julian calendar in 1923”, in “Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage”, 2008, 11 (1), pp. 50–54.

<sup>14</sup> Photius of Traditsa, “The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Pan-Orthodox Congress. A Major Step on the Path Towards Apostasy”, part II, [http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/photii\\_2.aspx](http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/photii_2.aspx); E. Theodossiou, V. N. Manimanis, M. S. Dimitrijević, “Six calendar systems in the European history from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Century”, in “Bulgarian Astronomical Journal” 16 (2011), pp. 109–129, <http://www.astro.bas.bg/AIJ/issues/n16/ETheodos.pdf>; T. Czekański, *Pogrobowcy Wielkiej Idei. Przemiany społeczne w Grecji w latach 1923–1940*, Kraków 2007, p. 154; A. Borkowski, *Stanowisko Patriarchy Jeremiasza II Tranosa wobec zmiany kalendarza przez Watykan*, “Elpis”, 2012, 16, pp. 369–389; A. Borkowski, “Materiały greckie do autokefalii Kościoła prawosławnego w Polsce”, part I, in “Wschodni Rocznik Humanistyczny”, 2009, vol. VI, pp. 359–391.

<sup>15</sup> Photius din Triaditsa, *A 70-a aniversare a congresului Pan-ortodox, partea a doua (ultima). Un pas important spre apostazie*, [http://www.voxdeibaptist.org/Aniversarea\\_Pan\\_Ortodox02.htm](http://www.voxdeibaptist.org/Aniversarea_Pan_Ortodox02.htm) (11/08/2021).

<sup>16</sup> R. P. Mureșan, *op. cit.*, pp. 24–25. It also includes further bibliography on the subject.

The clash of “the old” and “the new” in the Orthodox Church ended with another disturbance of the unity of and, ultimately, the division of the Orthodox Church. As already mentioned, the decisions of the congress concerning the calendar reform were recognised only by some Orthodox churches. In 1924, the new calendar was adopted by the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Churches of Greece, Romania, Albania, Georgia, and Cyprus. The Churches of Finland (1924) and Poland (1925), the Patriarchate of Alexandria (1928), and the Great Monastery of Vatopedi (1930) soon followed suit. Around the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the reform was introduced by the Patriarchate of Antioch (1940), the Church of Czechoslovakia (1951), and the Church of Bulgaria (1968). The Churches of Russia, Serbia, Holy Mount Athos (except the Monastery of Vatopedi), and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem kept the Julian calendar<sup>17</sup>.

The issue of the Orthodox calendar was also raised at the Pan-Orthodox Synod convened at the Great Monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos in June 1930, at the First Congress of Orthodox Theology in Athens in 1936, and at the Conference of Autocephalous Orthodox Churches in Moscow in 1948. The calendar reform re-entered the debate in the entire Orthodox world in the 1970<sup>s</sup> and continues to this day<sup>18</sup>.

### Romanian controversy

The calendar reform introduced in Western Europe and adopted by various Catholic countries as well as the echoes of theological disputes also reached the territories of Romanian countries. It was all mentioned by the Catholic clergy in their letters sent to popes and papal nuncios from Transylvania in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, including by Ferrante Caperi<sup>19</sup>. Broader discussions on the subject among Orthodox clergy began in Romania in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and continued in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the monastic milieu, they were raised by such monks as Hieromonk Laurent from the Hurezu monastery (in 1751), clergyman Radu (in 1806), who included them at the end of the *Book of Psalms*, the old man Benedict from the Neamţ monastery (in 1843), and the Archimandrite Nikifor of Buzău (in 1867)<sup>20</sup>. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these considerations moved to the secular milieu and were taken up by the government of Prime

<sup>17</sup> L. Patsavos, “Kalendarz liturgiczny”, in K. Leśniewski, J. Leśniewska (eds.), *Prawosławie. Światło wiary i źródło doświadczenia*, Lublin, 1999, p. 70.

<sup>18</sup> For more, see also: R. P. Mureşan, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–29; “Rezoluțiile adoptate în Conferința Ortodoxă de la Moscova”, in “Ortodoxia”, 1949, nr. 1, pp. 123–124; “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, 1948, Issue 11–12, pp. 652–653.

<sup>19</sup> F. Capececi, “Către nunțul din Polonia Bolognetti 1584 februarie 10, Alba Iulia”, in: M. Holban (ed.), *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. II, București, 1970, pp. 95–97; “Superstiții în legătură cu calendarul nou. Relație anonimă”, *op. cit.*, pp. 115–117.

<sup>20</sup> R. P. Mureşan, *Stilismul în România (1924–2011)*, Sibiu, Editura Agnos, 2012, p. 20.



Minister Alexander I Cuzo (1820–1873). As a result of the gradual secularisation, the discussion on the calendar reform thus encompassed two different environments, the religious and the secular, with each associated with different cultural influences (the Romanian Church – with the Byzantine and Slavic world, and the state—with the Latin world) derived from the notions embraced by the majority of Romanian intellectuals since the formation of the Transylvanian School movement in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>21</sup>. Due to the increasingly close contacts with the circle of Latin culture and the associated political and national mythology of Romanian intellectuals that was popularised in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the issue of adopting the calendar reform started to be treated as another step towards turning Romania into a modern, European country. In 1863, Dimitrie Bolintineanu (1818–1872), who was the minister of education in the government of Mihail Kogălniceanu, brought together representatives of the government and Orthodox clergy to attend a meeting where he outlined the problem of calendar change, moving these considerations from the dogmatic to the scientific field. The commission debated until January 12, 1864, and as part of the conclusions, the clergy agreed to change the calendar and adopt it in the Orthodox Church together with the state. These decisions, however, triggered strong dissatisfaction among some intellectual elites associated with the Church and religious elites in Romania<sup>22</sup>. Some of the protesting voices accused the clergy of catholicising the society and disobeying the Orthodox canons as well as the tradition of the Eastern Church. Among the critics in the secular public was the Patriarch of Constantinople Sophronius III (1798–1899), who sent a letter to the then Metropolitan of Ungrovlachiei Nifon Rusailă (1789–1875), reminding him that he should use the calendar of the entire Orthodox world<sup>23</sup>. In this context, both the Orthodox Church and the state decided to stick to the old style.

In early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the calendar issue in Romania resurfaced in many discussions. Due to Romanian interactions with Western countries, education of the young generation of Romanians in the West, and the problems experienced by Romanian institutions collaborating with foreign organisations (railways, post office, telegraph services, and banks)<sup>24</sup>, there appeared an urgent need to adapt the Romanian time calculation to the Gregorian calendar. As early as 1890, the Scientific Society in Bucharest established a dedicated commission to investigate time-related issues, which developed a special project to introduce the Gregorian calendar in Romania. The commission consisted of renowned figures from the Romanian scientific milieu, including astronomer and professor at the University of Bucharest Nicolae Coculescu (1866–1959), Sorbonne graduate, astronomer, and

<sup>21</sup> Lucian Boia, *Rumunii. Świadomośc, mity, historia*, Kraków, 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Melchisedec, episcop de Roman, "Biserica Ortodoxă și calendariul", in „Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, anul V, 1881, pp. 561–604.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.mitropoliaslatioara.ro/calendarul.php#1.15>.

<sup>24</sup> R. P. Mureşan, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

mathematician Spiru Haret (1851–1912), Metropolitan of Moldavia Kalinik Miculescu (1875–1902), and politician and governmental minister Ermil Pangrati (1864–1931). July 19, 1900 was set as the date of transition to the *new style*<sup>25</sup>. On March 15, 1900, the commission's report was presented to the Romanian Parliament, but after it had been sent for further elaboration, other dedicated committees started working on it, thus delaying the adoption of the calendar<sup>26</sup>.

The calendar predicament reappeared in 1916, after Romania had joined the war with Turkey. At that time, the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Romania and the presence of numerous representatives of the Western world led to many changes in everyday life, including religion. Furthermore, the Catholic clergy kept making every effort to introduce the Gregorian calendar in countries where it had not been implemented earlier. Pursuant to the recommendations of the Pope of Rome Benedict XV (1854–1922), in 1916 the German and Austro-Hungarian military heads proposed to the representatives of the Romanian Church to celebrate Christmas and New Year's Eve together according to the Catholic (Gregorian) calendar<sup>27</sup>. The official stand of the Metropolitan of the Romanian Orthodox Church Conon Arămescu Donici (1837–1922) was in favour of the request of the occupying armies. Unfortunately, the protests of some Orthodox clergy and the reintroduction of the calendar issue into public debate caused further complications and disputes. One person particularly reluctant to the idea was the Archimandrite of the Supreme Metropolis of Romania (Romanian: Metropolia Primate a României) Galaction Cordun (1883–1959), who on December 29, 1916, addressed the metropolitan with a letter protesting against the calendar change and accusing the German governor of interfering with the internal affairs of the Church<sup>28</sup>. The letter gave rise to the first 'calendar' persecution in Romania. Cordun, arrested on suspicion of engaging in harmful activities for the benefit of the Germans, spent several months in prison, from where he continued to express his dissatisfaction with the calendar modification<sup>29</sup>. Due to the wave of protests, both the government and the Romanian Orthodox Church officially abandoned the idea of adopting the Gregorian calendar. However, discussions on the topic and attempts to reconcile the rival parties continued and intensified after the 1918 Romanian annexation of

<sup>25</sup> Ion Bulei, *Lumea românească la 1900*, București, Editura Eminescu, 1984.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.mitropoliaslatioara.ro/calendarul.php#1.15> (04.12.2021).

<sup>27</sup> See: [https://m.facebook.com/Iubim-Mitropolia-Slatioara-513746378639926/?ref=page\\_internal&mt\\_nav=0&locale2=pl\\_PL](https://m.facebook.com/Iubim-Mitropolia-Slatioara-513746378639926/?ref=page_internal&mt_nav=0&locale2=pl_PL) (04.12.2021).

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Archimandrite G. Cordun to Archbishop Conon, see: "Însemnări ale arhimandritului Galaction din anul 1916, adresate Mitropolitului Primate Conon, cu privire la anunțata schimbare a calendarului"; <http://www.crucea.ro/2007/07/13/ps-galaction-cordun-note/> (11.08.2021). More on the life of this figure and their role in the history of the Old Calendarists in Romania, see: "Întâmpinarea ÎPSM Galaction Cordun la Slătioara, 1955"; [http://www.crucea.ro/2007/07/11/intimpinarea-ipsm-galaction-la-slatioara-1955/July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007](http://www.crucea.ro/2007/07/11/intimpinarea-ipsm-galaction-la-slatioara-1955/July%2011%202007) (11.08.2021).

<sup>29</sup> See: [https://m.facebook.com/Iubim-Mitropolia-Slatioara-513746378639926/?ref=page\\_internal&mt\\_nav=0&locale2=pl\\_PL](https://m.facebook.com/Iubim-Mitropolia-Slatioara-513746378639926/?ref=page_internal&mt_nav=0&locale2=pl_PL) (04.12.2021).

Transylvania, a vast province mainly inhabited by Protestants and Uniates, who had already been using the Gregorian calendar. The annexation sealed the adoption of a single calendar style. The Romanian army was the first to adopt the new calendar style in all provinces of the country, which occurred on the 1<sup>st</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> of February 1919. Soon, the government passed *Decretul-lege no. 1 053*, introducing the Gregorian calendar in Romania on April 1, 1919. Under this resolution, April 1, 1919 of the old style officially became April 14, 1919 of the new style. Since then, the state has been officially calculating all dates in Romania in line with the Gregorian calendar. The adoption of this calendar sparked off numerous conflicts throughout the country. Some regions (including Bessarabia) were not administratively prepared for the new style, which brought about a lot of difficulties for the state offices<sup>30</sup>. In addition, the new style was rejected by the representatives of the Orthodox Church, who had an enormous influence on the Romanian population. The Orthodox followers, who so far had been living in the sense of the unity of time, were suddenly forced to use the double time measure in everyday life. At the time, at least two calendars began to function simultaneously in Romania – the secular Gregorian calendar and the church Julian calendar.

After the decisions of the 1923 Pan-Orthodox Congress of Constantinople, the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church was convened to work out the details of the new calendar. In June and August 1924, the Synod sent out a document on the calendar reform to all the clergy and faithful in the country, explaining the rationale and recommendations on how to implement it. Representatives of the Romanian Orthodox Church, led by Metropolitan Miron Criste, introduced the Gregorian calendar on October 1, 1924, which became October 14, 1924. It was decided to move the holidays celebrated from October 1 to October 14 of the old style to 14 – 27 October of the new style. Also, the date of Passover was aligned with the Julian calendar (according to the old Paschalia). It was pointed out that the calendar reform was not directed against the dogmas and canons of the Orthodox Church but introduced due to religious, scientific, social, and economic reasons.

### **Romanian minorities of the Old Calendarists, i.e. the followers of the old calendar**

The lack of unanimity in the adoption of the calendar reform also caused another split in the Orthodox world. The local Churches that rejected the new version of the Julian calendar, i.e. the churches of Greece, Bulgaria, Poland, and Romania, experienced a schism in autocephaly that resulted in the formation of the so-called Old Calendarists faction, also referred to as *stylists* in Romania.

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<sup>30</sup> Petru Furtună, *Problema calendarului și istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe de Stil Vechi din România*, Chișinău, 2005.

The disputes and protests against the new calendar also led to the division in the Orthodox Church in Romania, which continues to this day. Part of the clergy perceived the Julian calendar in sacred terms as part of the Great Tradition of the Orthodox Church, which had shaped at the dawn of Christianity in accordance with the canons of the undivided Church councils. Other contributing factors included ideological considerations and the reluctance to accept the calendar designed by the highest authorities of the Catholic Church. For this reason, certain clerics in Romania perceived the 1923 Constantinople conference to be non-canonical and left the official Autocephalous Orthodox Church. In protest and fear of persecution, some went to live in seclusion. Particularly harsh criticism and opposition to the calendar reform came from Moldavian clergy, including priests and monks from the monasteries of Neamț, Secu, Sihăstria, and their sketes. Soon, they were joined by nuns from Moldavian monasteries, especially from Agapia and Văratec. Some of the clergy left the monasteries that had adopted the “Gregorian calendar” and went into isolation. Many of them lived in remote mountains and forests, in grottos, caves, and dugouts that only a few people knew about. One of the first protesters was Mother Mary (Magdalena) Gligă, who left the monastery of Văratec in 1926 with another unknown nun and settled in a dugout in the nearby woods<sup>31</sup>. Another protester was Hieromonk Glicherie Tănase, who was an old man of the Moldavian Pocrov skete<sup>32</sup>. Certain clerics moved from monasteries to villages, where, together with the faithful, founded the first prayer houses to secretly participate in religious rites celebrated according to the Julian calendar. One of them was Archimandrite Eustație Andreescu, who built religious places in the villages of Zănești, Roznov, Săvinești, Mestecăn, Borlești, and Rediu<sup>33</sup>.

In the face of the evolving influence of adherents of the Julian calendar, the circumstances of the Orthodox Church became so difficult that the hierarchy of the autocephalous Church asked the state authorities for help. This marked the outset of years of persecutions against the Romanian Old Calendarists, which were very turbulent. In many cities and towns, the military ostentatiously demolished places of religious worship, often along with liturgical utensils and sacred objects. The whereabouts of rebellious monks and nuns were also destroyed, often in full view of the public. In February 1926, monks Galaction, Paisie, and Benjamin, who had been living in caves in the Rusu Mountains, as well as monks from the monasteries of Neamț, Secu, and Părăul Neagru in the Neamț Mountains were arrested and imprisoned. The indignation of the clergy and the faithful, not only on the part of the Old Calendarists, was also triggered by the order of the Romanian

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<sup>31</sup> Arhivele Naționale Române, Fond *Inspectoratul General al Jandarmeriei*, Issue 5/1936, f. 6–9, after: R. P. Mureșan, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.mitropoliaslatioara.ro/calendarul.php#1.15> (1.03.2021).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

Patriarchate to celebrate the Passover in years 1926 and 1929 together with the Catholic Church. This only aggravated the religious disputes in the country<sup>34</sup>.

In late 1920s, the old stylists began to organise a new Church, established in the village of Vânători, near the Monastery of Neamț, in the house belonging to Michail and Ian Urzică (Mihai și Ioan Urzică). This Church was called the “Orthodox Church of the Old Style in Romania” (Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din România), with Hieromonk Glicherie Tănase appointed its first metropolitan<sup>35</sup>. By 1936, approximately forty old-style Orthodox churches had been built, mostly in Moldavia. Due to the ever-widening influence of this Church and the growing number of followers, Miron Cristea, Patriarch of the Romanian Autocephalous Church, ordered to destroy it by force. The persecution of the Old Calendarists continued until the outbreak of World War II, when over 130 clerics and monks were arrested, including Hieromonk Glicherie and hundreds of believers. The monasteries and churches of the stylists were completely wrecked.

During the wartime regime of Ion Antonescu (1940–1944), the Old Calendarists were recognised as one of the official denominations next to the Orthodox followers of the Gregorian calendar. There were seven official religions at that time, and the rest were considered illegal associations and sects<sup>36</sup>. After the war, the Old Calendarists began to establish the structures of the new Church. They chose the town of Slătioara in the Suceava district as the main place of their cultural heritage. In the years 1947–1948, an Orthodox monastery was built there, which to this day is the main monastery of the Old Calendarists and the seat of the Orthodox Church of the Old Style in Romania. Other crucial places of worship also include the monasteries of Our Lady of Protection “Brădișel”, built after the war in Bodești near Piatra Neamț, and of St. Glicherie “Brădișel” in the village of Plosici near Suceava<sup>37</sup>. During communism, this Church enjoyed relative freedom, and had the status of a cult tolerated by civil authorities. At the time, the Old Calendarists were allowed to build a few new places of worship and ordain new clergy. Today, after 1990, the Church enjoys complete freedom and is recognised as a full-fledged religion by the Ministry of Religious Denominations. However, there is still conflict and a lot of debating between the Orthodox clergy of the old and new styles, and their respective followers.

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<sup>34</sup> Archbishop Grigorie of Bessarabia opposed the decision of the Romanian Church and ordered the parishes that remained under his jurisdiction to celebrate Easter together with the entire Orthodox world according to the Julian calendar. See: <http://www.mitropoliaslatioara.ro/calendarul.php#1.15>.

<sup>35</sup> For more, see also: “Despre Sf. Glicherie la Muntele Athos”; <http://www.crucea.ro/> (12.8.2021) and “Figuri proeminente păstrătoare ale vechilor tradiții: ieromonahul Glicherie, ierodiaconul David, schimonahul Damaschin”; <http://www.mitropoliaslatioara.ro/calendarul.php#1.15> (12.08.2021).

<sup>36</sup> R. P. Mureșan, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>37</sup> V. Mogârzan, archbishop and metropolitan, <http://www.mitropoliaslatioara.ro/istoricpersecutia.php> (12.08.2021); Maica Stareță Schimonachia Varvara Blaga (eds.), *Chipurile monahale de ieri și azi. Istoricul Mănăstirii Brădișel Neamț*, București, Editura „Adormirea Maicii Domnului”, 2009; <https://issuu.com/anavirlan/docs/chipuri.monahale.de.ieri.si.de.azi> (01.12.2021).



Photo. 1. Slătioara Monastery, photo by Cezar Suceveanu.  
Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=slatioara+M%C3%A2n%C4%83stire&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image>  
(12.03.2022).

It is worth mentioning that, in addition to the Orthodox Romanians, the Julian calendar is used by the Old Believers, locally referred to as Lippovans, who settled in the Romanian land at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. These descendants of the followers of the Russian Orthodox Old-Rite Church, after the wave of bloody persecution that had befallen them in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Russia, chose the life of wandering and spread to various corners of the world. The banishment was inspired by the theological controversies and disputes that had been aggravating in the Russian Orthodox Church since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, including inaccurate translations of liturgical and theological books, the growing dogmatism and ritualism of the religion, magic, and the ever deeper moral decline among the Orthodox clergy<sup>38</sup>. All the above gave rise to the inconsistencies regarding the Orthodox observances and, with time, to the clashes between traditionalists and the

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<sup>38</sup> Aleksandr Varona, "Rușii lipoveni: repere istorice" (further quoted as: "Rușii lipoveni..."); <http://pl.scribd.com/doc/2670288/rusii-lipoveni-repere-istorice-drd> (02.08.2021); idem, *Tragedia schismei ruse. Reforma patriarhul Nikon și începuturile staroverilor* (further quoted as: *Tragedia schismei ruse...*), București, Editura Kriterion, 2002.

so-called innovators in the Russian Orthodoxy. The cult reform modelled on Greece and introduced by Tsar Aleksey I Mikhaylovich Romanov (1629–1676) and Patriarch Nikon (1652–1658), which disregarded the postulates of the so-called brotherhood led by Protopope Avvakum Petrovich (1621–1682) from Yuryev-Povolzhsky, Daniel Kostromsky, and Ivan Neronov, met with numerous protests of the clergy and the faithful<sup>39</sup>. The Great Moscow Synod, convened in 1667–1768, rejected their postulates and anathematised the old rites. At that time, there was the splitting of the Russian Orthodox Church into an official church and the Old Believers movement, also known as the Raskol movement<sup>40</sup>. The Old Believers expelled from Moscow and the surrounding area went on wandering in two directions. One led to the wilderness of northern Russia, where the old ritualists settled mainly on the White Sea, by Onega Lake<sup>41</sup>, around Pustoziersk near Arkhangelsk, in the Ural Mountains of the Komi Republic, by the lower Pechora River (Ust'-Cylma settlement). In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, they appeared on the rivers of Kerzhenets and Don in Siberia and in remote forests of the Volga valley. Everywhere they went, they established settlements, villages, and centres of religious worship such as hermitages, churches, and monasteries. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they set off to the Kuban region, and then, having crossed the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea, together with the Cossacks led by ataman Kondraty Bulavin, and after his death – by Ignat Nekrasov, they appeared in the territory of what was then Romania, near Dobruja and the Danube Delta<sup>42</sup>.

The second wandering route led to the northwest of Russia. At the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, great clusters of Old Believers were formed in the vicinity of Novgorod and Pskov, Kaluga, Starodub, Novozubkov, Vietka on the Sozh River, in the areas of today's Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and also in the territory of the Republic of Poland (Augustów region, Suwałki region, and Olsztyn and Białystok voivodeships). After further tsarist persecution, some of the old ritualists passed through Chernobyl, Zhytomyr, Podole, and Bohem only to reach the Romanian land in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and settle in Northern and Southern Bukovina – in Bila Krynytsia and in the vicinity of the towns of Suceava and Botoșani. In 1781, Emperor Joseph II (1741–1790) legitimised the right of Old Believers to settle in Bukovina, and in 1783 he guaranteed their religious freedom in those territories<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Avvakum Protopop, "Listy do cara Aleksego Michałowicza", in "Znak" 1980, Issue 1.

<sup>40</sup> Aleksandr Varona, *Tragedia schismei ruse...*

<sup>41</sup> One of the first Old Believers' settlements was established in Karelia, on the Vygus River, between Lake Onega and the White Sea. It quickly grew into a vast community of thousands of believers. See also: Z. Greg-Pabisowa, *Staroobrzędowcy. Szkice z historii, języka, obyczajów*, Warszawa, 1999, p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> Aleksandr Varona, "Rușii lipoveni...".

<sup>43</sup> Filip Ipatiov, *Rușii-lipoveni din România*, Cluj-Napoca, 2002; Z. Jaroszewicz-Pieresławcew, "Staroobrzędowcy na Bukowinie", in K. Feleszko (ed.), *Bukowina po stronie dialogu*, Sejny, 1999,



Photo 2. Monastery of Old Believers, *Bila Krynycia* (rum. Fântâna Albă), Ukrainian-Romanian border, photo by Ewa Kocój, 2015.

Nowadays, the Old Believers live throughout Romania. As in other regions, they are divided into two major strains: the Popovtsy (“priested ones”), administratively belonging to the town of Bila Krynytsia, and the Bezpopovtsy (“priestless ones”), subordinate to the archdiocese in the town of Novozâbkov (now Russia), comprising several Romanian villages. Researchers know approximately 70 towns and villages where the old ritualists have settled. However, this population in Romania is constantly decreasing. In the 2002 Romanian census, 35 791 people claimed to be Russian, and most of them were believed to be Russian Lippovans. In the “Population by mother tongue” category, 29 246 people

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pp. 137–145; R. Fr. Kaindl, *Kleine Studien zur Alterthumskunde der Bukowina. Zum Sonneneinfall. Die Lippowaner. Zauberglaube bei den Ruthenen*, Czernowitz 1893; G. Kobierzecka-Sikorska, “Ignacy Wysoczański – arcybiskup hierarchii białokrynickiej”, in K. Feleszko (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 146–152; Melchisedec Ștefănescu, episcop al Dunării de Jos, *Lipovenismul, adică schismaticii sau rascolnicii și ereticii rusești după autori ruși și izvoare naționale române*, București, 1871; S. Moldovan, *Comunitatea rușilor lipoveni*, București, 2004; I. I. Nistor, “Cercetări asupra cultului lipovenesc din România”, in “Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile istorice”, 1946, series III, vol. 29, Mem. 9, p. 39.



reported speaking Russian on a daily basis. This proves that sometimes foreign nationalities penetrate this ethnic group (e.g. by marriage), and that approximately 1/6 of Lippovans do not know their mother tongue or know it only partially. Furthermore, slightly more respondents (38 147) checked the category of “Old-Rite Christians”. In the 2011 National Census, the number of Russian Lippovans dropped by about 1/3 compared to the 2002 census. Data reveal that 23 864 people currently admit to be Russian, and 18 971 people speak Russian<sup>44</sup>.



Photo 3. Monastery of Old Believers, *Bila Krynycia* (rum. Fântâna Albă), Ukrainian-Romanian border. Photo by Ewa Kocój, 2015.

The Old Believers use Church Slavonic as their liturgical language; they also use old liturgical books written in Church Slavonic, typically originating from Ruthenia. These books, along with the icons brought from Ruthenia, are particularly valued and venerated by them and used during major holidays. Both factions of Old Believers have over 50 temples in the Romanian territory, including female and male monasteries. The key places of religious worship for

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<sup>44</sup> *Comunicat de presă 2 februarie 2012 privind rezultatele provizorii ale Recensământului Populației și Locuințelor – 2011*, [http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Comunicat\\_DATE\\_PROVIZORII\\_RPL\\_2011\\_.pdf](http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Comunicat_DATE_PROVIZORII_RPL_2011_.pdf) (02.11.2021).

the Popovtsy include the following Orthodox monasteries: of the Dormition of the Mother of God (Romanian: *Uspenia, Adormirea Maicii Domnului*) in the town of Slava Rusă, which dates back to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries; of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple (Romanian: *Ovedenie, Intrarea Maicii Domnului în biserică*), built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Slava Rusă, and the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Holy Mother of God in Bila Krynytsia (now Ukraine; Ukrainian: *Біла Криниця*, Romanian: *Fântâna Albă*), built in 1900–1908. One of the most important places of religious worship for the Bezpopovtsy is the Orthodox church in Slava Cercheză<sup>45</sup>. In Bukovina, the Old Believers have places of culture heritage among others (temples, cemeteries, traditional houses and farms) in the villages of Lipoveni, Rădăuți, Fălticeni, Suceava, Botoșani.



Photo 4. Cross on the site of the destroyed Orthodox Church of the Old Believers in Lipoveni, Bukovina, Romania.

Photo by Ewa Kocój, 2021.

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<sup>45</sup> Field research by EK, towns: Slava Rusă and Bila Krynytsia, 2011, interviews with monks and nuns of Orthodox monasteries and villagers.



Photo 4. Monastery and cemetery of of the Old Believers in Botoșani.  
Photo by Ewa Kocój, Romania, 2015.

The Julian calendar is used by the Serbian minority in Romania, which is part of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese in Romania, with its seat in Timișoara<sup>46</sup>. This is the so-called Slavic indigenous minority that has lived in south-west Romania since the Middle Ages. Most probably, the Slavs appeared in Banat as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century; however, increased Serbian migration to Banat occurred in several stages during the Turkish occupation, starting from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. The final major wave of Serbian influx took place in the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>47</sup>. At that time, there were about thirty towns inhabited by Serbs. According to the Serbian researcher Cerović, the evolution of religious culture in those areas dates back to the times of the Archbishop Sava of the Serbian Autocephalous Church (1174–1236), born in the Nemanjić family, who, thanks to his diplomatic

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<sup>46</sup> *Episcopia Ortodoxă Sărbă de Timișoara*; <http://www.culte.ro/DocumenteHtml.aspx?id=1725>; <http://ro.scribd.com/doc/16656849/Manastirea-Zlatia> (02.12.2021).

<sup>47</sup> L. Cerović, *Sârbi din România. Din evul mediu timpuriu până în zilele noastre*, Timișoara, 2005, pp. 4–7, 22–31.

initiatives, is reported to have established four Orthodox monasteries on the northern bank of the Danube<sup>48</sup>. What is more, Lazar, Prince of Serbia (1329–1389) is said to have probably collaborated with Vladislav I Vlaicu (1364–1377), Voivode of Wallachia, on the founding of the Vodița and Tismana monasteries, which were run by Nicodemus, a Serbian monk educated in Athos. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the bishopric of Ineu in Crișul Alb was established for the local Serbs, led by Metropolitan Dionysius (15<sup>th</sup> cent.), as well as the Orthodox monasteries in Sângeorge near Timișoara and Kušići, founded by despot Jovan Branković, Despot of Serbia. Serbian influences in these territories, still observed in the Orthodox culture to this day, intensified during the times of Despina, the Serb wife of the Voivode of Wallachia Neagoe Basarab, and Elena, the wife of Petru Rareș, Voivode of Moldavia<sup>49</sup>. In the era of the Ottomans, these areas were constantly invaded and therefore scarcely populated. Intense settlement did not take place until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, during which the minority in question is said to have inhabited about 500 towns in the region. The development of religious life and the influence of the Serbian Church grew stronger in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the Serbian Diocese was founded in Timișoara (1608), handed over to Metropolitan Neophytos.

Today, the Serbian Orthodox Diocese in Romania is based in Timișoara and covers predominantly the regions of Arad, Caraș-Severin, Mehedinți, and Timiș, with a total of 56 Serbian Orthodox parishes. This diocese is part of the Serbian Patriarchate based in Belgrade. The official liturgical languages of the Church are Serbian with Cyrillic spelling and Romanian<sup>50</sup>. The Church follows the Julian calendar, used by approx. 26 thousand believers of Serbian origin. In addition, it is in charge of five Serbian monasteries, with the oldest one, Zlatița, dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, is dedicated to St. Sava and currently remains without any monastic life. The town of Baziaș, Caraș-Severin, is home to the Ascension Orthodox Monastery, now inhabited by monks. Its origins date back to the foundation of Serbian despots from the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, it became home to a copy of the miraculous icon of *Three-handed Virgin Mary*, donated by the monks of the Hilandar Monastery in Mount Athos<sup>51</sup>. Another place of worship is the Monastery of St. George

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<sup>48</sup> For more, see also: A. Milin, *Sârbii din Banat. Realitățile istorico-etnologice și obiceiul pământului*, teză de doctorat, [http://www.uoradea.ro/attachment/791672704232e82e41d0a31a6bc16159/12be26cc92ff919d6d8e2cdca049197d/Milin\\_Andrei.pdf](http://www.uoradea.ro/attachment/791672704232e82e41d0a31a6bc16159/12be26cc92ff919d6d8e2cdca049197d/Milin_Andrei.pdf) (08.08.2021).

<sup>49</sup> L. Cerović, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>50</sup> *Statutul Episcopiei Ortodoxe Sârbe de Timișoara*, <http://www.culte.ro/DocumenteHtml.aspx?id=1725> (11.08.2021).

<sup>51</sup> The monastery was destroyed by the Turks in 1552. In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was completely renovated, turning into a popular place of religious worship over time. In 1860, its interior was covered with frescoes by Jivco and his son Dmitri Petrovici and painter Morit Braer.

in Bârda, Arad, dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This is where the relics of St. George were kept until 2008. Tradition has it that they were transferred there from Korovat in order to protect them from the Turks after the Battle of Kosovo.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, the now-closed Monastery of St. Nicholas in Cusici, founded by Despot Jovan Branković (died 1502), was most likely the metohija of the Studenica Monastery.<sup>53</sup> Destroyed many times by the Turks, it was renovated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and, by the decision of Empress Maria Theresa (1717–1780), subordinated to the Zlatița Monastery.<sup>54</sup> Probably in 1486, Despot Jovan Branković also instituted the St. George Monastery, located in Sângeorge on the Bârzava river. It was reconstructed in 1794, and the inside polychrome was painted by Paul Durnev in 1799. In the same year, Avram Manojlović made sculptures for the church, while Jovan Isajlović—the iconostasis. The Monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Bezdin dates back to 1522, and was probably founded by the Jakšić brothers. The monastery was to house the miraculous icon of Our Lady of Athos provenance, a rich library of liturgical books, as well as iconostases made by Stefan Tenecki and Jakov Orfelin.<sup>55</sup>

The Julian calendar is also used by a portion of the Ukrainian indigenous minority who has been living there since the Middle Ages and belong to the Ukrainian Orthodox Vicariate in Romania (Romanian: *Vicariatul Ortodox Ucrainean din România*; Ukrainian: *Православний Український вікаріат у Сигеті*), based in the city of Sighetu Marmăției. Since 1990, it has reported directly to the Romanian Patriarchate. It brings together the adherents of the Orthodox rite who use the Ukrainian or Romanian languages in liturgy and follow the old style.<sup>56</sup> They now include approximately 53,300 people (out of over 61,000 Ukrainians living in Romania). This vicariate was established in 1948, after some Ukrainian Greek Catholics had converted to the Orthodox faith. It covers the parishes of Maramureș, Transylvania, Crișana, and Banat. It has internal autonomy, but remains canonically connected with the Orthodox Patriarchate of the Church of Romania. Today, it has over 53 000 believers and

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For more, see also: V. Lupulović, B. D. Krstić, *Istoricul așezării Baziaș. Istoricul Mănăstirii Baziaș*, Timișoara, 1998.

<sup>52</sup> F. Bichir, *Capul Sfântului Gheorghe*, in “Lumea credinței”, anul II, nr. 3(8).

<sup>53</sup> [http://www.rastko.rs/rastko-ro/manastir\\_bazjas.htm](http://www.rastko.rs/rastko-ro/manastir_bazjas.htm); T. Nicoară, *Istoria și tradițiile minorităților din România*, 2005, pp. 69–73.

<sup>54</sup> L. Cerović, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>55</sup> *Mănăstirea Bezdin*; <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/biserici-manastiri/manastirea-bezdin-67845.html> (11.08.2021); L. Steponov, S. Bugarski, *Mănăstirea Bezdin. Scurtă prezentare*, Timișoara, 2003, pp. 1–56; [http://www.banaterra.eu/romana/files/manastirea\\_bezdin\\_scurta\\_prezentare.pdf](http://www.banaterra.eu/romana/files/manastirea_bezdin_scurta_prezentare.pdf) (11.08.2021); O. Velescu, arh. A. Corvătescu, „Un monument din vestul țării” – *Mănăstirea Bezdin*, în “Buletinul monumentelor istorice” București, 1, 1972; L. Cerović, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/carti-ortodoxe/noul-statut-bor/organizarea-81259.html> (01.12.2021).

about 37 churches. The key places of religious worship include: the wooden Orthodox Church of the Ascension in Poienile de sub Munte (Ruska Poliana), built in 1798<sup>57</sup>, and the Orthodox Church of St. Volodemer in Lugoj, Banata, built in 1990. Since 1990, it has also been running two Orthodox monasteries: the female Monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God, built in 1992 in the village of Rona de Sus<sup>58</sup>, and the male one of St. John the Baptist in the village of Ruscova, in Maramureş.

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<sup>57</sup> A. Baboş, „Maramureş, medieval wooden churches”, in “Revista Monumentelor Istorice”, 1996, LVI (1–2), pp. 40–65; A. Baboş, *Tracing a Sacred Building Tradition, Wooden Churches, Carpenters and Founders in Maramureş until the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century*, Norrköping: Lunds Universitet 2004, passim; G. Man, *Biserici de lemn din Maramureş*, Baia Mare, 2007, pp. 265–267.

<sup>58</sup> The monastery now runs its own website at: <http://ronadesus.uv.ro/> (02/12/2021).