

ONION DOME CONQUEST

Expansion of the Romanian Orthodox Church in settlements and counties with a relative or absolute majority ethnic Hungarian population

Among the so-called historical Churches in Transylvania, the Romanian Orthodox Church is the most recent. Considering the year of its establishment, 1864, it appears only before the growth of the neo-Protestant Churches in the 20th century. The 1571 decree on religious tolerance proclaimed first in Europe by Transylvania's ruler János Zsigmond does not mention it among the religious denominations. Romanian historical writing considers the 16th century presence of Metropolit Eftimie in the region as church historical precedent while ignoring the policy of tolerance and even support of the Protestant rulers of Transylvania. György Rákóczi I. orders the translation of the Bible into the Romanian language then ensures at his own expense its ornate publication. At that time most of Transylvania's Romanian population follows the eastern rite (Greek) Catholic religion, and its leading elite pressing for middle-class development and emancipation in the middle of the 19th century also originates from this segment. At the end of the 1700s, Anghel Atanasie, Orthodox bishop of Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia) and his clergy and faithful convert to Greek Catholicism. It is on the basis of these events that Orthodox church historians call "re-establishment" the church founding by Andrei Saguna in 1864.

Romanian sociologist Marius Cosmeanu mentions as one of the early examples of state-supported expansion in the 20th century the Orthodox cathedral built on the main square of Marosvásárhely (Targu Mures) in 1926. With regard to the ethnic character of Marosvásárhely, it was according to the 1910 census the city with the largest Hungarian majority population (approximately 98 percent) in the Carpathian Basin. In Transylvania, the Orthodox Church decorated with the biggest painted fresco surface was erected in a city inhabited by only 5 to 10 Orthodox families. Although there were many changes of government and of political and administrative systems in the past 80 years since then, the Orthodox Church and Romania's political will always found each other and cooperated throughout that period.

According to Gabriel Andreescu, chairman of the Romanian Helsinki Committee, the ultra-rightist political past and links to Codreanu's fascist legion of Patriarch Teoctist, the highest Orthodox Church authority who is still in office at present, hardly need any proof, just as no government in power has ever distanced itself from the crimes of the legionary period. The historical periods associated with the names of Georghe Gheorghiu-Dej then Nicolae Ceausescu show a similar intertwining in the relations between church and secular power. The person of the patriarch himself guarantees the unbroken continuity of church policy from the revolutionary change of 1989 to this very day.

When analyzing the data that will follow, one must most of all examine the demographic and ethnic data of the localities mentioned. In many cases (for example in most villages), the Romanian communities in the Szekler region (east Transylvania) are made up, next to the "mandatory" presence of public servants and law enforcement (police) forces, of members of the Orthodox clergy and occasionally of the resettled managers and officers of industrial or military establishments and their dependents. The report also reveals that in many cases the number of their families is below 50 and even below 10 although the data do not always show it.

The legal act of designation as a historic monument ensures special protection and support even to properties and buildings less than 70 to 100 years old. At the end of 1990s a government decree was adopted dealing exclusively with the care of Orthodox historic monuments. Under its terms, every single historical building has a caretaker paid by the state. This is also a motive proving expansion, especially when compared to the condition of the cultural heritage and historical monuments of the Hungarian and German minorities. A draft law built on exclusiveness that would have made legally valid the state religion character of the Romanian Orthodox Church almost became the subject of a legislative debate in the Romanian House of Representatives.

Next to examining the spectacular spreading of monastery and church construction, one should also pay attention to the effect of the church education and instruction programs, announced as missions, on state orphanages, homes for the aged, and other social institutes. These institutes use exclusively the official Romanian language in their internal administration, as a result of which the individuals under state care coming from among ethnic minorities are exposed to linguistic and then religious assimilation.

Territorial division and most important characteristics of the church district of Transylvania (Mitropolia Ardealului, Crisanei si Maramuresului) on the basis of data published by the Orthodox Church:

Archbishopric of Szeben / Arhiepiscopia Sibiului: Founded in 1761. The archdiocese counts 468 parishes, approximately 500 priests, and 510 churches and chapels.

Archbishopric of Körösrév, Felek, and Kolozs / Arhiepiscopia Vadului, Feleacului si Clujului: Founded in 1921. The church diocese counts 621 parishes and 637 churches, 166 of which have been declared historical monuments (!).

Archbishopric of Gyulafehérvár / Arhiepiscopia Alba Iulia: Re-established in 1975, elevated to archbishopric in 1998. There are approximately 650 priests and 613 parishes, with 653 churches of which 127 have been declared historical monuments (!).

Bishopric of Nagyvárad / Episcopia Oradea: Reestablished in 1920, the year of the first founding is not known. 614 parishes and 690 churches with approximately 500 priests belong to the bishopric. The churches declared as historical monument number 139 (!).

Bishopric of Szatmár and Máramaros / Episcopia Maramuresului si Satmarului: Founded in 1937. The church district counts 367 parishes. There are no data about the number of churches.

Bishopric of Kovászna and Hargita / Episcopia Covasnei si Hargitei: Founded in 1994. There are a total of 115 parishes with 75 priests. According to the report, 47 of its 107 churches are historical monuments (!).

EXPANSION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE SZEKLER REGION

The most recently established bishopric, on 24 November 1994, with its seat in Csíkszereda, is actually located in the Szekler Region. A construction and property acquisition program that completely ignores ethnic, religious and demographic conditions and considerations is being carried out nowadays in Romania's minority-inhabited regions and on the territory of Transylvania. This manifests itself in the most rapid growth of the number of newly built churches, monasteries, and convents showing *no actual relation whatsoever to ethnic proportions*, and in the *large-scale financial grants* given to the Orthodox Church. To justify this program, the Orthodox Church leaders use a rather fictitious historical and internal missionary argumentation. Referring to the destructive 1761 campaign of the Austrian general Nicolaus Adolf Bukow, they call *the building of new monasteries as reconstruction*. The second frequently used justification is the Hungarian marching in of 1940. A more neutral but unverifiable argument is the case of the "former modest wooden church that burned down to the ground."

More than 1,500 Orthodox churches have been built in the past 10 years throughout Transylvania, and many hundreds are still in construction.



DATA ON THE EXPANSION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE SZEKLER REGION

Religious borders are also ethnic borders in Transylvania. The majority ethnic Romanian population belongs to the Orthodox Church.

The aim of the “onion dome conquest” is obviously to change the ethnic and religious proportion of Transylvania, inhabiting Romanian Orthodox priests and families, church personnel and families, police officers and officers, teaching staff and families, etc, into the region. About 2,500,000 million Romanians were settled into Transylvania since 1920. This will bring an additional 1,000,000+ Romanian newcomers into Transylvania, who have no experience about co-existence of various cultures. And majority intolerance has too often resulted in bloodshed in East Central Europe, since 1989. Remember Marosvásárhely/Targu Mures! Memento Bosnia! Memento Kosovo!



According to the limited official information, the following Orthodox churches were built or repaired in the last few years in Hargita and Kovászna counties:

Hargita county. Total population: 348,335: **84.7 %** of them Hungarians.

- **Alsóboldogfalva/Bodogaia:** church rebuilt in 1992, restored after the creation of the Orthodox Bishopric of Kovászna and Hargita (KHOP), consecrated on 3 October 1999. Total population: 777: **96.4 %** Hungarians (7 persons declared themselves as being Romanians)
- **Borszék/Borsec:** Patriarch Miron Cristea erects a wooden church in 1925 which is demolished in 1940 following the Hungarian marching in. The new church is presently still under construction with the help of the bishopric (KHOP). Total population: 3,074, **79.7 %** of them Hungarians.
- **Csíkcsicsó/Ciceu:** the church dedicated to Saint Peter and Saint Paul

was built between 1979 and 1983. The proportion of Hungarian inhabitants is above **90 %**.



Kovászna county. Total population: 233,256, **75.2 %** of them Hungarians.

- **Nagybacon/Batanii Mari:** following the establishment of the Orthodox Bishopric of Kovászna and Hargita (KHOP), the church and parish house were renovated and the village also has a permanent priest since then. Total population: 1,836: **94.3 %** of them Hungarians.
- **Böölön/Belin:** the new church and parish house were restored in 1994 and work is being done on the equipment of the old church. Total population: 1,482: **85.5 %** of them Hungarians.
- **Bikfalva/Bicfalau:** the church and parish house were repaired in 1994. Total population: 429: **95.8 %** of them Hungarians.
- **Kökös/Chichis:** the old church was declared a historical monument then repaired and restored together with the parish house, all of this with the financial aid of KHOP. Total population: 1,727: **54.6 %** of them Hungarians.
- **Kilyénfalva/Chilieni:** the priest Ioan Cucu from Sepsziszentgyörgy began in 1998 the construction of a new church for the local Romanian community. Total population: 642: **96.1 %** of them Hungarians (25 persons declared themselves as being Romanians)
- **Kommandó/Comandau:** the new wooden church built with the assistance of KHOP was consecrated in 2000. Total population: 1,120: **91.8 %** of them Hungarians.


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- **Székelyszáldobos/Doboseni:** until 1995 the church was in ruins and was then restored by KHOP. Population: 1,409: **76.4 %** of them Hungarians.
 - **Bodzaforduló/Intorsatura Buzaului:** a new church was built after the establishment of KHOP. Total population: 6,513. The settlement with an ethnic Romanian majority can build a second church out of KHOP's financial aid.
 - **Lisznyó/Lisnau:** the church was renovated after the establishment of KHOP. Total population: 471: **98.3 %** of them Hungarians (8 persons declared themselves as being Romanians)
 - **Ozsdola/Ojdula:** the church was repaired with KHOP assistance. Total population: 3,579: **93 %** of them Hungarians.
 - **Szentivánlaborfalva/Santionlunca:** the church was repaired after the establishment of KHOP. Total population: 808: **98.7 %** of them Hungarians.
 - **Kézdivásárhely/Targu-Secuiesc:** church built after 1990 in defiance of the difficulties raised by the local Hungarian town leadership. Total population: 22,912: **91.6 %** of them Hungarians.
- Vargyas/Varghis:** after great difficulties, it was possible to mark with a *troita* (a Romanian Orthodox wooden cross composition) the site of the former Romanian church. Total population: 1,983: **97 %** of them Hungarians.



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HUNGARIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TRANSYLVANIA
 SZÉKELY NEMZETI TANÁCS

The Hungarian National Council of Transylvania is a public organisation, which aims at representing the interests of the indigenous Hungarian community through parliamentary structures and means by preparing, sustaining and proposing for approval legal measures to ensure the forms of autonomy demanded by the community.

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ISSN 1841- 0634