

Silviu Sana, *Eparhia Greco-catolică de Oradea și Marea Unire (1918-1919)* [*The Greek-Catholic Eparchy of Oradea and the Great Union (1918-1919)*], (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega), 2018, 199 p.

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The book *Eparhia Greco-catolică de Oradea și Marea Unire (1918-1919)/The Greek Catholic Eparchy of Oradea and the Great Union (1918-1919)* written by Silviu Sana, a librarian and historian from Oradea, was published in 2018 by Editura Mega. The author intends to present the most important aspects of the role the Greek Catholic clerical elite of Oradea played in politics on December 1, 1918. The historical review the author offers to his readers announces itself to be a sententious one, as he analyzes a relatively short historical period, which comprises the years 1918-1919.

The work is divided into four chapters preceded by a message to the readers and an argumentation. The first pages of the book echo back to us the words of Professor Blaga Mihoc, PhD, offering details regarding the research that Silviu Sana attempted in order to write the present work. The argumentation outlines accounts regarding the importance and the history of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Oradea in the period 1918-1919, considered at that time to be one of the most important Dioceses of United Romania. The author presents the methodological aspects of his work, relying on research methods which are typical for history and approaching original documents and information details.

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In the first chapter entitled “Historical aspects of the Greek Catholic Diocese of Oradea-Mare (January 1918 - May 1919)”, the author combines historical and socio-political aspects of the Greek Catholic Diocese of Oradea. The events presented by means of directives, correspondence, and articles extracted from the local press are carefully selected and organized thematically and chronologically. It is worth to mention that the author was able to reconstruct the relationship of the Greek Catholic Diocese of Oradea with the Hungarian authorities and with the central Romanian ones, thus reconstituting the historical order of the actions that set off the Great Union of December 1, 1918.

In the second chapter entitled “The Diocesan Normal School (1918-1919)”, the author focuses on the issues of this educational institution under pressure and on the dimension of the persecutory politics of the Government in Budapest. This chapter comprises the vast correspondence between the Greek Catholic Diocese of Oradea and the Normal School of Beiuș. Considered as a hallmark of the education in Oradea, starting from 1919, the Normal School of Beiuș had to swing between the requests coming from Budapest and those of the Governing Board of Sibiu. However, historian Silviu Sana managed to present a solid chronological review of the activity of the Normal School in the period 1917-1919, focusing on several major aspects, such as the teachers’ and the students’ activity control exerted by Commissioner Téglassy Ferenc, the issue of teaching subjects in Hungarian, and the transition from the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture and Public Education in Budapest to the direct political authority of the Governing Board of Sibiu.

The third chapter is dedicated to the commemoration of the Great Union in the pages of “Vestitorul”, the official magazine of the Greek Catholic Diocese of Oradea. On the one hand, the author reveals the major role the

Romanian United Church has played in the birth of Greater Romania and the sacrifices made by the priests and the faithful, and on the other hand, the substantial contribution that the strong relationship between State and Church had in creating and maintaining Romanian national identity in Transylvanian politics. In this respect, the author calls on the memoirs of eye witnesses, combined with documents issued by authorities, later reproduced in the pages of the aforementioned magazine.

In the fourth chapter entitled "Portraits of unionists", the author outlines the biographies of the nine personalities who represented the Greek Catholic Diocese of Oradea at the Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia. This delegation was led by the Romanian Bishop Demetriu Radu. In other words, these biographies include details about the life and activity performed by a part of the clerical elite of Oradea, as well as their contributions to the Great Union. In this respect, we should mention the following priests, teachers, and canons: Jacob Radu, Gheorghe Miculaș, Vasile Chirvaiu, Constantin Pavel, Valeriu Hetco, Grigorie Pop, Petru Tămăian, Augustin Maghiar, and Gheorghe Maior.

As for the critical apparatus, it is very carefully presented. While analyzing the complete bibliographical list at the end of the book, which includes rich original sources and archival materials (the Bihor County National Archive, and the Archives of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives), 7 published sources, 50 general and specialty works, press articles and periodicals, dictionaries and encyclopaedias, electronic sources and audio-video registrations, the author's passionate interest in approaching this vast and delicate topic becomes quite obvious.

The book comprises a series of appendices, i.e. 71 carefully selected and transcribed documents accompanied by an overview written in

Romanian by the author, proper name, cities, states, and institutions indices as well as a summary of the entire book written in English.

In brief, the work *The Greek Catholic Eparchy of Oradea and the Great Union (1918-1919)* by Silviu Sana represents an important historical and ecclesiastic approach on the Romanian United Diocese of Oradea. It is one of the most complex works that discusses this topic. The main entities referred to in this book are the Church, the School, and the Community. The author accurately reflects the sacrifices the clerical elite of the Greek Catholic Diocese of Oradea has made for contributing to the accomplishment of the Great Union.