

THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE ROMANIAN CHURCHES ABROAD THE COUNTRY. A VALUABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATIONS OF OUR FELLOW COUNTRY MEN

Radu Dimitriu^{a*}, Andreea Dimitriu^a, Raluca Ioana Horea-Şerban^a

^a *Department of Geography, Faculty of Geography and Geology, University of Al. I. Cuza, Iasi, Romania*

Abstract: The quantification and analysis of international migrations have always represented difficult approaches especially because of the lack of some reliable statistical data. Consequently, alternative sources of information (such as religious institutions and administrative boards of different Christian cults) are not to be neglected. However, from this point of view, significant differentiations can be highlighted: the Catholic Church has always been keen on good quality statistical registrations (more or less Neoprotestant cults fit this pattern, too); in its turn, Orthodoxy tries to catch up on the lost ground by means of a considerable administrative organization. Thus, from the different incidence of religion-triggered emigration to the geographical distribution of the cult edifices abroad the country, the connection between migration and religion is a very powerful one. In this sense, our analysis is meant to spot the most important features of the Romanian diaspora.

Key words: Religion, Migration, Romanian churches abroad the country

Europe, at challenge time

International migrations are well known to have always represented a human geographical and social phenomenon which is difficult to quantify and implicitly to analyse. The main cause of this situation is the fact that this type of migrations generally lies at the border of lawfulness (and quite often beyond it) – maybe especially within the European Union. Once the historical European borders were *de jure* and *de facto* abolished and the Schengen Area created (by signing on the 2nd of October, 1997 the Amsterdam Treaty, which entered into force on the 1st of May, 1999) our continent and its adherent power structures accepted, on their own initiative, a new challenge: that of managing large human masses endowed with a stronger and stronger ethnic and cultural diversity. In this way, during the last two

decades, the mixture of European population of different nationalities (perfectly known and having a historical character) has got superposed by a significant flow of population coming from outside the continent. Although this does not represent a surprise and although certain European countries have a vast social and political experience in this field (the example of France is relevant and sufficient) it is a certainty that the phenomenon of migrations in present Europe is more and more difficult to quantify. The economic and living standard discrepancies in the contemporary world are able to break all legislative barriers; despite the numerous political efforts and xenophobe manifestations that punctually appear within the European area, in spite of the vigorous power escalation of the right wing parties, the attraction exercised by the rich and longed for (but so exigent) Europe on large masses of people can hardly be prevented. Consequently, the only realistic solution is to as exactly as possible manage the phenomenon under discussion

*Corresponding author:

Email: dimitriuradu@yahoo.com

and to as thorough as possible get to know it. The scientific deciphering of present-day migrations and the removal of their volatile attributes is a desideratum that is worth achieving.

The classical remedy of this problem is to undertake the so banal population censuses. Meant to provide quantitative information including on human migrations, the recording actions undertaken by the European states have, however, nowadays, too few common elements. But, while the temporal differences regarding their development process and the methodological incongruence's are elements that can be smoothed out, the level of statistical approach of this human geographical phenomenon displays significant deviations: from an extremely rigorous and thorough level (as it happens in the case of Italy and Spain – that is of some entities that have recently acquired an immigrant state vocation) to a level characterized by terse and much too general information that can hardly have a scientific use (the case of France or that of Germany). Even the transparency degree regarding the statistical information of the public could be reduced to the same denominator – of course, in a positive sense – under the circumstances in which the present existing differences are considerable.

But these issues only represent the top of the iceberg; the more we advance in getting to know more on population international migrations, difficulties become stronger and stronger, many times being insuperable.

In search of statistical palliatives...

Fortunately, the unhandiness, errors – and often secret-mania – of the authorities can be removed, even though only partially, by appealing to alternative but completely (or, in any case, to a high degree) credible sources of information. In the panoply of these statistical palliatives we consider that religious institutions hold an important place – more precisely, we refer to the qualitative and quantitative information provided by the administrative leading bodies of different Christian cults.

In essence, the idea of making use of these sources may not be completely original but the present-day scientific community impermissibly ignores this (re)source and too often discredits religious issues in the context of the present secularism.

Of course, Christianity is far from being unitary both as regards its dogmatic aspects and concrete, administrative organization but, most of the times, bureaucratic ecclesiastical bodies, regardless of their colour, have more convergence points than the similar organisms of the lay world. The explanation: a better organization in the context of a smaller community, a more efficient social and psychological frame (confessional barriers have always been very efficacious and more impervious than ethnical and even linguistic ones) and, last but not least, an experience accumulated in a longer period of time compared to other institutions¹.

At the world level, the first systematic attempts of the church at more thoroughly studying the problems raised by emigrants belong to Roman Catholicism, along the centuries the Vatican constantly proving a real mania for statistical recording – even though many times having a purely secular (tax and administrative) motivation.

In this respect, within the Roman Catholic Church, *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini* (1839 – 1905) stands out by far – he is the monk who, in the year 1887, set up the Congregation of the Missionaries of San Carlo Borromeo, an organization which, in time, would take over his name, the members of this confessional community simply being known under the name of Scalabrinian monks. The fundamental idea of Scalabrini's initiative dating back more than a century ago was to perform religious services and offer any type of help to the Catholic Italians emigrated across the ocean. On account of this purpose, Scalabrini undertook voyages to both Americas: to the United States - in 1901 and to Brazil – in 1904. But, whereas the desiderata of this Roman Catholic order initially had a religious nature, in time its goals became

¹For example, the present Romanian National Institute of Statistics was founded only on the 12th of July, 1859 under the name of The Centre for Administrative Statistics by means of a decree signed by ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza.

more and more diverse, some of them getting a scientific tinge – as it was (and it still is nowadays) the case of the (as possible as exact) recording of the Italians living in the New World and the study of these recently shaped communities. At present, these valuable Scalabrinian monks (counting about 700 people and a fluctuating number of lay volunteers) activate in more than 30 countries on five continents, dealing with both proper immigrants and refugees (from studying the migration phenomenon itself to granting legal assistance or performing actions meant to defend the rights of the people involved in migration).

Another organism of the Roman Catholic Church that is able to provide us interesting and useful statistical information on international migrations is *Caritas Ambrosiana*, an association which was founded in Italy, in the year 1971, at the initiative of Pope Paul VI. Set up for charity purposes, *Caritas Ambrosiana* has among its priorities the work for immigrants both from the religious and lay point of view.

Every year, *Caritas Ambrosiana* publishes (under the title of *Caritas/Migrantes*) a fully documented report on the immigrants in Italy entitled, *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione*.

Being less pragmatic from this point of view, the Orthodox Church hasn't founded specialized organisms similar to those of Catholic Christianity, although initiatives have not been missing – even though they have been quite few and of recent date. Among them, the most notable one belongs to the present Patriarch of the Romanian Church, His Beatitude Daniel, and dates back to the period during which he held the position of Metropolitan of Moldova and Bucovina. More exactly, in the year 2005, during a meeting with a high participation degree attended by about 900 parish priests, they primarily focussed their attention on the issue of the Orthodox believers' international migrations². The final decision of this important meeting was that every priest had to keep an as possible as rigorous account of the

parishioners working abroad – probably after the already implemented pattern provided by *Caritas Ambrosiana*, at whose meeting (that had taken place the year before) the former Metropolitan had been invited. Unfortunately we do not know whether this (otherwise valuable) initiative has ever taken a concrete form and if it has, what shape it has taken.

Last but not least, we must not omit from the Christian repertoire the neo-Protestant churches, which are of more recent date (at least by comparison to the previous ones) but which compensate their early age by means of a special visibility, especially if we take into consideration the relatively small number of adherents they cumulate. The (many times voluntary) humanitarian actions developed by their members and the opening of some worldly windows to possible proselytes ensure to a great extent the success of these cults. Moreover, it is worth remarking the speed with which neo-Protestantism meets the needs of its believers – as it is the fast setting up of parishes in emigrant countries.

Two place adverbials: „here” and „there” – a short geographical radiography

But the Christian Church on the whole is far from being a stiff institution from the social point of view as it is – in a wrong manner – often perceived. Of course, the adjustment to the new realities depends on dogmatic and traditional factors – but, without doubt, it exists in every case. From Orthodox traditionalism to Catholic *aggiornamento*, from Protestant rigour to neo-Protestant pragmatism, the distance is quite large.

From this point of view what we are obviously interested in is the territorial dissemination capacity of churches (analysed in terms of newly shaped communities of believers founded abroad). Of course, the analysis of this aspect will be regarded strictly from a lay point of view and only for scientific purposes. At the same time we do not intend to exhaust this topic – it would be an impossible to attain desideratum because of

² According to *Ziua de Iași* newspaper published on September, 2nd, 2005.

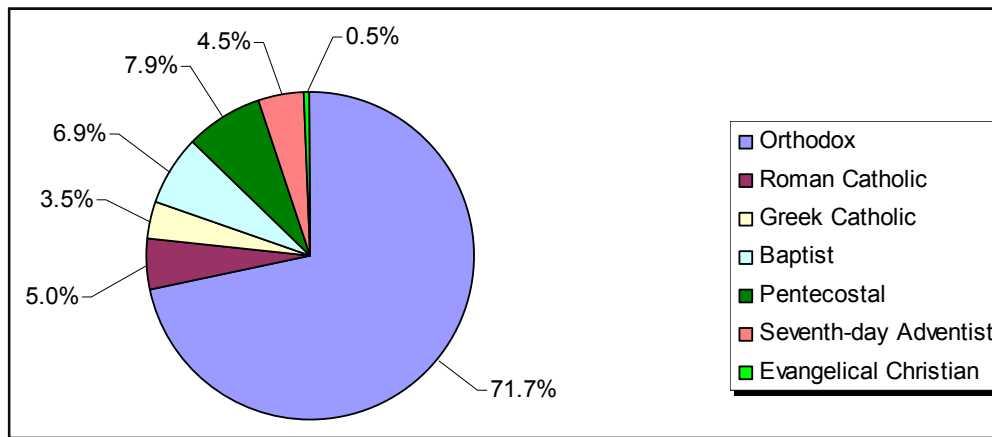


Figure 1. The religious structure of the Romanian churches abroad the country – Europe (2010)

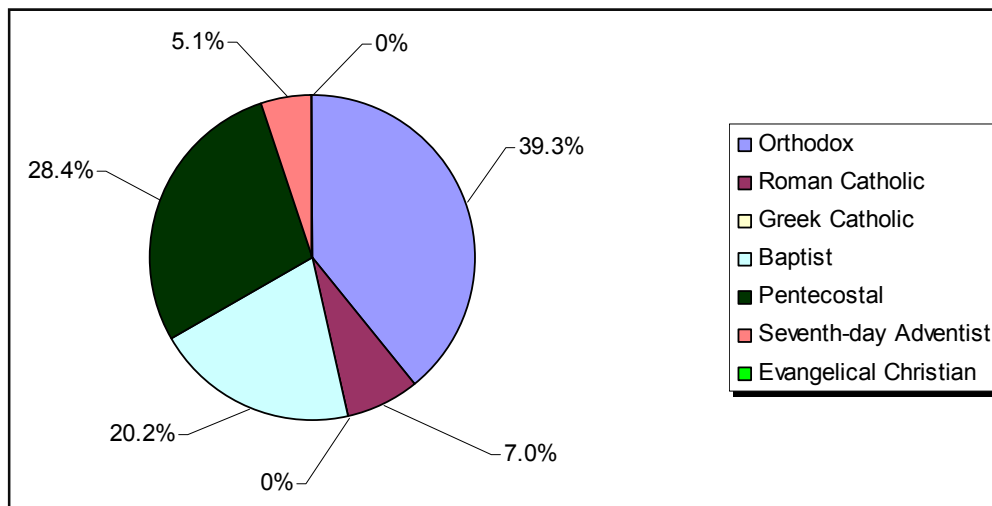


Figure 2. The religious structure of the Romanian churches abroad the country – USA (2010)

its complexity – we just intend to acquire further information on the field we are to a great extent interested in: the international economic migrations of the Romanians in the present-day period of time.

Thus, for the beginning, we must precisely state that the documentation sources „feeding” this approach comprise two internet sites and their adherent links: that of the Orthodox Romanian Church and that belonging to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs³.

As both figures 1 and 2 and table 1 reveal, Romanian Orthodox churches clearly prevail all similar structures abroad, representing 59.09% of the total number (in absolute values: 390 out of 660). However, if we regard things in a wider frame, we can notice that Orthodoxy is in fact under represented – in

Table 1. The number of the Romanian churches in Europe and USA and their religious structure (2010)

<i>Churches</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>USA</i>
Orthodox	289	101
Roman Catholic	20	18
Greek Catholic	14	0
Baptist	28	52
Pentecostal	32	73
Seventh-day Adventist	18	13
Evangelical Christian	2	0
TOTAL	403	257

the year 2002 not less than 86.79% of the total population of Romania belonged to the Orthodox religion⁴. Undoubtedly, this is a good example of what *selective access to*

³ www.patriarhia.ro and www.mae.ro respectively.

⁴ All the data on the total population are provided by the Population and Settlements Census undertaken in the year 2002, the latest action of the kind that took place in Romania.

migration means, Roman Catholicism and Neo-Protestant cults being much better connected to the European West, with synapses which are more efficient, more functional and better joined up to developed abroad territories. The homology of the religious space has the capacity of compressing the social space, of bringing together proximity and distance, as well as the quality (not grammatical but social and geographical) of linking two place adverbials: *here* and *there*.

The Roman Catholics – the first at the start line

The hypothesis of the selective access to migration can be easily proved especially if we focus on territories which do not have an extended dimension and – consequently – are easier to manage and decipher.

Thus, regarding things at the scale of Moldova (lying between the East Carpathians and the Prut), we can notice that the valley of Siret river stands out as a quite compact catholic area (it has been shaped in this manner by means of infiltrations of population of Transylvanian origin during the last three centuries⁵ (Figure 3).

Nowadays, Moldavian Catholics hold significant percentages (sometimes even 100%) especially in the communes lying in the neighbourhood of Bacău and Roman municipalities (secondarily also in the proximity of Onești town), resulting in an almost perfect overlapping with the area in which emigration has a great incidence, the same area that we pointed out at the beginning of our analysis. It is obvious that it was precisely this feature that allowed the shaping of that area (an argument in favour of this idea is the fact that the emigration towards Italy holds a share that is definitely above the average value) (Table 2)⁶.

As a matter of fact, it is precisely the Roman Catholics living in the area of Bacău municipality who are the pioneers of the Moldavian emigration – it was them who founded, for example, the present community of the Romanians in Torino⁷. In this context we must also emphasize the provincial record held by Luizi – Călugăra commune (here Catholics represent 98.6% of the total population) – in the case of which the census of 2002 reveals that emigrants represent 23.4% of the total population (but surely this official figure is once again smaller than the real one).

Instead, for the isolated (and probably weakly organized) Roman Catholic communities lying eastward of Siret, it is only rarely that the degree of participation to emigration is superior to that of the administrative units having a majority of Orthodox population even though these ones lie in their immediate neighbourhood.

The geographical distribution of the Romanian Roman Catholic churches abroad (figure 5) points out a preferential presence of these believers in countries (or regions) in which this religion is majority – Italy, Spain and Ireland – with a certain tendency of settling in big urban centres (Rome, Torino, Milan, Zaragoza etc). In the USA these churches are to be found especially southward of the Great Lakes (Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan) and in New England, that is exactly where the first waves of Romanian emigrants of Transylvanian origin settled down starting with the 19th century.

Somehow belonging to the same family, Greek Catholicism is present (for the time being) only in West Europe – in the suburbs of Paris, Vienna and Rome, as well as in the northern half of Italy (Friuli – Venezia Giulia and Emilia – Romagna), where there is an important concentration of nine churches – a fact that has not been recorded (as far as we know) by the literature in the field so far.

⁵ The Roman Catholics recorded by the census of 2002 represent 5.20% of the total population of Moldova.

⁶ In this case, the connections to the Vatican (Italy included) are faster especially by means of the Caritas branches that activate in the main towns or by means of the Catholic foundations, which are very active even in the rural environment.

⁷ According to the surveys made, the emigration of Iași seems to have connected, in the first stage, to the already functional network of Bacău.

Table 2. A comparative analysis of the main religions within the total population and to the presence of the Romanian churches abroad

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Share within the stable population</i>	<i>Share within the Romanian churches abroad</i>
Orthodox	86.8	59.1
Roman Catholic	4.7	5.8
Greek Catholic	0.9	2.1
Baptist	0.6	12.1
Pentecostal	1.5	15.9
Seventh-day Adventist	0.4	4.7
Evangelical Christian	0.2	0.3

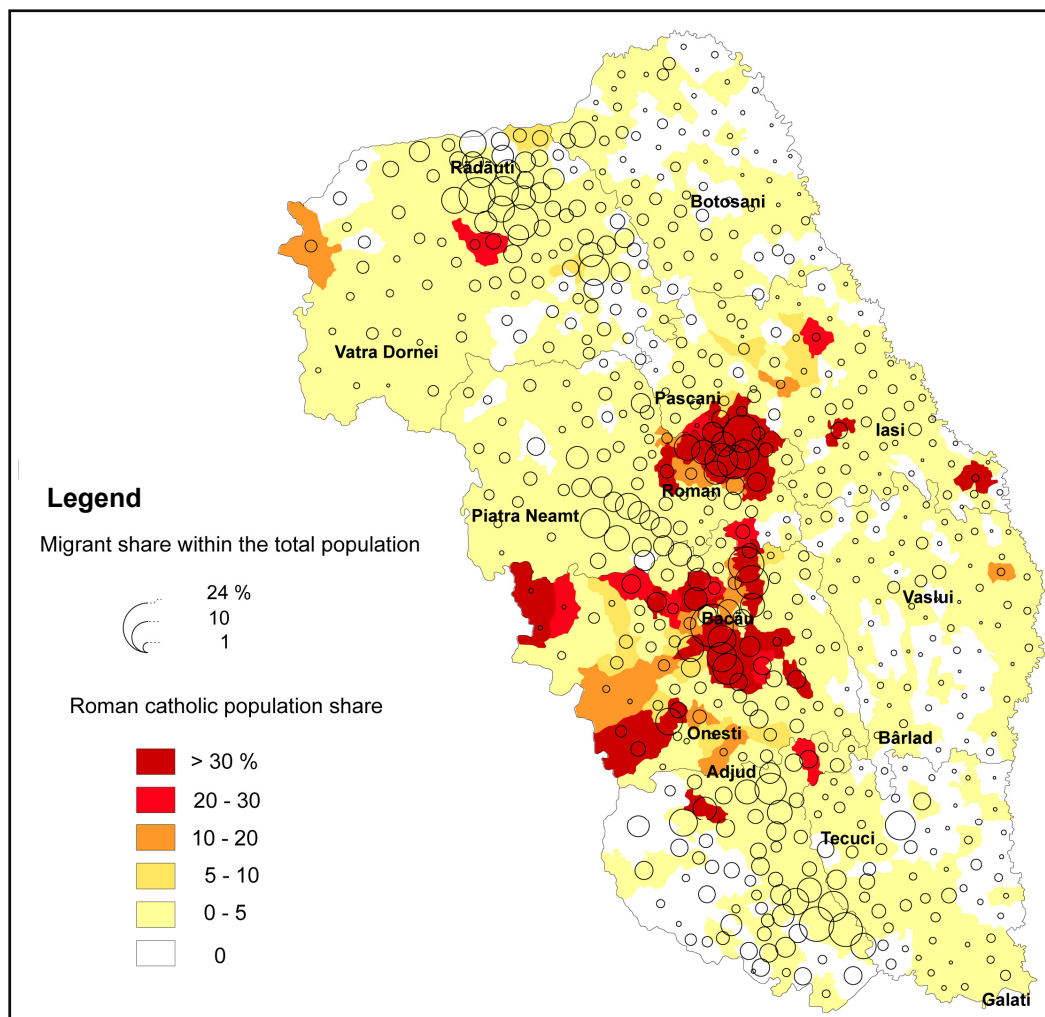


Figure 3. International migrations and religion in Moldova: Roman Catholics

Romanian neo-Protestant churches – emigration “champions”?

Just like Catholicism, neo-Protestant cults also have good connections to the West, being just as able to convert themselves into real

emigration catalysers⁸ (Figure 4). Once again the link between religion and emigration is extremely strong and it explains, to a great extent, the above average incidence of this phenomenon in the north part of Moldova, Rădăuți Depression and neighbourhood of

⁸ At the last census, neo-Protestantism held 2.42% of Moldova's total population.

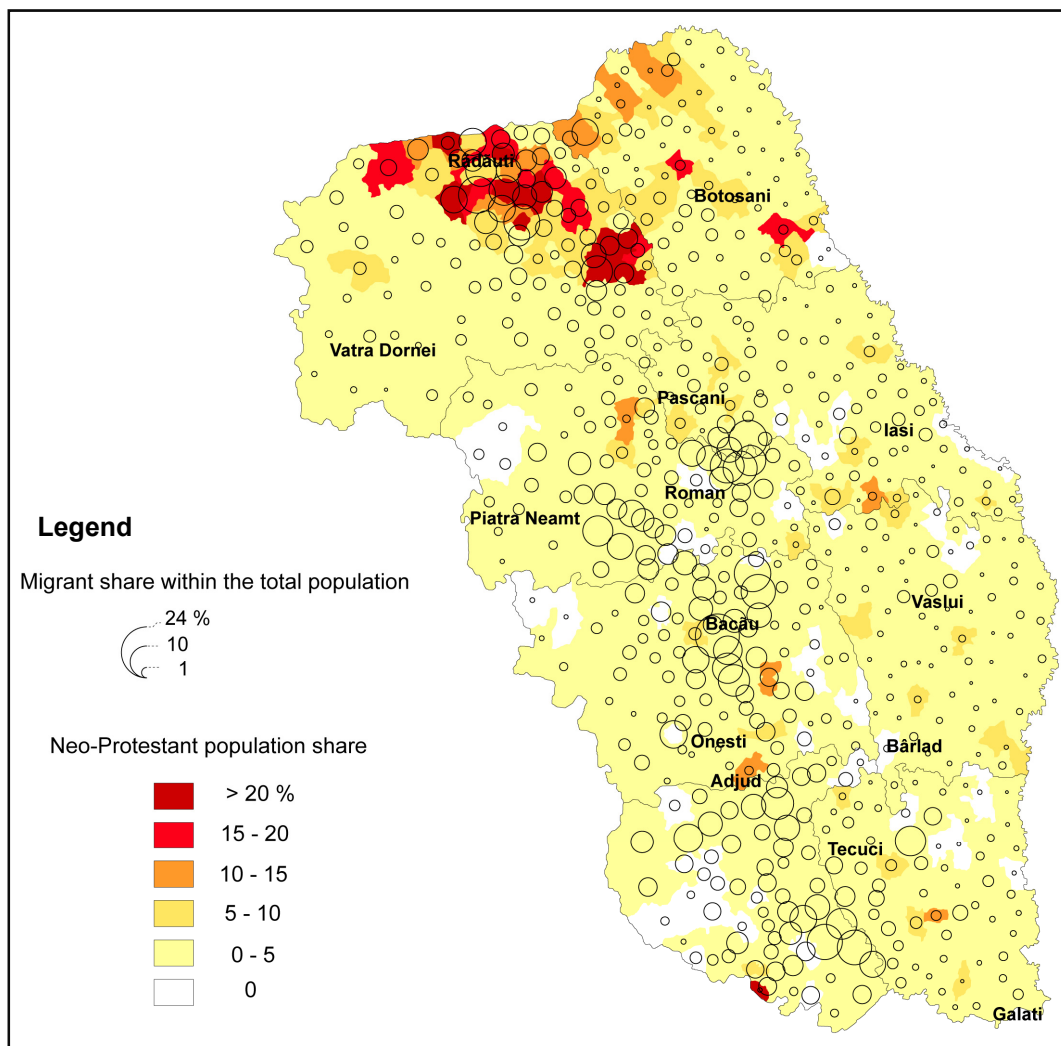


Figure 4. International migrations and religion in Moldova: Neo-protestant

Suceava municipality (especially in Pătrăuți commune, where neo-Protestants are better represented than anywhere else in Moldova: 40.9% of the total population).

On the level of international migrations, Baptists prove to be the most active neo-Protestants, 20.2% times exceeding the percentage they hold in respect of the stable population (table 2).

Officially set up in England in the year 1612, this church endured persecutions in its origin country so that, after 20 years, Baptists migrated in a body to the United States of America, where it acquired recognition. The return to Europe occurred only in the 19th century (more exactly in the year 1834) when Baptists inserted themselves with the help of the Protestant communities in Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands and Hungary,

benefiting from a strong financial help coming from across the ocean⁹.

In Romania, Baptism appeared at the end of the 19th century, being brought by the Transylvanian Romanians returned from the New World (but also by local Hungarians), representing the oldest neo-Protestant cult recorded on the territory of our country. The first mention certifies the presence of this religion in the year 1884 in Rohani commune (Bihor county), during the interwar period Baptism spreading at the level of the whole country (in 1930 only 27% of its representatives were confined to Bihor county)¹⁰.

⁹ The information on the dogmatic features, history and distribution of neo-Protestantism originate in "Istoria bisericească universală" (in English: "The Universal Ecclesiastical History") written by I. Rămureanu, M. Șesan and T. Bodogae.

¹⁰ Achimescu N. (2004) – *Noile mișcări religioase*

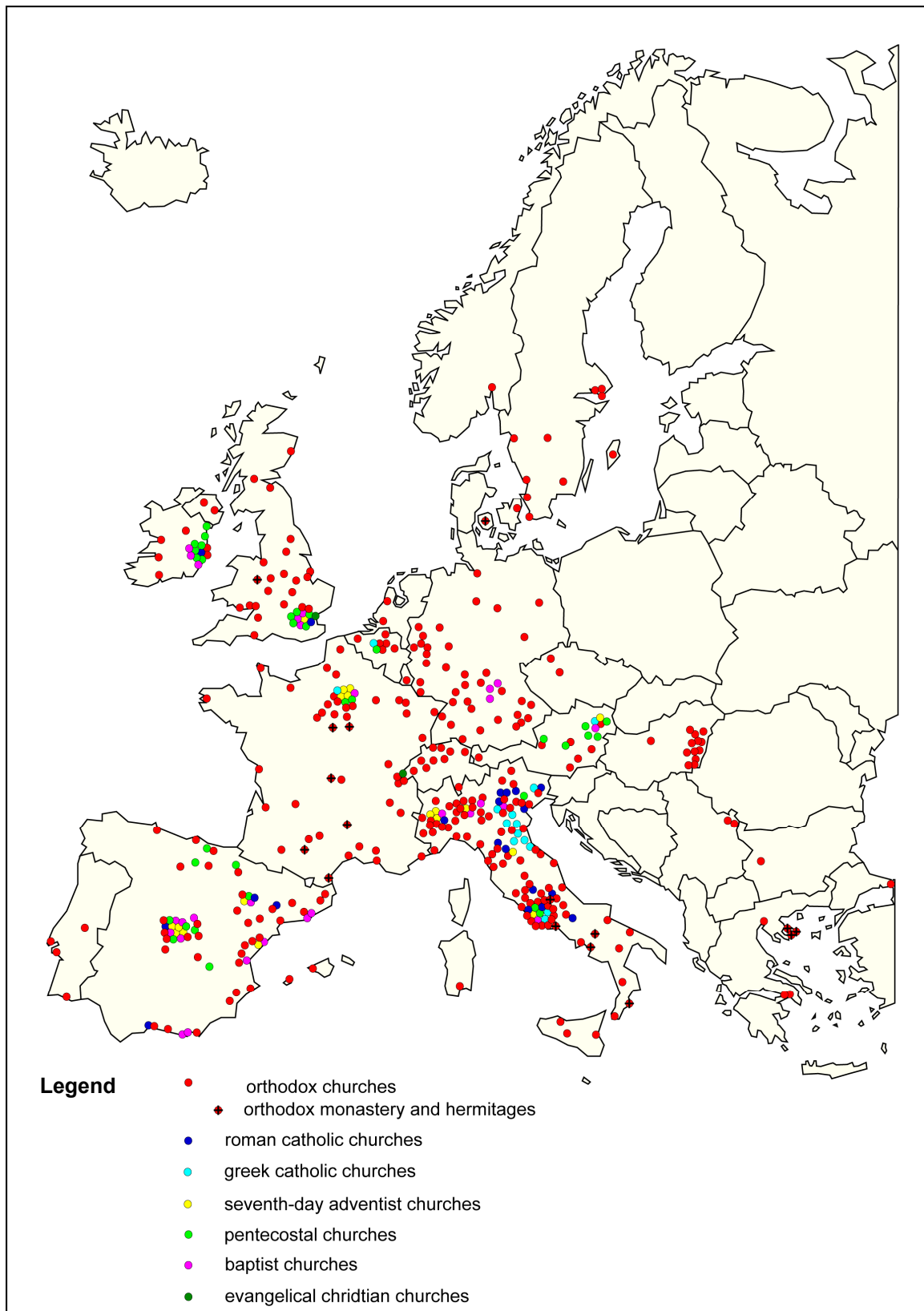


Figure 5. The territorial distribution of the Romanian churches in Europe (2010)

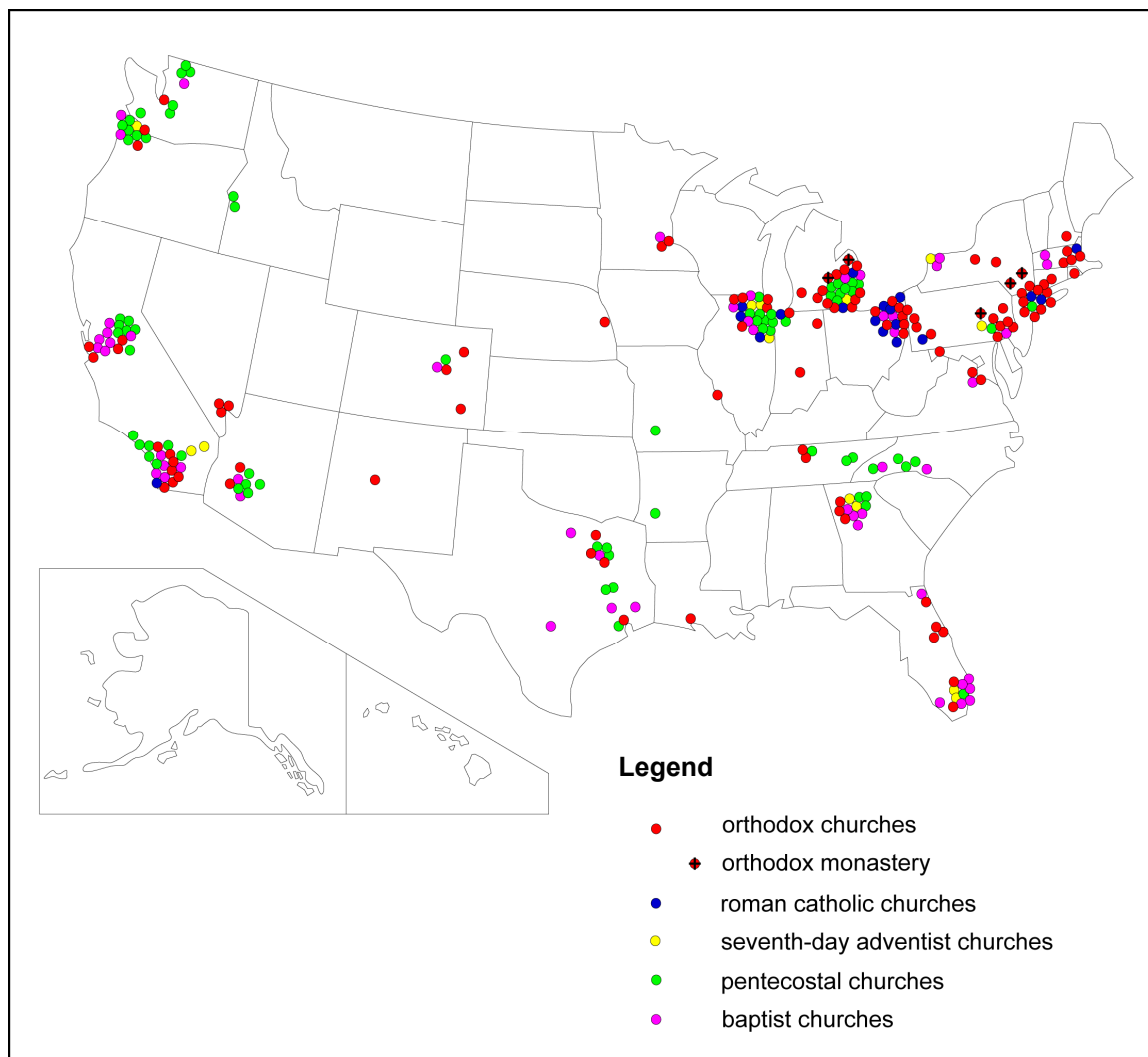


Figure 6. The territorial distribution of the Romanian churches in USA (2010)

As regards the diaspora geographical distribution of the churches that are linked to this cult, there can be noticed a certain tendency of territorial approaching to Roman Catholic churches but this time they are set in a more diffuse manner, probably because of the administrative organization which is more sensitive even when we deal with small communities of believers. Or is it possible that the explanation must be looked for in the fact that both categories of emigrants have the same origin area, namely the west and south-west part of Romania? Anyway, Northern Italy, the Spanish Mediterranean coast, the Community of Madrid, Bavaria and the Region of Dublin seem to be the favourite destinations of the Romanian Baptists.

However, the Baptist Church is extremely active also across the ocean, where the Romanian believers emigrated even before

1989, benefiting from special support in this respect – the case of the communities shaped southwards of the Great Lakes and in the north-east Metropolitan Region. The transoceanic connection seems to be very possibly represented by the descendents of some older Romanian communities that embraced this religion later on – this hypothesis must not be excluded. Furthermore, the Romanian Baptists in the USA are also concentrated in California – either in San Francisco-Sacramento area or in the south – in Los Angeles-San Diego-San Bernardino perimeter. Secondly, Baptists can also be found on the Pacific coast, in Portland and Seattle (newer destinations, activated after 1989).

It is just as interesting to analyse Baptism's representation in territories that have not been (until recently) fiefs of the

Romanianism in the USA, as it is the case of Georgia, North Carolina or Florida or even certain states endowed with an exacerbated nationalism and local patriotism, sometimes shown including to their fellow countrymen – the case of Texas. Obviously, once again we deal with the good relationships between the Romanian and American Baptists.

Among migration-enabling neo-Protestant churches, Seventh-day Adventists also stand out – within the share of the Romanian churches abroad they exceed 11.7 times the value they hold in the stable population.

Seventh-day Adventists represent the main branch of Adventism - it appeared in the USA in 1846, having as central creed the imminent return of Jesus Christ on the Earth (in Latin *adventus* meaning “arrival”). Adventists also quickly adopted a proselytism oriented towards the European Protestants which were more easily to convert due to dogmatic similarities, the German area representing once again the main region of secondary dispersion; afterwards it spread primarily towards the east of the continent. In our country Adventism was introduced by Mihail Czechowski, a former Roman Catholic priest who preached especially in Pitești, Southern Romania being nowadays the main irradiation centre (especially Teleorman, Prahova and Dâmbovița counties).

As regards the destinations of the emigrant flows, Adventism seems to be the denomination with the most obvious urban orientation and localization – churches are set in big cities and quite often even in capital cities – Vienna, London, Paris, Rome, Dublin are relevant examples in this respect. Instead, the presence of the Seventh-day Adventist Romanians on the American continent is scantier (at least in comparison to the other neo-Protestant branches), their churches having a rarefied localization southward of the Great Lakes, in the south-eastern states and in California.

Pentecostals also stand out due to their spectacular contribution to emigration (1.5% of the stable population as opposed to a share of 15.9% of diaspora churches).

Split from the Baptist cult in the United States of America (more exactly in California

and Texas) in the year 1904, Pentecostals experienced a territorial spreading which was even more fulminate than in the case of the previous examples, initially to Europe – Norway (1906), Wales (among mine workers) and Germany – and then to Africa and Latin America (especially to Brazil). In Romania this religion was first recorded in Arad county in the year 1910, being brought directly from the source by the same Transylvanian emigrants (the main promoter being Pavel Budeanu, returned home from Akron – Ohio).

At least by comparison to the previous cases, the spatial distribution of Pentecostal churches has particular features, even though similarities are not totally excluded (the preference for the Hispanic area, for instance). But this time we deal with an important presence in Anglo-Saxon Europe – as we have seen the bridgehead of this young church of American origin in the Old World. Thus, Austria (Vienna basin), Great Britain (Greater London) and Ireland (the eastern coast) are the sure destinations of the Romanian Pentecostals.

Somehow in compensation, Pentecostals have the best representation of all the Romanian neo-Protestants living in the USA, with a multitude of churches having either a grouped localization in the areas of old or new destination (southward of the Great Lakes, California and Oregon, Georgia and Texas) or a punctual distribution in the interior regions (in Colorado, Missouri or Idaho).

The only neo-Protestant cult that but hardly surpasses in the emigration process the value it records within the stable population is that of Evangelical Christians (0.3% as opposed to 0.2%). Actually, this community experienced a strong “throw-back” even at the national level – from 49, 963 members in 1992 to 44, 476 in 2002 – a unique phenomenon within the Romanian Neo-Protestantism.

As a matter of fact, Evangelical Christians are the most recent neo-Protestants, having their origins in 19th century Switzerland but rapidly extending to East Europe and North America (in the USA it represents the most important neo-Protestant church). In Romania, the first conversions took place in the year 1901, first in the capital and some big cities (Constanța, Craiova,

Ploiești – Prahova county holds the most important community, counting 4, 486 members in 2002) but it enjoyed its greatest success among the neo-Protestant German ethnics living in Brașov and Sibiu areas. After World War I Evangelical Christians gained new followers in Iași, from here the spreading direction being oriented towards Bessarabia (joined again to the mother country). On July 15th, 1939 this cult received its religious association status. At the same moment, a fraction split from Orthodoxy in Bucharest – the *Holy Scripture Christians* – partially joined the *Evangelical Christian Church*, the union activating until the year 1989, when the respective Orthodox dissidents retired, becoming independent under the title of the *Romanian Evangelical Church*.

In West Europe there can be found only two Romanian churches of the Evangelical Christians (in Geneva and London), while across the ocean – even though, as we have seen, the large dissemination of this cult among the American population would (theoretically) warrant a good representation – there is not at least one. Most probably, the explanation of this fact must be looked for somewhere else than in the field of human geography.

Romanian Orthodoxy – from traditionalism to aggiornamento?

Even though it does not play the role of a migration catalyser, the Orthodox Church is not impassive when it comes to this relatively recent phenomenon of the Romanian society. It is true that it neither facilitates the emergence nor influences the speed of the migratory flows but, instead, it is endowed (especially during the last decade) with a remarkable capacity of localization outside the acknowledged area, the logic of the appearance of the new locations being dictated by the shaping of some significant Romanian communities in the destination countries. While the Romanian Orthodox churches in East Hungary and East Serbia (Timok Valley) are linked to the existence of some communities having a historical

character, while the presence of the monastic settlements on Athos Mountain is motivated by the obvious (and normal) connections to this central point of the Orthodoxy, the new parishes that appeared beyond the *Iron Curtain* represent manifest signs of the existence of some communities which are big enough to reason such a decision.

From this point of view, both the Protestant (Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia and Great Britain) and Roman Catholic West European area (France, Spain, Portugal) have been equally „conquered” (Figure 5). The only rule is dictated by the presence of some numerous Romanian communities and that is why the density of parishes is maximum in big cities and their immediate neighbourhood, either we deal with capital cities (Rome, London, Paris, Madrid) or regional metropolises (Turin, Milan, Munich). The setting up of twelve Orthodox Christian monasteries in West Europe (half of them in France) is also to be emphasized¹¹.

The North-American continent has not remained unexplored by the Romanian Orthodox Christianity either, the churches of this religion being the first to be set up across the ocean. From the point of view of this dynamics, while the beginning dates back to the year 1904, they got really concentrated during the immediately following period up to World War I, when the Romanian flows of Transylvanian origin reached their peak (Figure 7).

Afterwards, up to the last world conflagration, the setting up of Romanian Orthodox parishes in the USA was sporadic, a light change for the better taking place starting with the half of the 50's and up to the beginning of the 70's, when the results of the self-isolation policy imposed by the communist regime became visible. It was only after 1980 that the chain of Orthodox churches got reloaded – during that period illegal emigrations reached maximum quotas of development. But the most prolific period in this respect is by far the one that succeeded

¹¹ This fact is not at all fortuitous as long as during the last two centuries Orthodoxy has experienced remarkable progress in a strongly secularized country such as France.

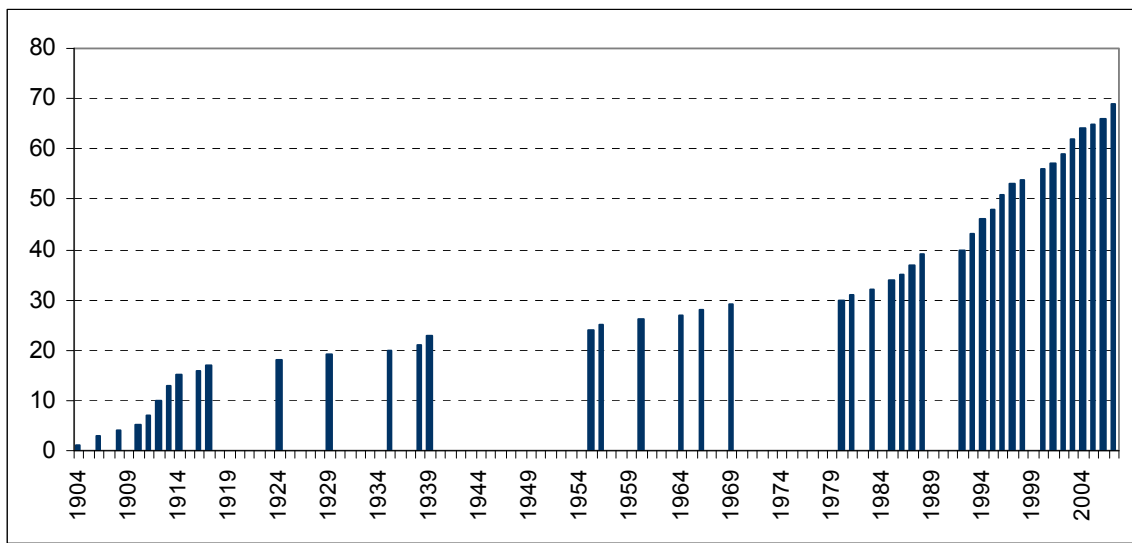


Figure 7 – The dynamics of the Romanian Orthodox churches in the USA

the democratization of the Romanian society and liberalization of the circulation; during the period 1991-2007 not less than 30 such churches appeared in the USA.

The territorial distribution of these religious institutions and their dynamics makes us wonder if the Romanian Orthodox Church has not initiated a process of *aggiornamento*, the traditions in this field having completely different coordinates. From this point of view, it is possible to have adopted a strategy similar to that of the neo-Protestant cults.

Anyway, we must point out the territorial distribution of the Orthodox representation in the USA, with very well outlined areas of the Romanian community: southward of the Great Lakes (spreading to Minneapolis), New England, California, Georgia and Florida, but also Texas, Tennessee or Colorado. The presence of the five monastic settlements in New York, Pennsylvania and Michigan („the tough nucleus” of the American Romanianity) is also to be noticed.

Short conclusions

The statistical and many times even qualitative information on the international migrations of the Romanians is to a great extent impermissibly terse and devoid of consistency. The Romanian authorities have had very few initiatives in order to remove this

The first Orthodox parish across the ocean was set up in the year 1904, in Cleveland, the Romanian believers here requesting the Metropolitan Church of Ardeal to send them a priest.

From the 25th to the 28th of April, 1929 20 priests and 24 lay-men representing 22 parishes met in Detroit within an Ecclesiastical Congress and decided the foundation of the Romanian Missionary Orthodox Archdiocese in America. They appointed a working commission to draw up a statute of the new archdiocese and to implement the congress's decisions. The commission sent the new statute to the Romanian Patriarchate, together with the request of being sent a bishop from the country.

Patriarch Miron Cristea started to solve out the case which finally came to an end only in the year 1935. During the Congress on July, 4th they installed Policarp Morușca archbishop at St. George Church in Detroit, event which was attended by 1, 500 Romanian Orthodox believers. The 4th Ecclesiastical Congress took place after that installation and it lasted for two days, involving 57 delegates from 32 parishes.

Bishop Policarp started to organize the archdiocese by introducing in parishes the Sunday schools for the Romanian children, by setting up the women's and youth's organizations, by publishing the Yearly Calendar "Solia" which would play a significant part in the life of the archdiocese.

(<http://www.holy-ascension.org/about%20ous.html>)

opaque veil, the lack of interest being quasi generalized. In this situation, the only solution to increase the degree of knowledge is to make use either of external quantitative

documentation sources (especially Italian institutions prove to be very generous in this respect) or of parallel sources – the case we analysed: the territorial distribution of the Romanian churches abroad.

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