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NEWS ABOUT BESSARABIA IN THE ROMANIAN PRESS OF ARAD IN 1918

Sebastian-Dragoș BUNGHEZ,
National College “Vasile Goldiș”, Arad, Romania

Maria Alexandra PANTEA,
Western University “Vasile Goldiș”, Arad, Romania

The year 1918 brought radical changes to the map of Europe. It is the year when old empires disappeared, giving way to national states. In this context, the Union of Bessarabia with Romania took place on March 27/April 9, 1918, a significant event for Romanian society. Due to the harsh conditions imposed by the war and the closure or censorship of numerous Romanian publications in Transylvania and Banat, not many news reports about the Union emerged in these regions. However, upon analyzing the press of Arad, we find intriguing information about various events or personalities active in Bessarabia after the Union. The analysis of these articles and the way they were written reveals the realities and the rapid, profound changes Romanian society experienced throughout 1918.
Keywords: *press, Arad, Union, Bessarabia, culture.*

ȘTIRI DESPRE BASARABIA ÎN PRESA ROMÂNEASCĂ ARĂDEANĂ A ANULUI 1918

Anul 1918 a provocat schimbări radicale pe harta Europei. Este anul în care dispar vechile imperii, iar în locul lor apar state naționale. În acest context a avut loc și Unirea Basarabiei cu România pe 27 martie/9 aprilie 1918, un eveniment important pentru întreaga societate românească. Din cauza condițiilor dure impuse de război și a desființării sau cenzurării a numeroase publicații românești din Transilvania și Banat, aici nu au apărut știri numeroase despre Unire, dar analizând presa arădeană constatăm că după aceea au apărut informații interesante despre diferite evenimente sau personalități care activau în Basarabia. Analiza acestor articole și a modului în care au fost scrise este o dovadă a realităților și a schimbărilor rapide și profunde prin care a trecut societatea românească pe parcursul anului 1918.
Cuvinte-cheie: *presă, Arad, Unire, Basarabia, cultură.*

The events of 1918 caused major shifts, significantly impacting Romanian society, already deeply affected by the war. During this period, Arad was the most important city for Romanians in the Dual Monarchy, housing significant Romanian institutions and intellectuals fighting for the national cause. The publication of articles or news in the Arad press regarding events in Bessarabia was in line with the context of the era.

Since the second half of the 19th century, Arad has played an essential role in the Romanian press during the Dual Monarchy. Here, several publications in the Romanian language appeared. During the years of the Great War, the most important Romanian periodicals published in Arad were *Biserica și Școala* (Church and School) and *Românul* (The Romanian).

Biserica și Școala first appeared on January 30/February 11, 1877, as a „religious, scholastic, literary, and economic newspaper”. Although this fact was not mentioned until its last issue in 1927, it was the official publication of the Orthodox Diocese of Arad. This magazine primarily published articles and news of a theological nature, related to church and school life, but it also included substantial information about cultural, political, and economic life, among others.

Since 1911, the newspaper *Românul* was also published in Arad as the official organ of the Romanian National Party in the Dual Monarchy. It featured numerous local news pieces as well as information about events in other countries, many of them from Romania. Notably, among the contributors to this newspaper were prominent Romanian cultural figures, such as historians A.D. Xenopol, Nicolae Iorga, Ioan Ursu, and writer Ion Luca Caragiale, who published several articles in Românul.

After the ban of the daily *Românul* in March 1916, the official newspaper of the Romanian National

Party, the periodical *Biserica și Școala* remained the most important Romanian publication in Arad, with widespread circulation. It circulated throughout the Diocese of Arad, which included territories in Crisana and Banat, and even beyond, playing an essential role in Romanian society. The conditions imposed by the war and the fear of its potential ban – especially after Romania entered the war against Austria-Hungary on August 27, 1916 – led the editors to exercise caution and a form of self-censorship. As a result, articles or news that might have upset the authorities were avoided. Analyzing documents of the era and the press during World War I, it can be said that the Church maintained an attitude of loyalty to state authorities until the end of the conflict, which made censorship less severe for ecclesiastical publications.

Browsing through the pages of *Biserica și Școala* from 1917, we can observe that there is no information about the significant transformations occurring in Russia and, consequently, in Bessarabia. The name of the Romanian province situated between the Prut and Dniester rivers does not appear at all in this year within the Arad periodical.

The first news about Bessarabia following the Russian Revolution of February/March 1917 was published in issue 14 from April 1/14, 1918, of the Arad periodical. It was a brief piece, more like a note regarding the fate of certain intellectuals from Transylvania who had taken refuge along with the Romanian army after its retreat from Transylvania in the autumn of 1916. Thus, it was reported that Brașov doctor Gh. Baiulescu was a professor at the ,,popular university" of Chisinau, serving as ,,dean of the medical faculty,", while the former director of the Brasov branch of Banca Albina, Dr. N. Vecerdea, was ,,dean of the legal faculty". Other intellectuals from Transylvania, who had left Sibiu – Dr. Onisifor Ghibu and Dr. Ioan Matei – were editors of the newspaper *România Nouă* (New Romania), while teacher Gh. Hodrea from Fagaras was a school inspector in Chișinău [1, p. 4].

After this initial notice, throughout 1918, *Biserica și Școala* published numerous other pieces of information related to Bessarabia. These can be divided into four categories:

- Large articles where Bessarabia is the main or an important subject;
- Small articles, more like notes, concerning Bessarabia;
- Literary works whose subject is Bessarabia or whose action takes place in Bessarabia;
- Articles where the main topic is different, but brief mentions of Bessarabia are included.

The news about the Union of Bessarabia with Romania was only reported in issue 17 from April 22/ May 5, 1918. On page 5, an article entitled ,,The Romanian Academy and the Union of Bessarabia with Romania" was published, discussing the meeting held at the Romanian Academy on April 12, 1918, in the new style. On this occasion, the vice-president of the Academy, I. Bogdan, delivered an emotional speech, in which he stated, among other things:

,,The vote cast by Bessarabians on April 9 proves to us that despite a century of Russian rule, a rule which became increasingly oppressive day by day, Bessarabians have remained Romanian and wish to remain Romanian henceforth. At the first opportunity they had to determine their destiny, they willingly decided to unite their fate with that of Romanians in the Kingdom, to collaborate with them towards the future upliftment of all Romanians."

The same article stated that Prime Minister Alexandru Marghiloman responded from Iași via telegram to the telegram sent to him after the Romanian Academy meeting. In his telegram, Marghiloman mentioned that he received the dispatch from the Academy while hosting a meal for Bessarabian delegates. These delegates, led by Ion Inculeț, also expressed their gratitude to the esteemed cultural institution ,,for the words of embrace" they had sent [2, p. 5].

In the same issue, there is also an article reproduced from the newspaper ,,Acțiunea Română" from Iași, titled ,,The Union of Bessarabia with Romania. How the Sfatul Țării Session in Chișinău Unfolded". The article details the historic session of April 9, 1918 (new style), during which the Union of Bessarabia with Romania was voted. Nearly half of the article is dedicated to the emotional speech delivered by Constantin Stere, in which he advocated for a vote in favor of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania, addressing even the minority representatives in Russian. It is worth mentioning that the Bessarabian leader Constantin Stere was known to the intellectuals of Arad, having visited Arad several times in the years preceding the war [3, p. 42-45].

The 1918 article also recounts other speeches, including those of deputies Buzdugan, from the Moldovan Bloc, Bârca, representing part of the Peasant Faction, as well as speeches by deputies of national minorities. Among them, only the Polish deputy Dutkievici welcomed the Union. The other minority deputies said they did not have the mandate to vote for this proposal. Interestingly, the article does not refer to the voting of the motion for the Union of Bessarabia with Romania or the content of the act but abruptly ends after summarizing, in a laudatory tone, the speech of deputy Bârca, who was in favor of the Union [4, p. 6].

In the next issue, 18, dated April 29/May 12, 1918, the opening of the University of Bucharest is mentioned. On this occasion, the rector I. Bogdan delivered a speech in which he also spoke about the union of Bessarabia with Romania, appreciating that through it „a wrong done one hundred years ago has been corrected” [5, p. 4].

Also, in issue 18, information is published regarding the area, size, and population structure, as well as the administrative organization of Bessarabia. For example, concerning the population, it is written that it is composed of „2,000,000 Romanians, 270,000 Jews, 250,000 Ukrainians, 85,000 Russians, 75,000 Russified Romanians, or Ruthenized, 70,000 Germans (colonists), 65,000 Gypsies, 60,000 Bulgarians (colonists), 40,000 Lipovans, 35,000 Cossacks, 30,000 Gagauz (Turko-Bulgarians), 30,000 Poles, 18,000 Armenians, 10,000 Greeks, 2,000 French and 10,000 of other nationalities” [6, p. 4].

A moving „Song, to the Union of Bessarabia”, composed in M.-Telegd (probably Tileagd, Bihor County), on April 15/28, 1918, authored by Ales. Munteanu, son of Vasilie, a Romanian Orthodox archpriest, is published in issue 19 of May 6/19, 1918. The author draws inspiration from Eminescu›s „Doina”, which he also paraphrases [7, p. 2].

Cântec,
la unirea Basarabiei

Dup'un secol şi mai bine
După lacrimi şi supine,
Ştefane, Măria Ta,
Tu la Putna nu oftă,
Căci un duh de premenlre,
De cerească înoire,
Azi încep a-ţi mişcă,
Sicriul cu oasele,
Codrul cu frumoasele,
Râul cu izvoarele,
Pământul şi soarele,
Basarabia zdrobită
Şi cu cnutul logodită,
Azi e liberă, sglobie,
Rupse-şi lanţul de robie,
Şi din morţi iarăş îovie.
Vin la Tine Hotinenil
Şi cu fraţii Orheienii
Din Soroca 'n Chişinău,
Toţi slăvesc numele Tău.
Căci în gândul lor curat
El îşi cearcă nencetat,
Făt-frumosul ce-o să-i vie
Cu poclon de cununie,
Ce sărbare, ce mărire,
Ce minune peste fire,
Ne-a adus la nemurire
La frăţeasca lor unire?

Unde-i harfa eolină,
Unde dulcea mandolină,
Unde fluerul din luncă,
Ce-ţi aduce dor de ducă,
Să ni-l plângă, să ni-l cânte,
Inimile să le-avânte.
Ceasul sfânt să-l vecinicească,
Hora nouă să pornească,
Horă mare românească.
Nistrule pe unda-ţi creaţă
Va renaşte-o nouă vieaţă.
Prutule, pe malul tău,
Coborî-va Dumnezeu.
Şi din vechi şl noi morminte
Din bisericile sfinte
Duh eroic răsări-va,
Tatăl nostru ocroti-l-va,
Şi sărbarea triumfală,
Prin frumseţa-i ideală,
Ne-a sădi în inimi fală,
C'a venit din cer Dreptatea
Şi-a sfinţit Frăţietatea,
Limba noastră 'ncătuşată,
Iat'o astăzi deslegată,
Sfânta noastră liturghie,
S'a sluji pe românie.
Cei muscali ascundă-şi cnutul,
Şi îngroape-şi azi trecutul,
Dacă vor să se trezească
Din ruşinea căzăcească.
Şi creştini să se numească.

„Sfatul Ţării- cel cuminte
Intr'cn graiu, cu dulci cuvinte,
Va 'nfrăţit cu maica voastră
Şi din fii orfani şi birnici,
Robi batiuştilor becisnici,
Sunteţi liberi, cetăţeni,
Viţă de basarabeni
Fraţi cu dârzii Moldoveni,
Şi cu toţii-un brav popor,
De lumină doritor,
De credinţă purtător.
Visul Tău sfânt Voivoade,
Scrisul vechilor izvoade
La plinirea vremii, eatăl.
Ni-l sfinţeşte, mări Tatăl,
Cu iubire-l învesmântă
Cu dreapta bine-l cuvântă.
Să rămână visul — faptă,
Pentru inima Ta dreaptă,
Pentru cel, cari suferirâ,
Şi cu crucea se 'ntăriră,
Azi ce dragă ni-i vieaţa,
Tuturor le rîde faţa
Şi în ochii arşi de soare
Viitorul nou înfloare.
In genunchi, la rugăciune,
Tot românul, blând se pune,
Preamăreşte, azi, Tăria,
Care 'nfrânge iobăgia!

M.-Telegd, la 15/28 April 1918.
Ales. Munteanu al lui Vasilie, protopop ort. român.

Figure 1. The poem published in issue 19, dated May 6/19, 1918, of the publication Biserica şi Şcoala

In issue 21, dated May 20/June 2, 1918, the opening of courses at the University of Bucharest is revisited. This time, the speech delivered on that occasion by Virgil Arion, the acting minister of religious affairs and public instruction, is reproduced. He extensively referred to the Union of Bessarabia with Romania, which he described as „a ray of light" amidst the darkness that seemed to engulf Romania [8, p. 2]. Arion also stated: „Isn't it a miracle that Bessarabia, abandoned by us, thought dead, whose requiem some Romanians even sang, has risen from the dead and restored life to a Romania wounded at its heart?" [8, p. 3].

The ecclesiastical issue in Bessarabia was also addressed in the pages of the Arad publication. Thus, in issue 22, dated May 27/June 9, the following information is provided: „A synod of bishops from Bessarabia was held in Iași under the presidency of the Metropolitan of Moldova, in which the separation of the Orthodox Church of Bessarabia from the Russian Church and its affiliation with the autocephalous Church of Romania was decided" [9, p. 3]. A few weeks later, another update appeared on the same matter: „The Romanian Synod, considering that the Russian bishop of Bessarabia, Anastasie, did not respond to the call to participate in the synod›s work and did not provide any explanation, declared him defrocked. At the same time, the Synod invited the government to inform the Christian population of Bessarabia that it would respect the ecclesiastical autonomy of Bessarabia. The Synod also announced an encyclical that will be published in the coming days" [10, p. 2].

In issue 30, dated July 22/August 4, 1918, a „Manifesto to the People of Bessarabia", addressed by the Bessarabian Director›s Council, led by P. Cazacu, is published. This document highlights the advantages of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania: the preservation of all rights gained through the revolution, Bessarabia›s governance by autonomous institutions such as the Sfatul Țării and the Director›s Council, representation of Bessarabia by two ministers in the Romanian government, land redistribution to peasants, guarantees of rights for national minorities etc. [11, p. 2].

In the same issue, the „Romanian Chamber›s Response to the Throne Message" is also included, featuring the following passage: „The Assembly of Deputies greets with gratitude and piety this elevating moment and marks the day of March 29 (old style) (sic!), when, in Your Majesty›s name and the Romanian People›s name and through the will of the Sfatul Țării of Bessarabia, the union was legally consecrated—as a national holiday" [12, p. 3].

The „Romanian Senate›s Response to the Message" is published as well, stating: „Amidst disaster, we had the great consolation of seeing Bessarabia, the dear child forcefully taken from us, returning to its mother. The reintegration of Moldova of Stephen the Great and the recovery of the part torn away in 1878 from the Romania of Carol I was for us a relief from present suffering and a luminous ray of hope for the future. We joyfully welcomed the inclusion in the country›s government of the two representatives of Bessarabia and will be happy to see soon, in the kingdom›s parliament, the representatives of this beloved province" [13, p. 3].

In issue 33, dated August 12/25, 1918, the ecclesiastical matter in Bessarabia resurfaces. The decree from the Chișinău Consistory is published, which imposed that services in monasteries in Bessarabia be conducted „only in Moldovan and all abbots be Moldovan" [14, p. 2]. The same issue also recounts an eight-event literary-artistic tour held in Bessarabia, in which several Romanian artists participated: «the writers N. N. Beldiceanu and Nichifor Crainic, the artist Ion Sârbul from the National Theatre in Bucharest, and the baritone Văleanu.» The events, including some for children, were highly successful, and people were moved to tears by the Romanian artists› performances [15, p. 2].

The development of Romanian culture in Bessarabia was a focus of the authorities, as demonstrated by the news that, at the initiative of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, a grand National Theatre was planned to open in Chișinău in the fall of 1918 [16, p. 3].

Bessarabia was also used as a point of comparison. To illustrate the unsatisfactory state of education in Romania, the minister of religious affairs and public instruction, Simion Mehedinți, remarked that Romania had „fewer high schools and gymnasiums than Bessarabia" [17, p. 2].

Starting with issue 40, dated September 30/October 13, 1918, *Biserica* și Școala began publishing a serialized literary sketch titled „From Russian Bessarabia" [18, p. 2]. According to the editorial team, the sketch had originally appeared in an old calendar and was written by schoolmaster George Dumbravă.

The sketch addresses the imposition of the Russian language in churches instead of Romanian in the three southern counties of Bessarabia, following their annexation to Russia as a result of the decision made at the Berlin Congress on July 13, 1878. Its publication continued in each issue until issue 45, dated November 4/17, 1918. It›s interesting how the tone and content of the magazine change throughout these issues, as it shifts from a publication that was loyal to the official state policy to one that, against the backdrop of the military and political crisis of the Dual Monarchy, gradually comes to openly support the idea of Transylvania›s union with Romania.

Meanwhile, other news regarding Bessarabia emerged. In issue 45, dated November 4/17, 1918, it was announced that public subscriptions had started to raise the funds needed to establish a national printing house in Bessarabia [19, p. 4].

In issue 46, dated November 11/24, 1918, a manifesto by King Ferdinand, also signed by Prime Minister Constantin Coandă, was published. The monarch declared that the long-promised agrarian and electoral reforms would be implemented, and these reforms would apply „in the Old Kingdom, as well as in Bessarabia” [20, p. 1]. The same issue reported a large assembly held in Chișinău, attended by the U.S. representative, Wopicka. During this assembly, the following declaration was adopted: „In our name and in the name of the entire national consciousness, we firmly declare that the unwavering decision of Romanianism is to accept no other political arrangement, in these moments when all countries inhabited by the same nation are uniting into one free life, than the national unitary state. Long live, grow, and flourish Bessarabia; long live Transylvania and Bukovina, united forever with the motherland within the broad and encompassing borders of Greater Romania” [21, p. 3].

In the next issue, 47, an order of the day issued by General Petala, commander of the Fourth Army Corps, was published prior to his troops entering Bukovina. Addressing his soldiers and officers, the Romanian general evoked the call made by „our Bessarabian brothers” a year earlier, who sought „to complete the liberation that had begun and to unite entirely and eternally the two sister countries” [22, p. 3]. Also in issue 47, the publication announced the release of Book 40 in the „Sămănătorul Library” series, which contained national songs, including „The Seizure of Bessarabia”, alongside other musical pieces such as „Three Colors”, „On Our Flag”, „Awaken Thee, Romanian”, and others [23, p. 4]. The same announcement was reproduced in issue 49 of the Arad publication [24, p. 4].

Issue 48 of the magazine opens with the article „The Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia: Proclaiming National Unity. One People, One Country”. Although unsigned in *Biserica* și Școala, it is known from the writings of his son, Emil Botiș, that the article was written by the great historian, professor, theologian, and cultural figure Teodor Botiș. Both the account of the proceedings of the Great National Assembly and the speech of Vasile Goldiș, reproduced at the end of the article, evoke the Union of Bessarabia with Romania as a precursor to the Union of Transylvania with Romania [25, p. 1-2].

Issue 49 provides brief information about the area and population of Greater Romania, which the magazine estimates at 329,460 km², with a population of 18,710,983. It notes that Bessarabia had an area of 44,422 km², with a population of 2,588,400 [26, p. 3].

Bessarabia is also mentioned in connection with the formal submission of the Union documents by Transylvanian representatives in Bucharest. In his speech on this occasion, reproduced in the magazine, Vasile Goldiș stated: „Through this union, through the union of Bessarabia and Bukovina, the thousand-year dream of the Romanian nation has been fulfilled: the union of all Romanians into a single state”. King Ferdinand, in turn, responded: „On behalf of the Romanians of the Old Kingdom, the Romanians of Bessarabia and Bukovina today united forever, I profoundly and gratefully receive the resolution of our brothers beyond the Carpathians to accomplish the national unity of all Romanians, and I declare all territories inhabited by Romanians from the Tisza to the Dniester forever part of the Romanian kingdom” [27, p. 1].

The same issue also reproduces „The Speech of His Grace Bishop Dr. M. Cristea on Horea›s Field”, in which the future patriarch of Greater Romania declared: „We could not think of anything else but what our brothers in Bessarabia and Bukovina have decided and done, namely the union with our dear Romania, uniting the entire ancestral land to it” [28, p. 2].

Românul reappeared in November 1918, more than two and a half years after its suspension in 1916. The newspaper played a significant role in the events of autumn 1918, helping to popularize the decisions made in Arad by the leadership of the Central Romanian National Council and mobilizing the population to get involved in organizing Romanian leadership structures and later in traveling to Alba Iulia. The first article referring to Bessarabia was published in issue 10, dated November 7/20, 1918. Under the title „The Great Celebration in Chișinău, Bessarabia", it recounts the festivities of October 21, 1918, marking in Bessarabia's capital a year since the proclamation of its autonomy by the Congress of Moldovan Soldiers. The event was attended by members of the General Directors' Council, the Sfatul Țării, the American diplomat Charles J. Vopicka (U.S. representative in Romania), General Artur Văitoianu, and a large audience. Significant, given the slow flow of information, is the fact that this news was published nearly three weeks after the event.

On this occasion, Sfatul Țării Vice President Pantelimon Halippa gave an emotional speech, stating that Bessarabian Romanians were „the first among oppressed Romanians" to gain the right to decide their own destiny. He called for the same right to be recognized for Romanians in Austria-Hungary, which at that point was on the brink of collapse. The Bessarabian leader further declared that „the unwavering determination of Romanianism is to accept no political arrangement other than the national unitary state in these moments when all countries inhabited by the same nation are merging into one free life!"

At the same event, Dr. Baiulescu, president of the committee for Transylvanian and Bukovinian refugees, asserted that „Transylvanian and Bukovinian Romanians on the territory of the Romanian kingdom demand liberation from the yoke of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the formation of the entire nation into a single national and free state under the rule of the Romanian dynasty" French Consul D. Sarré also spoke, expressing that „the time has come for all Romanians to unite into a single nation". Charles Vopicka noted that while Romania had been forced to leave the war, the U.S. government tried to help it remain among the Allies „who fight for the triumph of justice and the liberty of nations", and that the final victory, which „will bring the union of Transylvania and Bukovina with Romania", following Bessarabia›s union, was near. Other speakers included Agricultural Director Cateli, Dr. I. Nistor, and Waklaw Miller, president of the Czech committee in Romania, who extended greetings from the Czechs „to friendly Romania, on the occasion of the union of all Romanians" [29, p. 3].

In issue 29, dated November 31/December 14, 1918 (sic!), *Românul* published a note on page 3 titled "Why Did the Bessarabians Retain Autonomy?" It reported that an article in the *Sfatul* Țării newspaper from Chișinău explained why Bessarabians encouraged Bukovinians to vote for unification with Romania without reservations: „The guarantees in the Act of Union of Bessarabia with Romania were not taken against the Romanian people but against the reactionary forces that ruled the country under the pressure of the German bayonet... Today, things have fundamentally changed. Today the King speaks, and His word is that of the best Romanian and greatest democrat. Today there is no doubt that the Moldovan peasant will receive land, whether or not the conditions of the Union Act exist' [30, p. 3].

Another news item describes a ceremony to welcome students from Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transylvania at the University of Bucharest. The ceremony took place „last week" in the aula of the Carol University Foundation in Bucharest, attended by most university professors, led by Ioan Bogdan, who delivered a welcoming speech to the three delegations. At the end of the ceremony, held in an atmosphere filled with emotion and enthusiasm, it was decided to organize a student congress in Alba Iulia in August 1919 [31, p. 4].

In issue 35, dated December 9/22, 1918, of *Românul,* a brief report is published about the submission to King Ferdinand of the act of „unconditional union of Bessarabia" by „the Minister of Bessarabia, Ciuhuneanu (sic!), and the Director of Justice of Bessarabia, Pelivan" [32, p. 2].

Românul also includes other brief references to Bessarabia, such as those made in speeches delivered at the Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia and during the submission of the Resolution of the Great Union by the Transylvanian delegation to King Ferdinand, references that were also reproduced in *Biserica și Școala.*

Analyzing the articles about Bessarabia published in 1918 in *Biserica și Școala* and *Românul,* it can be observed that there are fewer substantial articles on this subject in *Românul* compared to *Biserica și Școala.*

This is understandable, given the much shorter publication period of *Românul* in 1918 compared to that of *Biserica și Școala,* as well as the role of *Românul* as the official organ of the Central Romanian National Council, which primarily needed to publish official communiqués and news relevant to the national struggle of Romanians in this territory. Another issue was the difficulty with which news from Bessarabia reached these regions, evidenced by the publication of news about events that had occurred weeks earlier in Bessarabia.

In *Biserica și Școala*, there is not only more information but also greater diversity, whereas in the pages of the newspaper *Românul*, political events are primarily reported. Referring to the editorial policy imposed on the ecclesiastical periodical during the years of the Great War, the future bishop of Oradea, Roman Ciorogariu, who was its editor-in-chief until his departure from Arad in 1917, stated in his memoirs: ‚Fortunately, *Biserica și Școala*, in the absence of the caution prescribed by law, was not allowed to engage in politics. I was therefore not obliged to publish the false military and political communiqués. I revolved around themes of religiosity, morality, culture, charity, and the sacrifice that the Romanian people bring in this war. An integration of national consciousness into the core of a weekly magazine”. [33, p. 19]. This policy was maintained until the end of the conflict and the collapse of the Dual Monarchy.

Even though there are differences in how events are reported in the two periodicals, we can see that they played an important role at the time, helping to establish bridges between the various Romanian provinces.

The news about Bessarabia in the two Arad publications addresses various issues—national, political, cultural, statistical, etc. - and in all documents or articles with the theme of the Great Union, Bessarabia repeatedly appears as a leitmotif. It can be said, as Virgil Arion declared in his speech delivered at the reopening of the University of Bucharest, that the Union of Bessarabia with Romania was „a ray of light”, not only for the Romanians of the Old Kingdom, gravely impacted at the end of 1917 and in the first part of 1918, but also for those beyond the mountains, who had lost hope of seeing the national ideal fulfilled. The Union of Bessarabia encouraged them, made them believe that miracles could still happen, and their national struggle bore fruit under more favorable circumstances.

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Data about the authors:
Sebastian-Dragoș BUNGHEZ, National College “Vasile Goldiș”, Arad, Romania.
ORCID: 0009-0006-0645-5841
E-mail: sbunghez@gmail.com

Maria Alexandra PANTEA, Western University “Vasile Goldiș”, Arad, Romania.
ORCID: 0009-0001-4826-094X
E-mail: mariapantea82@gmail.com

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