

CROSSING THE LINES: CALINIC I. POPP ȘERBOIANU AND THE ISSUES OF CREMATION IN ROMANIA*

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“I won’t go to an abbey, I won’t disappear from the horizon of the Church’s activity, I won’t rid them of my presence and my scolding- this isn’t what’s needed, but the other way around, to continue my duty, to create a whip of flame for striking down the unjust doings and to unmask sacrileges, from the heart of our holy and miserable church.”

Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu (1912)

The cornerstone of modern cremation in Romania could be considered the life and work of Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu. He was a complex and contradictory personality of his time, who stood out through several important activities. He was an activist member of the Orthodox clergy, involved in society, a missionary among the Roma population and supporter of the cremation idea. Therefore, due to his initiatives and options, he often stood against the major trend of thoughts of the time, for which he was often criticized and even defrocked as an Orthodox clergy member.

Șerboianu was and still is the only Orthodox clergy member in Romania to publicly support cremation. That is why his work is also important for the global history of cremation. Șerboianu is part of a restricted category of theologians or representatives of the Church that supported cremation, in a time period in which most of their exponents would reject it. Some members of the aforementioned category are, for example, Michel Riquet, who has a significant contribution towards changing the Roman catholic Church’s view on cremation,¹ or various representatives of the protestant Church, which have been, ever since the end of the 19th century in favour of burning the bodies of the deceased. We can also bring the case of the Church of England into the picture,² as well as some examples from the United States of America (which firstly acted as a

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¹ Mates 2005, p. 232.

² Jupp 2005, p. 114-117.

feedback towards some British realities).³ In the case of the English, Frazer, the Bishop of Manchester had a significant position that supported cremation, at the end of the 19th century, which proved itself remarkable, keeping in mind the low level of development of the practice of cremation at that time.⁴

The life and work of Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu⁵

Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu was born on October 16, 1883 at Șerboieni in Argeș County, in southern Romania. His father was an Orthodox priest, Șerboianu confessing, at one point, that he had been the fifth generation of priests in his family.⁶ He became a student at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest, which he graduated with a thesis entitled *Zece predici duminicale, începând cu Duminica Vameșului și Fariseului până la Duminica Paștelui exclusiv* (the work was published in 1909).⁷ In 1909, on November 16, he was appointed deacon at the Romanian Orthodox Chapel in Paris, where he served until July 1910. Due to disagreements with Chesare Stefano, who served as high priest at the chapel, he left the French capital and returned to Romania. In 1913, he was deployed to Southern Dobruja (a south-eastern Romanian region at that time - an area of north-eastern Bulgaria now), and for a period between 1914 and 1918 he served as pastor at St. Elias Church in Bucharest. He tried but did not succeed in pursuing doctoral studies at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest in 1914. Before the outbreak of World War I, he wrote for the journal *Culture. A Journal for Church Singers in Romania*, and signed as hierodeacon.

Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu fought in World War I, as a cavalry officer. After the war ended, he taught French, Greek and Latin at the Theological High School in Curtea de Argeș. In 1922, he left for America for three years, sent by the Patriarchate to spread the Orthodox faith among Romanians who had settled there. After his return from the United States of America, for two years (1925-1927), he was orthodox priest in Beiu, Teleorman County, where he held the position of inspector-missionary at the Buzău diocese for three months. He then visited several monasteries, among which Cozia and Stânișoara (in southern Romania).

In 1929, he began a longer journey for studies, which included Italy, Albania, Macedonia and France. It is said that he had been priest in Albania, up until his expulsion in 1929.⁸

³ Prothero 2001, p. 86.

⁴ Jupp 2006, p. 50-51.

⁵ Some information for this chapter were taken from Rotar 2012, p. 7-83, *passim*.

⁶ *Un epilog* 1912, p. 3.

⁷ Popescu-Șerboianu 1909.

⁸ AMAE, fond *Problema 15*, p. 6.

In 1930, in Paris, he managed to publish his famous work dedicated to the Gypsies.⁹ His work enjoyed appreciation,¹⁰ but also criticism, especially among the Romanian academic world.¹¹ Also, the Șerboianu's book was mentioned in the most important monograph on the gypsy's history.¹² After his return from France in 1931, for a period of two years (1931-1933), he was abbot of the Crasna monastery, where, according to Gheorghe Lăzărescu Lăzurică, he was degraded from the rank of Archimandrite by the Diocese of Vâlcea and expelled from the monastery on February 1, 1933. The reason was serious moral offence and failure to comply with the Orthodox doctrine, as well as an alleged propensity for the Greek-Catholic Church.

After his arrival from France (1931), Șerboianu began to organize the Gypsy community in Romania. Thus, in April 1933, he founded the General Association of Gypsies in Romania. His merit was obvious, since this was the first attempt to organize Romanian Gypsies in an association. The purpose of this association was the emancipation of Gypsies. Șerboianu thus issued a "Call to all Gypsies in Romania", in 26 points, which included publishing a newspaper, books, organizing evening classes, establishing libraries, setting up theoretical schools, schools of crafts, a people's university, establishing museums, hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, instituting scholarships, guilds, legal aid, reclamation of land for the nomads, etc. The reason behind the creation of this association was to stop the racial hatred towards this ethnic group in that time.¹³

On the other hand, in autumn 1933, the General Union of Roma in Romania was founded in Bucharest, led by Gheorghe Lăzărescu Lăzurică, with the same goal of emancipation for the Gypsies.¹⁴ Differences and mutual hostilities arose between the association led by Șerboianu and that led by Lăzurică, despite the fact that, at first, the two leaders had worked together. Thus, Șerboianu was accused of trying to organize the Gypsies, so as to integrate them into the Greek-Catholic Church. On the other hand, Lăzurică was accused of pursuing political purposes through his association. Lăzurică, of Gypsy origin, accused Șerboianu, who was not a Gypsy and no longer a member of the Orthodox clergy, of intent to convert the Gypsy to Greek-Catholicism. This was a decisive point in their separation.

⁹ Popp Șerboianu 1930.

¹⁰ *Les Tsiganes* 1930, p. 412; Pasca 1930, p. 445-446.

¹¹ See, for instance, *Comptes-rendus* 1931, p. 141; Popp Șerboianu 1934, p. 168; Iorga 1939, p. 284-285.

¹² Potra 1939, p. 5, 165; Chelcea 1944, p. 5, 7, 24-26, 30-33, 91-92, 98, 100, 103, 113-114, 176, 192.

¹³ AB 1933, p. 10.

¹⁴ *Și țigani* 1933, p. 7.

Șerboianu's alleged conversion to Greek-Catholicism was just a rumour launched by Lăzurică. Also, Lăzurică insisted on the fact that he was supported by the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate, which, because of suspicions about Șerboianu, would rather support his rival.

The dissensions between the two faded in time. The Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate withdrew their support for Lăzurică as a missionary among Gypsies and favoured Gheorghe Niculescu, a new leader of Romanian Gypsies of the time. This was the reason for a new rapprochement between Șerboianu and Lăzurică. Petre Matei showed that in 1937, the two simultaneously launched attacks against both the Orthodox Church and Niculescu.¹⁵

His activity amongst the gypsies didn't go unnoticed by the interwar press. Therefore, in *Realitatea ilustrată* Șerboianu was mentioned as a figure of authority amongst the gypsies of those times, but also the leader of their first association.¹⁶

Between 1934 and 1940, Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu worked as a priest at the "Cenușa" Crematorium, where he performed religious services mainly for the Orthodox Christians who chose to be cremated. He died in 1941 and was buried in the Bellu cemetery, but in 1948, his remains were exhumed and cremated at the "Cenușa" Crematorium in Bucharest.¹⁷

The publishing activity of Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu was intense and began early. He published three books, the most popular of which was dedicated to the Gypsies. The third book was published in 1931 and it was a guidebook for prospective visitors of Cozia monastery.¹⁸ Thus, the archimandrite used his time spent at the monastery as a source of inspiration for his writing.

In addition, he published a series of articles in various newspapers and magazines of the time, thus showing constant interest in writing. Several stages can be defined in his writing activity. First, Șerboianu stood out as a defender of traditions in the Orthodox Church, before and after World War I. His articles published in *Glasul țărănilor* or *Cultura poporului* are worth mentioning, as they were moralistic and in keeping with the teachings of the Orthodox belief.¹⁹ Also, Șerboianu stood out in his early years as a

¹⁵ Matei 2006, p. 159-173.

¹⁶ Mihail 1933, p. 21-24.

¹⁷ Bezviconi 1972, p. 80.

¹⁸ Popp-Șerboianu 1931.

¹⁹ Popp Șerboianu 1912, p. 12-13; Popp-Șerboianu 1928a, p. 1; Popp-Șerboianu 1928b, p. 2; Popp-Șerboianu 1928c, p. 3; Popp-Șerboianu 1928d, p. 1; Popp-Șerboianu 1928e, p. 1; Popp-Șerboianu 1928f, p. 3; Popp-Șerboianu 1928g, p. 3; Popp-Șerboianu 1928h, p. 3; Popp-Șerboianu 1928i, p. 1; Popp-Șerboianu 1928j, p. 1; Popp-Șerboianu 1928k, p. 4; Popp-Șerboianu 1928l, p. 3; Popp-Șerboianu 1928m, p. 3; Popp-Șerboianu 1928n, p. 5;

critic of some facts connected to the Romanian Orthodox Church. Thus in 1910, he criticized the measures taken against vagrant monks by the state authorities.²⁰ With the scandal regarding the creation of the Superior Church Council, which ended, at one some point, with the defrocking of three Orthodox hierarchs, Calinic Popp Șerboianu intervened, asking to be publicly judged by the Holy Synod with them, which was seen as proof of his critic spirit and his undisguised courage, which perfectly characterized Șerboianu's persona. More so, he published an extremely critic article in regards to the Clergy, in the *Adevărul* newspaper. In this article he roughly criticized the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, saying that they'd parodied Christianity. The situation produced many unpleasant events, being judged twice by the Consistoriu, circumstance in which he reacted in vehement terms. Following his intervention, he'd been initially defrocked, then demoted for two years, serving as a deacon.²¹

Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, a supporter of the cremation idea

When Șerboianu became a supporter of cremation many changes in the field had taken place in Romania in this direction.²² The Orthodox traditionalist rhetoric had already recorded significant victories: in addition to the press campaign against cremation and cremationists that had already begun before the opening of "Cenușa" crematorium on January 25, 1928, the hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church decided by two decisions of the Synod that met in 1928 and 1933, to prohibit any religious service in the case of cremation (valid to this day). Therefore, from the Orthodox point of view, cremation was completely outside the Christian "truth" and its supporters were publicly stigmatized for advocating the overthrow of traditions, of the church and, through these, of the very foundation of the Romanian people. Iuliu Scriban, Marin C. Ionescu, Dionisie Lungu, Ioan Popescu Mălăiești, Iulian Mihălcescu and Haralambie Roventța were just some of the personalities of the Romanian Orthodox Church who adopted such a view, among other important figures of the Romanian public life of the time (for example Nae Ionescu and Cezar Petrescu).

Romania had passed a law on cremation, the Criminal Code issued in 1936, which gave it equal legal status with the practice of burials.

On the other hand, Romanian cremationists had achieved important victories by the year 1934: the opening of the crematorium was the most

Popp-Șerboianu 1928o, p. 2; Popp-Șerboianu 1928p, p. 3; Popp-Șerboianu 1928r, p. 1; Popp-Șerboianu 1928s, p. 3; Popp-Șerboianu 1928t, p. 1-2; Popp-Șerboianu 1928u, p. 2; Popp-Șerboianu 1928v, p. 1.

²⁰ Cernăianu 1920, p. 73-74.

²¹ *Informațiunii* 1912.

²² See Rotar 2013, p. 68-273, *passim*.

significant because it meant that the idea of Romanian cremation had come to life. For a while, the cremationist society was financially supported by the Mayor’s Office in Bucharest, but the support gradually decreased in time. On the other hand, by 1934, work at the “Cenușa” Crematorium had almost been completed, the number of “Cenușa” society members had significantly increased and the number of cremations had slightly gone up. Romania was at that time the only Balkan state to own a crematorium and the first country with a majority of Orthodox believers to have such a facility.

An outline of the number of cremations since the opening of the crematorium until 1940 is shown below, which can hopefully shed more light to the matter:

1928	262
1929	266
1930	297
1931	332
1932	470
1933	602
1934	580
1935	480
1936	364
1937	581
1938	230
1939	261
1940	243

Source: Rotar 2011, p. 194-199.

Although the traditionalist Orthodox rhetoric had subsided during the fourth decade of the twentieth century, it was still extremely vehement about cremation. Within this context, *Flacăra sacră* [Sacred flame], a journal written by and for Romanian cremationists, was first issued on December 1934. The journal served several purposes. On the one hand, it was a platform from which Romanian cremationists could now firmly express their views and, on the other hand, they could answer all accusations and rumours sprung at the idea of human cremation. As in the Western world, the journal was a means to forward the development of cremation in Romania, now in the possession of more direct and effective means of propaganda.

Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu's interest on cremation dates from the early twentieth century. In 1909, he published in *Gazeta țărănilor* an article openly critical of the practice.²³ At that time, he was priest at the Romanian Orthodox Chapel in Paris. He attended a cremation at the Père Lachaise crematorium, which he described in the journal in the form of a letter. According to him, cremation had been embraced by atheist socialists in particular, and it constituted a drift from the truth of those times. He compared it to burials and the cemetery, which, in his opinion, were one of the highest divine pedagogy lessons for humanity. At the end of his article, Șerboianu predicted that not before long, such aberrations, highly damaging to our national spirit, would also appear in Romania.

Twenty-five years later, after he had already come to support cremation, Șerboianu admitted that he had unrealistically described cremation. He explained that he had written in the spirit of the times and had wrongly thought that he was helping the peasants. Meanwhile, he had come to believe that peasants led their lives according to various superstitions, many of which were encouraged by the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Șerboianu's pro-cremationist opinions were published in *Flacăra sacră*, starting with its first issue in December 1934.²⁴ Hence, the former archimandrite's presence in the journal was a necessary step for the Romanian cremationist movement of those times, because it provided a foothold from within the Orthodox rhetoric, even if its exponent was, at that hour, completely marginalized and excluded from the Orthodox clergy.

From a theological perspective, Șerboianu embarked upon a difficult task in writing his study on cremation: he had to offer compelling and unsophisticated arguments on the lack of grounds for the anti-cremationist rhetoric that cremation was a pagan practice, completely against the Romanian spirit, as well as anti-Christian and, especially, anti-Orthodox. However, such an approach implied mastering a broad theological culture, the ability to identify such possible theological arguments, and, an act of great courage at the time of the year 1934.

Overall, Șerboianu's contribution became fundamental to the aims pursued by the Romanian cremationists and stated in the journal *Flacăra sacră*. Their agenda, published in the first issue of December 1934, marked the itinerary of the future struggle, under the circumstances of the Romanian Orthodox Church opposing cremation: "Cremation should be

²³ Popp Șerboianu 1928z, p. 1-2.

²⁴ Piconșer 1934, p. 7.

considered to be equal to burials in utility and purpose and it should be allowed to include without any restraint, the complete religious service.”²⁵

Thus, the archimandrite published about 12 articles related to cremation in the journal *Flacăra sacră*. The most consistent and representative study on cremation that Șerboianu published in *Flacăra sacră* was dedicated to Cremation and Christianity. The study was published in 16 issues of the journal between December 1934 and April 1936.

Șerboianu engaged in direct accusations against the Orthodox Church regarding their error in approaching the issue of human cremation. He highlighted the fact that the Orthodox leading structures did not use the same measuring unit for various drifts from the Christian spirit of the time, some of which they even tolerated and included in their own practices. Thus, he blamed the tolerance shown towards witchcraft advertisements, smoking or other pagan habits

“stabbing the heart of the deceased presumed to be a walking dead with a burning spit, chaining the foot of a living lunatic with an iron chain, a custom practiced in Oltenia and in other provinces, the public exposure and street procession with the bloodied nightshirt, worn by the bride on her wedding night, the outrageous wake for the deceased custom practiced in Moldova, repeating baptism for epileptics and other people possessed by evil spirits, warlocks pulling out saints’ eyes.”²⁶

Calinic therefore strongly condemned the intolerance against cremation in the Romanian Orthodox Church, which stood in a mismatch with their Synod decisions from 1928 and 1933. He noticed that there was a leniency towards the priests who carried out religious services for those who were cremated elsewhere than the crematorium’s chapel. The intolerance towards cremation grew even more serious due to the activity of “priests who had their own interests and a poor theological culture”²⁷ who created an anti-cremationist neurosis in Romania of that time, instead of guiding the religious towards a true life in the light of faith.

On the other hand, Șerboianu did not exhibit a cremationist propensity only in theory but also in practice as he performed religious services for Christians (mostly Orthodox) who had chosen to be cremated. In recognition of his merits in the field, he became an honorary member of the cremationist society “Oganj” in Serbia and some of his articles were published in the journal issued by “Oganj”²⁸.

²⁵ *Cuvânt înainte* 1934, p. 2.

²⁶ Popp Șerboianu 1935a, p. 4-5.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁸ PC Arhimandrit 1939, p. 5.

Șerboianu systematically dismantled the arguments of the Orthodox rhetoric against cremation. For example, he argued that the Bible passage “for dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return” (Genesis, 3:19) could not be solely considered as the grounds to reject cremation. In his opinion, the aforementioned text referred to the fact that Adam was banished to Earth to make a living through the sweat of his brow, and not to be buried. To support his claims, he said that the Old Testament specified the death of Adam, but that there was no information regarding his burial or the lack of it.²⁹ He argued and proved that the texts of the Scriptures and of the Bible did not reject cremation. Thus, the accusation that cremating the deceased was a pagan practice had no real base.

The other articles written by the former archimandrite, with few exceptions, follow the same guideline: he strove to prove that cremation was a valid practice, in accord with the Christian teachings; he criticized the Orthodox leading structures for their attitude toward cremation, which he considered to be wrong.

I find significant for his views an article that he published in 1937, when Șerboianu, noting the ignorance and disbelief, he openly blamed the Orthodox priests and Orthodox higher structures for manipulation and petty interests on cremation.³⁰ As compared to his previous articles, this time, his tone was more radical. The archimandrite stated his viewpoint starting from various rumours of that time about the crematorium and cremations. Such rumours spoke about the cremation of political dissidents, burning people alive, the use of body fat to produce Vaseline and make-up, movements of the body during cremation, turning human ashes into sugar and so on. Some of the rumours had been heard during confession.³¹ He believed them to be purely fantasy stories, encouraged by some of the priests of that time.

The conclusion was that a Church with such priests was merely a lifeless body, which no longer served the truth, but its self-interest to keep people in the darkness of ignorance. Șerboianu was particularly indignant against the ideas spread by some priests who believed cremation would have consequences on the resurrection of the dead at the end of time, a theological error due to their ignorance and profound disbelief, in his opinion. In his opinion, the state of intolerance towards cremation was intensified by the actions of “some interested priests and theologians.” These created an anti-cremation neurosis in Romania, at that time, instead of guiding their followers towards a true life in the light of Faith. The

²⁹ Popp Șerboianu 1935b, p. 1-2, 4.

³⁰ Popp Șerboianu 1937, p. 3.

³¹ Ibid.

question “Who is more of an atheist, more of a free-thinker, more of a freemason? The one who bestows a religious blessing or the one who refuses it, out of shameful interests.” Therefore has a symbolic value and translates the entire attitude in the theme adopted by the archimandrite.

Another proof of the lack of concordance of the anti-cremation speech of the Orthodox Church of Romania of the times was, in his opinion, the treatment towards the Holy Communion, in the case of profanity. Therefore, if (no idea) would be profaned, even though it represented the body of the Savior, it had to be burned onto a stone by a priest, and the ashes remaining thrown into a stream of water. This argument was used in the dialogue with his possible detractors:

“Tell me: Have you anything to answer against fire, which the Church itself sees worthy of God’s might? That’s all I had to say, and with this I think I shall silence, not only the mouths of garrulous, but also the false pens of other slanderers, which consider themselves martyrs in the face of the public opinion, and occupy high ranks in the Church, from which they banish the ones with true faith and followers of those that are commanded by dogmas, canons, traditions and rules of the Church?”

But his cremationist belief is most clearly stated in an article published in *Flacăra sacră* in early 1938. In this case, Șerboianu used as pretext for expression the idea of happiness.³² He defined it as harmony between individuals, but sadly noted that in those days, the concept of happiness was misunderstood as people sought satisfaction and tranquillity in petty and worldly things such as money, lust, wealth, or conspiring for their own ascension or conservatism as motif for personal interest. But his was most afraid of the happiness of the many, as he suggestively called it, which was driven by superstition. Consequently, the former archimandrite completely assume his stand on cremation, which he considered to be a formula for simplicity, an expression of freedom and true faith, in the light of Christ. He thought of himself as a martyr:

“I am writing these lines for the few intelligent people and not for those who have pilloried me for leaving their traditionalist den, for serving as a priest at this Crematorium and becoming a true citizen of my country and of the world, freed from private interests and serving the only truth which is Jesus Christ.”³³

The last article that Șerboianu published in the journal *Flacăra sacră* tackled the manner in which someone’s relations should react if that person wished to be cremated.³⁴ The matter has been fundamental within the

³² Popp Șerboianu 1938, p. 4.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Popp Șerboianu 1939, p. 4.

context of the decisions adopted by the Romanian Orthodox Church Synod banning any religious service for those who choose cremation. Calinic Popp Șerboianu considered that

“the last wish does not belong to the living, but to the dead and they are the ones who will answer to God for their deeds in this life and for what they wanted their descendants to do for them. So, grant and respect so scrupulously and exactly the desire of your dead loved ones, if you wish to have peace of mind.”³⁵

Therefore, an Orthodox priest had to grant this desire, even if he faced some risks. Șerboianu compared the situation of a priest to that of a soldier, who, in order to save his country, had to disregard his commanding officer's orders.

The public expression of his cremationist views determined various Orthodox theologians of the time to criticize Șerboianu in violent terms. Thus, he was considered to be a traitor, like Judas. He was also described in the Orthodox written media as in league with Satan, a punk and wretched alike:

“Behold the devil's associate! Weigh his faith! Understand the rudeness with which he speaks with the «Church», praise his concessive spirit and the «admiration» which he confesses towards its «conservative spirit!»...”

That's what happens when the leaders of the Church have something else to do.”³⁶ Șerboianu was said to plead for cremation because he was paid by the followers of cremation in Romania. Through his attitude, he allegedly spread anarchy among the Romanian Orthodox Church troubling the churchgoers.³⁷

His portrayal by Ion Irineu Mihălcescu in 1933 was also relevant. Mihălcescu was Dean of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest and was of the opinion that cremation was “one of the many psychoses that mankind suffered from after the Great War, a dangerous spiritual disease or a whimsical fashion, like all fashions, and gruesome.”³⁸ Șerboianu was considered a vagrant monk who dared to perform religious services in the crematorium, thus enabling cremationists to distort the truth.

His activity as a priest at the “Cenușa” crematorium did not slip the attention of the public view. Therefore, via a letter addressed to the redaction of the *Renașterea* newspaper, in 1940, one of the readers was asking if Șerboianu had been defrocked because he had conducted the requiem mass, 40 days after Grigore Trancu Iași's cremation (January 1940).

³⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁶ *Pe două coloane* 1934, p. 4.

³⁷ *Inconștiență* 1935, p. 1. See also *Despre Cenușari* 1935, p. 6.

³⁸ Mihălcescu 1933, p. 1.

The redaction's answer was prompt, underlining the fact that the archimandrite had been defrocked and that drastic measures were required towards his persona. Two years before the event, "The Church and School" was warning the Orthodox media about the archimandrite's activities at the Crematorium, asking for him to be questioned.

For the cremationist movement in interwar Romania, Șerboianu was considered a hero for his courage to support cremation. Thus, annual activity reports of "Cenușa" society (which built and owned the crematorium in Bucharest until 1948) expressed their gratitude and admiration for him. It is also worth mentioning the fact that the archimandrite didn't occupy any leader position inside the Society, even though he could have, keeping in mind the importance of his activity.

His death in 1941 was perceived by Romanian cremationists as one of their biggest losses.³⁹

Conclusions

Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu can be seen as a contradictive personality in Romania's pre-World War I setting, but also in the interwar one, a wayfarer of various directions but, at the same time, a factor of tension towards the Romanian Orthodox Church's activity.

We can say that the texts defending cremation signed by the former archimandrite are an original contribution to the subject and that they deserve to be returned and submitted to the general public's attention. These texts are the echoes of an era of fierce controversy over the cremation idea, which marked the opinions of interwar Romanian society and whose effects can be identified to this day (more so because of the fact that the Orthodox Church continues to reject the practice of cremation). Although sometimes speculative and improvable to a theologian's eyes, these texts have the merit of stirring up questions and favouring debate. Even though Șerboianu was stigmatized by the Romanian Orthodox Church, he stood by his choice aware of the risks. He believed he had a mission, rooted in the primary role of the priest as pastor of the soul, who shaped consciences. He is now considered to be the main voice of the fundamental attitudes of interwar Romanians supporters of cremation, who made the most serious efforts to prove that there was no discrepancy between cremation and the Christian faith. His case is also relevant because of the fact that, despite the interdictions set forth by the Synods of the Romanian Orthodox Church against cremation (1928, 1933 and 2012),

³⁹ *Flacăra sacră* 1941, p. 1.

Orthodox priests continue to give religious services to those who opt for cremation.⁴⁰

Crossing the Lines: Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu and the Issues of Cremation in Romania

(Abstract)

The cornerstone of modern cremation in Romania could be considered the life and work of Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu. He was a complex and contradictory personality of his time, who stood out through several important activities. He was an activist member of the Orthodox clergy, involved in society, a missionary among the Roma population and supporter of the cremation idea. Therefore, due to his initiatives and options, he often stood against the major trend of thoughts of the time, for which he was often criticized and even defrocked as an Orthodox clergy member.

Șerboianu was and still is the only Orthodox clergy member in Romania to publicly support cremation. That is why his work is also important for the global history of cremation.

Bibliographical Abbreviations

- AB 1933 - AB, *Congresul țiganilor*, in *Realitatea ilustrată*, 7, 7 September 1933, no. 345.
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⁴⁰ *Inconsecvența* 2014.

Marius Rotar

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Marius Rotar

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Keywords: cremation, Romanian Orthodox Church, interwar period, attitudes, death.

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AAC	- Acta Archaeologica Carpathica. Cracovia.
ABR	- Arbeitsberichte zur Bodendenkmalpflege in Brandenburg. Calau.
Acta	- Acta (Siculica). Muzeul Național Secuiesc. Sfântu Gheorghe.
ActaAA	- Acta Academiae Agriensis. Sectio Historiae. Eszterházy Károly Főiskola. Eger.
ActaArch	- Acta Archaeologica. Copenhagen.
ActaArchHung	- Acta Archaeologica. Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae. Budapest.
ActaH	- Acta Hargitensia. Hargita Megye Múzeumainak Évkönyve. Miercurea Ciuc.
ActaMN	- Acta Musei Napocensis. Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei. Cluj-Napoca.
ActaMP	- Acta Musei Porolissensis. Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Artă Zalău. Zalău.
AÉ	- Archaeologiai Értesítő a Magyar régészeti, művész-történeti és éremtani társulat tudományos folyóirata. Budapest.
AIIA	- Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj. Cluj-Napoca (din 1990 Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „George Barițiu” Cluj-Napoca).
AIIAI/AIIX	- Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie „A. D. Xenopol” Iași. (din 1990 Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „A. D. Xenopol” Iași).
AIIGB	- Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „George Barițiu” din Cluj-Napoca. Institutul de Istorie „George Barițiu” din Cluj-Napoca. Cluj-Napoca.
AIIN	- Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională. Cluj-Sibiu.
AISC	- Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasice. Cluj (Sibiu).
AJA	- American Journal of Archaeology. New York.
AK	- Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt. Main.
Altertum	- Das Altertum. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Berlin.
Aluta	- Aluta (Studii și comunicări - Tanulmányok és Közlemények). Sfântu Gheorghe.
AM	- Arheologia Moldovei. Institutul de Istorie și Arheologie „A. D. Xenopol”. Iași.
AnB	- Analele Banatului (serie nouă). Muzeul Banatului. Timișoara.
Angustia	- Angustia. Muzeul Carpaților Răsăriteni. Sfântu Gheorghe.
AnUBI	- Analele Universității din București - Istorie. Universitatea din București. București.
AnUCIPI	- Analele Universității „C. I. Parhon”, seria Științe Sociale. Istorie. Universitatea din București. București (din 1964 Analele Universității din București - Istorie).
Aquileia Nostra	- Aquileia Nostra. Bollettino dell'Associazione Nazionale per Aquileia. Milan & Aquileia.
ARCHEA	- Archéologie du cimetière chrétien. Actes du 2 colloque ARCHEA, Orléans 29 Septembre-1 ^{er} Octobre 1994.

	Supplément à la Revue Archéologique du Centre de la France 11. Tours: FÉRACF.
Antiquity	- Antiquity. A Quartely Review of World Archaeology. York.
AO	- Arhivele Olteniei. Craiova; serie nouă (Institutul de Cercetări Socio-Umane. Craiova).
APA	- Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica. Berlin.
Apulum	- Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis. Buletinul Muzeului Regional Alba Iulia/Anuarul Muzeului Național al Unirii. Alba Iulia.
ArchAustr	- Archaeologia Austriaca. Viena.
Archeologické rozhledy	- Archeologické rozhledy. Praga.
ArchHung	- Archaeologica Hungaria. Budapest.
ArchKözl	- Archaeologiai Közlemények. Pesten (1859-1899).
Argo	- Argo.
ArhBas	- Arhivele Basarabiei. Chișinău (1929-1938).
ArhSom	- Arhiva Someșană. Arhiva Someșană. Revistă istorico-culturală. Năsăud (1924-1940).
Astra Salvensis	- Astra Salvensis. Cercul Salva al ASTRA. Salva.
AT	- Ars Transilvaniae. Institutul de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj-Napoca. Cluj-Napoca.
AUA	- Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica. Universitatea „1 Decembrie 1918” din Alba Iulia. Alba Iulia.
AV	- Arheološki vestnik. Ljubljana.
AVSL	- Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde. Sibiu.
BAHC	- Bibliotheca Archaeologica et Historica Corvinensis. Hunedoara.
Banatica	- Banatica. Muzeul de Istorie al Județului Caraș-Severin. Reșița.
BA	- Biblioteca de arheologie. Muzeul Național de Istorie a României. București.
BAR	- British Archaeological Reports (International Series). Oxford.
BB	- Bibliotheca Brukenthal. Muzeul Național Brukenthal. Sibiu.
BCȘS	- Buletinul Cercurilor Științifice Studențești. Universitatea „1 Decembrie 1918” din Alba Iulia. Alba Iulia.
BerRGK	- Berichte der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission. Roman-Germanic Commission. Frankfurt am Main.
BHAUT	- Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Universitatis Timisiensis. Timișoara.
BHAB	- Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Banatica. Muzeul Banatului Timișoara. Timișoara.
BIAUL	- Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology. University of London.
Biserica și Școala	- Biserica și Școala - Foaie Bisericească-scolastică, literară și economică. Arad (1877-1948).
BM	- Bibliotheca Marmatia. Baia Mare.
BMA	- Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis. Muzeul Național al Unirii. Alba Iulia.
BMS	- Bibliotheca Musei Sabesiensis. Muzeul Municipal „Ioan Raica”. Sebeș.
Brukenthal	- Brukenthal. Acta Musei. Muzeul Național Brukenthal. Sibiu.

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BS	- Bibliotheca Septemcastrensis. Sibiu.
BTh	- Bibliotheca Thracologica. Institutul Român de Tracologie. București.
BUFM	- Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte Mitteleuropas.
Bună Vestire	- Bună Vestire. Organ de zidire creștină. Roma.
BV	- Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter. Kommission für bayerische Landesgeschichte.
CAANT	- Cercetări arheologice în aria nord-tracă. Institutul Român de Tracologie. București.
CAn	- Current Anthropology. Chicago.
Carpica	- Carpica. Complexul Muzeal „Iulian Antonescu”. Bacău.
CCA	- Cronica cercetărilor arheologice. București.
CCDJ/CCBD	- Cultură și civilizație la Dunărea de Jos/Culture et civilisation au Bas Danube. Muzeul Dunării de Jos. Călărași.
CCRPM	- Cercetări de conservare și restaurare a patrimoniului muzeal. București.
Cele Trei Crișuri	- Cele Trei Crișuri. Fundația Cele Trei Crișuri. Oradea (1920-1944).
Chronica Valachica	- Chronica Valachica. Vezi Scripta Valachica.
Chronos	- Chronos. Revistă de istorie. Despărțământul ASTRA „Mihail Kogălniceanu” Iași. Iași.
Civilisations	- Civilisations. Revue international d'anthropologie et de sciences humaines. Institut de Sociologie de l'Université libre de Bruxelles. Bruxelles.
CLL	- Cercetări de limbă și literatură. Oradea.
CN	- Cercetări numismatice. Muzeul Național de Istorie a României. București.
CommArchHung	- Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae, Magyar Némzeti Múzeum. Budapest.
Corviniana	- Corviniana. Acta Musei Corvinensis. Hunedoara.
Crisia	- Crisia. Culegere de materiale și studii. Muzeul Țării Crișurilor. Oradea.
CSSZMÉ	- Csíki Székely Múzeum Évkönyve. Muzeul Secuiesc al Ciucului. Miercurea Ciuc.
Cultura creștină	- Cultura creștină. Publicație apărută sub egida Mitropoliei Române Unite cu Roma Greco-Catolică și a Facultății de Teologie Greco-Catolică din Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai” Cluj-Napoca, Departamentul Blaj. Blaj.
Cultura poporului Dacia	- Cultura poporului. Cluj, București (1921-1930).
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Danubius	- Danubius. Muzeul de Istorie Galați. Galați.
DavarLogos	- Davar Logos. Revista biblico-teologică de la Facultad de Teología de la Universidad Adventista del Plata.
DocMis	- Documenta Missionaria. Documenta Missionaria Hungariam et regionem sub ditone turcica existentem spectantia. Szegedi Hittudományi Főiskola. Szeged.

DolgCluj	- Dolgozatok az Erdély Nemzeti Múzeum Érem - és Régiségtarából. Kolosvár (Cluj).
DolgSzeged	- Dolgozatok. A. M. Kir. Ferencz József Tudományegyetem Archaeologiai Intézetéből. Szeged.
Drobeta	- Drobeta. Muzeul Regiunii Porților de Fier. Drobeta Turnu-Severin.
EcHR	- The Economic History Review. Economic History Society (UK).
EHR	- The English Historical Review. University of Oxford. Oxford (UK).
EJA	- European Journal of Archaeology.
EphNap	- Ephemeris Napocensis. Institutul de Arheologie și Istoria Artei. Cluj-Napoca.
Eurasia Antiqua	- Eurasia Antiqua. Zeitschrift für Archäologie Eurasiens. Mainz am Rhein.
Familia Română	- Familia Română. Baia Mare.
FI	- File de istorie. Muzeul de Istorie Bistrița. Bistrița.
Flacăra sacră	- Flacăra sacră. Organ pentru propagarea creațiunii umane în România. București (1934-1942).
FoliaArch	- Folia Archaeologica. Magyar Történeti Múzeum. Budapest.
Germania	- Germania. Anzeiger der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission. Frankfurt am Main.
Glasul monahilor	- Glasul monahilor. București (1924-1946).
Hermannstädter Zeitung	- Hermannstädter Zeitung. Sibiu.
Hesperia	- Hesperia. American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Cambridge.
HistTeacher	- The History Teacher. Society for History Education; University of Notre Dame. History Teachers' Association. USA.
HJ	- The Historical Journal. Cambridge University. Cambridge (UK).
HU	- Historia Urbana. Institutul de Cercetări Socio-Umane. Sibiu.
IPSR	- International Political Science Review. Columbia University, USA & Australian National University.
IS	- International Security. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. Harvard University. Cambridge (Massachusetts).
InvArchRoumanie	- Inventaria Archaeologica Roumanie. București.
InvArchRumänien	- Inventaria Archeologica Rumänien. București.
IPH	- Inventarta Praehistorica Hungariae. Budapest.
Istros	- Istros. Muzeul Brăilei. Brăila.
JAA	- Journal of Anthropological Archaeology.
Jahresbericht	- Jahresbericht des Instituts für Vorgeschichte der Universität Frankfurt am Main. Frankfurt am Main.
JAMÉ	- A Nyiregyházi Jóna András Múzeum Évkönyve. Nyiregyháza.
JAR	- Journal of Archaeological Research. New York.
JAS	- Journal of Archaeological Science. Academic Press. United States.
J. Biogeogr.	- Journal of Biogeography. London.

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JCH	- Journal of Contemporary History. Sage Publications, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC.
JFA	- Journal of Field Archaeology. Boston University.
JMH	- The Journal of Modern History. University of Chicago. Chicago.
JOML	- Jahrbuch des Oberösterreichischen Musealvereines für Landeskunde. Linz.
JPS	- The Journal of Peasant Studies. Critical Perspectives on Rural Politics and Development.
JRGZM	- Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums zu Mainz. Mainz.
JRS	- The Journal of Roman Studies. London.
JSRI	- Journal of the Study of Religious & Ideologies. Societatea Academică de Cercetare a Religiiilor și Ideologiilor. Cluj-Napoca.
JWP	- Journal of World Prehistory. New York.
KVSL	- Korrespondenzblatt des Vereines für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde. Hermannstadt [Sibiu].
Laborativ Arkeologi	- Laborativ Arkeologi. Institutionen för arkeologi och antikens kultur. Stockholms universitet. Stockholm.
Latomus	- Latomus. Revue d'études latines. Bruxelles.
Litua	- Litua. Muzeul Județean „Alexandru Ștefulescu” Gorj. Târgu-Jiu.
LȘ	- Lucrări științifice. Institutul de Învățământ Superior Oradea.
Magyar városok	- Magyar városok és vármegyék monográfiája. Budapest.
MAGW	- Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien. Wien (1912-1941).
Man	- Man. Man. Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.
Marmatia	- Marmatia. Muzeul Județean Maramureș. Baia Mare.
MCA	- Materiale și cercetări arheologice. București.
Mecklenburgische	- Jahrbücher des Vereins für Mecklenburgische Geschichte und Altertumskunde.
MemAntiq	- Memoria Antiquitatis. Complexul Muzeal Județean Neamț. Piatra Neamț.
MittAnthrGesWien	- Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien. Hrsg. von der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien.
Mitteilungen	- Mitteilungen aus dem Baron Brukenthalischen Museums. Sibiu.
ΜΩΜΟΣ	- ΜΩΜΟΣ. Őskoros Kutatók Összejövetelének konferenciakötete.
MonHistBp	- “Est tu scholaris” Ünnepi tanulmányok Kubinyi András 75. születésnapjára. Monumenta Historica Budapestinensia. Budapesti Történeti Múzeum. Budapest.
MT	- Magyar Törvénytár, Corpus Juris Hungarici. Budapest [Ungarische Gesetze].
MTCN	- Magyarország tiszti cím- és névtára. Magyar Királyi Központi Statisztikai Hivatal. Budapest.
NAFD	- Neue Ausgrabungen und Forschungen in Niedersachsen.
Nature	- Nature. London.

- OH VI** - Opuscula Hungarica VI. Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum. Budapest.
- OJA** - Oxford Journal of Archaeology, Blackwell Publishing Inc. United Kingdom.
- Ősrégészeti levelek** - Ősrégészeti levelek. Prehistoric newsletter. Budapest.
- PA** - Patrimonium Apulense. Alba Iulia.
- PamArch** - Památky archeologické. Praga.
- PAS** - Prähistorische Archäologie in Südosteuropa. Berlin.
- PBF** - Prähistorische Bronzefunde. München.
- Peuce** - Peuce. Studii și comunicări de istorie veche, arheologie și numismatică. Tulcea.
- Potaissa** - Potaissa. Studii și comunicări. Turda.
- PPS** - Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society. Cambridge-London.
- Programm Mühlbach** - Programm des evaghelischen Untergymnasium in Mühlbach und der damit verbundenen Lehranstalten. Mühlbach (Sebeș).
- PZ** - Prähistorische Zeitschrift. Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte, Institut für Prähistorische Archäologie. Berlin.
- QR** - Quaternary Research. University of Washington.
- QSR** - Quaternary Science Reviews. The International Multidisciplinary Research and Review Journal.
- RA** - Revista Arhivelor. București.
- Rațiunea** - Rațiunea. Organ al „Asociației științifice de educație pozitivă” București. București (1911-1914).
- RB** - Revista Bistriței. Complexul Muzeal Bistrița-Năsăud. Bistrița.
- RC** - Revista Catolică. București (1912-1916).
- Realitatea ilustrată** - Realitatea ilustrată. Cluj, București (1927-1946).
- REN** - Revue des études napoléoniennes. Paris, France: Libraries Felix Alcan (1912-1924).
- Renașterea** - Renașterea. Organul oficial al Eparhiei Ortodoxe Române a Vadului, Feleacului, Geoagiului și Clujului. Cluj.
- Revista din Iași** - Revista din Iași. Iași.
- Revista istorică** - Revista istorică: dări de seamă, documente și notițe. București (1915-1943).
- RHSEE** - Revue historique du sud-est européen. Institut d’Histoire Universelle „N. Iorga”. București (1925-1941).
- RHMC** - Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine. Berlin. Paris.
- RI** - Revista de Istorie (din 1990 Revista istorică). București.
- RIR** - Revista istorică română. Institutul de Istorie Națională - Universitatea București. București (1931-1947).
- RM** - Revista muzeelor. București.
- RREI** - Revue Roumaine d’Etudes Internationales. București.
- RRH** - Revue roumaine d’histoire. București.
- RRHA** - Revue Roumaine d’Histoire de l’Art, série Beaux-Arts. Academia Română. București
- Sargetia** - Sargetia. Buletinul Muzeului Județului Hunedoara (Acta Musei Devensis). Deva.
- SAA** - Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica. Institutul de Arheologie Iași. Iași.

Lista abrevierilor

SAI	- Studii și articole de istorie. Societatea de Științe Istorice din România. București.
SCIA	- Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei. Seria Artă Plastică. București.
SCICPR	- Studii și comunicări de istorie a civilizației populare din România. Sibiu.
SCIV(A)	- Studii și cercetări de istoria veche. București (din 1974, Studii și cercetări de istorie veche și arheologie).
SCIM	- Studii și cercetări de istorie medie. București.
SCN	- Studii și cercetări de numismatică. Institutul de Arheologie București.
Scripta Valachica	- Scripta Valachica. Studii și materiale de istorie și istorie a culturii. Târgoviște.
SDT	- Siebenbürgisch-Deutsches Tageblatt. Sibiu.
Societatea de mâine	- Societatea de mâine. Revistă săptămânală pentru probleme sociale și economice. Cluj (1924-1945).
SMIM	- Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie. Institutul de Istorie „Nicolae Iorga”. București.
Social Forces	- Social Forces. Department of Sociology at the University of North Carolina.
SSK	- Studien zur Siebenbürgischen Kunstgeschichte, Köln. Wien.
Starinar	- Starinar, Treća Serija. Arheološki Institut. Beograd.
StComCaransebeș	- Studii și comunicări. Muzeul Județean de Etnografie și Istorie Locală. Caransebeș.
StComSibiu	- Studii și comunicări. Arheologie-istorie. Muzeul Brukenthal. Sibiu.
StComSM	- Studii și comunicări. Muzeul Județean Satu Mare. Satu Mare.
StRI	Studii. Revistă de istorie (din 1974 Revista de istorie și din 1990 Revista istorică)
StudArch	- A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve. Studia Archaeologica. Szeged.
Studia	- Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Series Historia. Series Geologia-Geografia. Cluj-Napoca.
SUCH	- Studia Universitatis Cibiniensis. Series Historica. Universitatea „Lucian Blaga” Sibiu. Sibiu.
SympThrac	- Symposia Thracologica. Institutul Român de Tracologie. București.
SzMMÉ	- A Szolnok Megyei Múzeumok Évkönyve. Szolnok.
Terra Sebus	- Terra Sebus. Acta Musei Sabesiensis. Muzeul Municipal „Ioan Raica”. Sebeș.
Thraco-Dacica	- Thraco-Dacica. Institutul Român de Tracologie. București.
Tibiscum	- Tibiscum. Studii și Comunicări de Etnografie și Istorie. Muzeul Regimentului Grăniceresc din Caransebeș. Caransebeș.
Tisicum	- Tisicum. A Jasz-Nagykun-Szolnok megyei muzeumok evkonye. Szolnok.
TR	- Transylvanian Review. Centrul de Studii Transilvane. Cluj-Napoca.
Trans.AmPhilos.Soc.	- Transactions of the American Philosophical Society. Philadelphia.

Transilvania	- Transilvania. Foaia Asociațiunii Transilvane pentru Literatura Română și Cultura Poporului Român. Brașov.
Tribuna	- Tribuna. Arad (1911-1912).
Történelmi Szemle	- Történelmi Szemle. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia. Történettudományi intézet. Budapest.
TT	- Történelmi Tár. Magyar Történelmi Társulat. Budapest.
Tyragetia	- Tyragetia. Muzeul Național de Arheologie și Istorie a Moldovei. Chișinău.
Țara Bârsei	- Țara Bârsei. Muzeul „Casa Mureșenilor” Brașov. Brașov.
Ungarische Jahrbücher	- Ungarische Jahrbücher. Berlin.
Unirea poporului	- Unirea poporului. Blaj (1919-1948).
UPA	- Universitätsforschungen zur Prähistorischen Archäologie. Berlin.
VAH	- Varia Archaeologica Hungarica. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Régészeti Intézete. Budapest.
Vjesnik	- Vjesnik Arheološkog Muzeja u Zagrebu. Zagreb.
VKT	- Várak. Kastélyok, Templomok. Történelmi és örökségturisztikai online magazin.
WorldArch	- World Archaeology. London.
WPZ	- Wiener Prähistorische Zeitschrift. Selbstverlag der Wiener Prähistorischen Gesellschaft. Wien.
Zalai Múzeum	- Zalai Múzeum. Zalaegerszeg.
Zborník SNM	- Zborník Slovenského Národného Múzea. Bratislava.
ZfA	- Zeitschrift für Archäologie. Berlin.
ZfSL	- Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde. Gundelsheim.
Ziridava	- Ziridava. Studia Archaeologica. Muzeul Județean. Arad.