

THE RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE OF MARAMUREȘ COUNTY AT THE 20TH OCTOBER 2011 CENSUS

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Abstract. –*The Religious Structure of Maramureș County at the 20th October 2011 Census.* In regards to the religious structure of Maramureș County, only 450 196 people out of a total of 478 659 inhabitants declared their religion at the 2011 Census. Most of them were Orthodox, with 357 627 followers (79.44%), which formed the majority in 74 of the 76 administrative-territorial units. The Roman-Catholic congregation comprised 22761 people, that is a percentage of 5.06%, Greek-Catholic 21836 followers or 4.85%, Pentecostals 16 541, which translated into 3.67%, Reformed with 16 246, 3.61%. The category named other religions or atheists contains 15 185 people or 3.37%. We would also like to point out that the difference between the value of the stable population and the value of the declared population constitutes an indicator labelled „Unavailable information”, an irrelevant component in registering the religious structure of a territory.

Key words: Maramureș County, religion, Orthodox, Roman-Catholic, Greek-Catholic, Reformed

1. INTRODUCTION

The current study aims to present the spatial distribution, within the 76 administrative-territorial units that compose Maramureș County, of one of the main geodemographic indicators, *religious structure*, at the census held on 20th October 2011. This scientific endeavour is also fuelled by the fact that during the socialist period (1948-1989), religious registration was overlooked in censuses.

The situation changed during the last decade of the 20th century, starting with the 1992 Census, the one in 2002, and the one held in 2011, which will be examined in this paper.

Without going into much detail, we would like to reference several studies, focused among others, on this topic, that is the religious fabric of Maramureș. In chronological order, these are: *Etnie și confesiune în partea de nord-vest a României*, study published by Josan et al., in the Works of the 1994 International Geography Congress, organized in Prague; then the doctorate thesis of Ilieș, *Etnie, confesiune și*

comportament electoral în Crișana și Maramureș (Sfârșitul sec. XIX și secolul XX), published at Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 1998; *Organizarea spațiului geografic în Depresiunea Maramureșului*, Popa, Bota, 2003, an unpublished PhD thesis; three more doctorate theses, published at the Presa Universitară Clujeană Publishing House, regarding *Țara Lăpușului* (2006), Dezsi; *Țara Maramureșului* (Ilieș) and *Chioarului* (Pușcaș), 2007, and an unpublished paper written by Hotea (2008), *Munții Maramureșului. Studiu de Geografie Umană*.

The main author of this paper is currently dealing with a similar topic, in the form of a postdoctoral research, regarding *the ethnic and religious structures of Harghita, Covasna and Mureș Counties* in 2011 (see the references).

The census held in 2011 saw the registration of the religious structure based on the free declaration of interviewed people. Those who did not wish to declare their religion and the people whose data was indirectly collected from

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administrative sources were included, for the first time, in the „*Unavailable information*” section. Therefore, the indicators were calculated *based on the number of declared persons* and not on the stable population.

Thus, the religious structure of Maramureș County, in 2011, comprised 450 196 people (out of 478659 inhabitants), while for the remaining 28463 people, data was unattainable.

2. WORK METHODOLOGY

From a methodological point of view, we employed solely official data from *The National Institute of Statistics* (www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-2) and *Maramureș County Statistics Department* (<http://www.maramures.insse.ro/main.php>), which offered plenty of statistical material in order for us to emphasize the main religious characteristics of the population residing in Maramureș County.

After the collection of statistical data, we processed it and gave it a table form (main data grouped into 21 positions, starting with the *Orthodox, Roman-Catholic, Reformed, etc.*, and all the way to *No religion and Atheists*), a graphical form (three representations of the values of the main religions - county level, plus urban versus rural) as well as cartographic one, which clearly illustrates the territorial distribution of the main religions in the 13 urban settlements and the 63 rural settlements of the county. Compared to 2002, there have been some changes, like the registration of the adherents to Jehova's Witnesses, Serbian Orthodox and Armenian.

3. THE RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION

For a proper synthetic view on the values and territorial distribution of the main religions, we divided said religious structure into six large categories, based on their percentages (see table 1).

Thus, we have the following situation: *Orthodox* had a total of 357 627 adherents (79.44%), out of the total 450 196 people who declared their religion, *Roman-Catholic* (22 761 people, 5.06%) and *Greek-Catholic* (21 836, 4.85%), then *Pentecostals* (16 541, 3.67%), *Reformed* (16 246, 3.61%) and a category for

other religions and atheists (15 185 people, 3.37%), which is comprised of 16 confessions (Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist, Muslim, Unitarian, Jehova's Witnesses, Christian Plymouth Brethren, Old-Rite Christian, Evangelical Lutheran, Serbian Orthodox, Evangelical, Augustan Evangelical, Mosaic, Armenian, Other religion, No religion and Atheist).

Orthodox formed a majority in all 13 urban localities in the county, with percentages above 90% in Borșa, Dragomirești and Săliște de Sus, while in rural areas, the situation was somewhat similar, with the exception of those communes with a Hungarian majority (Câmpulung la Tisa and Coltău), adherent to the Reformed religion.

Orthodox

In 2011, it was the most representative religion, with percentages of 79.44% (357 627 people) out of the total of 450 196 county inhabitants who agreed to declare their religion. 196 062 adherents reside in urban areas (77.25%), while 161 565 (82.26%) are located in the rural areas (63 communes and 226 villages).

At urban level, the largest percentages, that is above **90%** can be found in three towns (Borșa and Dragomirești, both with 94,78%, and Săliște de Sus, 98.08%). Percentages between **70-90%** can be found in almost half of the urban areas (Sighetu Marmăției, 72.27%; Baia Mare, 74.28%; Târgu Lăpuș, 75.83%; Cavnic, 77.69%; Tăuții Măgheruș, 78.69%; Șomcuta Mare, 85.70% and Vișeu de Sus (85.93%), while in the remaining three urban localities, percentages fall below **70%** (Ulmeni, 65.76%; Seini, 66.67%, due to a high percentage of Reformed adherents, and Baia Sprie, 69.74%, with a high Roman-Catholic presence).

In rural areas, out of a total of 161 565 Orthodox (82.26%), percentages of **100%** can be found only in Poienile Izei (927 people), located in Maramureșului Depression. In 24 of the 63 communes, Orthodox have percentages above **90%** (in alphabetical order): Ardușat (93.71%), Bârsana (90.03%), Bicăz (90.98%), Bistra (94.24%), Bogdan Vodă (93.26%), Boiu Mare (95.86%), Botiza (96.23%), Budești (93.56%), Coaș (96.41%), Coroieni (98.09%),

Cupşeni (99.83%), Deseşti (91.18%), Gârdani (92.77%), Groşii Țibleşului (91.46%), Lăpuş (96.65%), Moisei (92.52%), Petrova (96.82%), Rozavlea (96.21%), Săcel (98.09%), Săpânta (90.74%), Şieu (91.44%), Suciul de Sus (93.18%), Valea Chioarului (95.90%) and Vima Mică (90.92%).

A number of 30 communes are included in the **70-90% category**: Ariniş, Asuaju de Sus, Băiţa de sub Codru, Băseşti, Bocicoiu Mare, Cerneşti, Cicârlău, Copalnic-Mănăştur,

Dumbrăviţa, Fărcaşa, Giuleşti, Groşi, Ieud, Leordina, Mireşu Mare, Oarţa de Jos, Ocna Şugatag, Onceşti, Poienile de sub Munte, Recea, Remetea Chioarului, Remeţi, Rona de Jos, Rona de Sus, Ruscova, Săcălăşeni, Satulung, Strâmtura, Vadu Izei, and Vişeu de Jos. Percentages below **70%** can be found in eight communes (Sălsig, 64.43%; Băiuţ, 61.85%; Călineşti, 57.35%; Şişeşti, 54.22%; Repedea, 53.40%; Sarasău, 50.14%; Câmpulung la Tisa, 28.43%, and Coltău, 9.08%).

Table 1. The religious structure of Maramureş County, at county level and its urban-rural distribution, in 2011.

(Data source: 2011 Census)

No.	Religion	County		Urban		Rural	
	Total declared population	450196	100.00	253787	100.00	196409	100.00
1	Orthodox	357627	79.44	196062	77.25	161565	82.26
2	Roman-Catholic	22761	5.06	19815	7.80	2946	1.50
3	Reformed	16246	3.61	12392	4.88	3854	1.96
4	Pentecostal	16541	3.67	7516	2.96	9025	4.60
5	Greek-Catholic	21836	4.85	10729	4.22	11107	5.65
6	Baptist	2094	0.46	1429	0.56	665	0.34
7	Seventh-Day Adventists	3451	0.76	63	0.02	28	0.01
8	Muslim	58	0.01	50	0.02	8	0.00
9	Unitarian	70	0.01	70	0.02	-	-
10	Jehovah's Witnesses	5960	1.32	2981	1.17	2979	1.51
11	Christian Evangelical	815	0.18	372	0.14	443	0.22
12	Christian of Old Rite	477	0.10	91	0.03	386	0.19
13	Evangelical Lutheran	111	0.02	108	0.04	3	0.00
14	Serbian Orthodox	80	0.01	67	0.02	13	0.00
15	Evangelical	95	0.02	74	0.03	21	0.01
16	Evangelical of Augustan Confession	14	0.00	13	0.00	*	-
17	Mosaic	64	0.01	56	0.02	8	0.00
18	Armenian	*	-	*	-	*	-
19	Other religion	915	0.20	565	0.22	350	0.17
20	Free of religion	641	0.14	451	0.17	190	0.09
21	Atheists	338	0.07	313	0.12	25	0.01

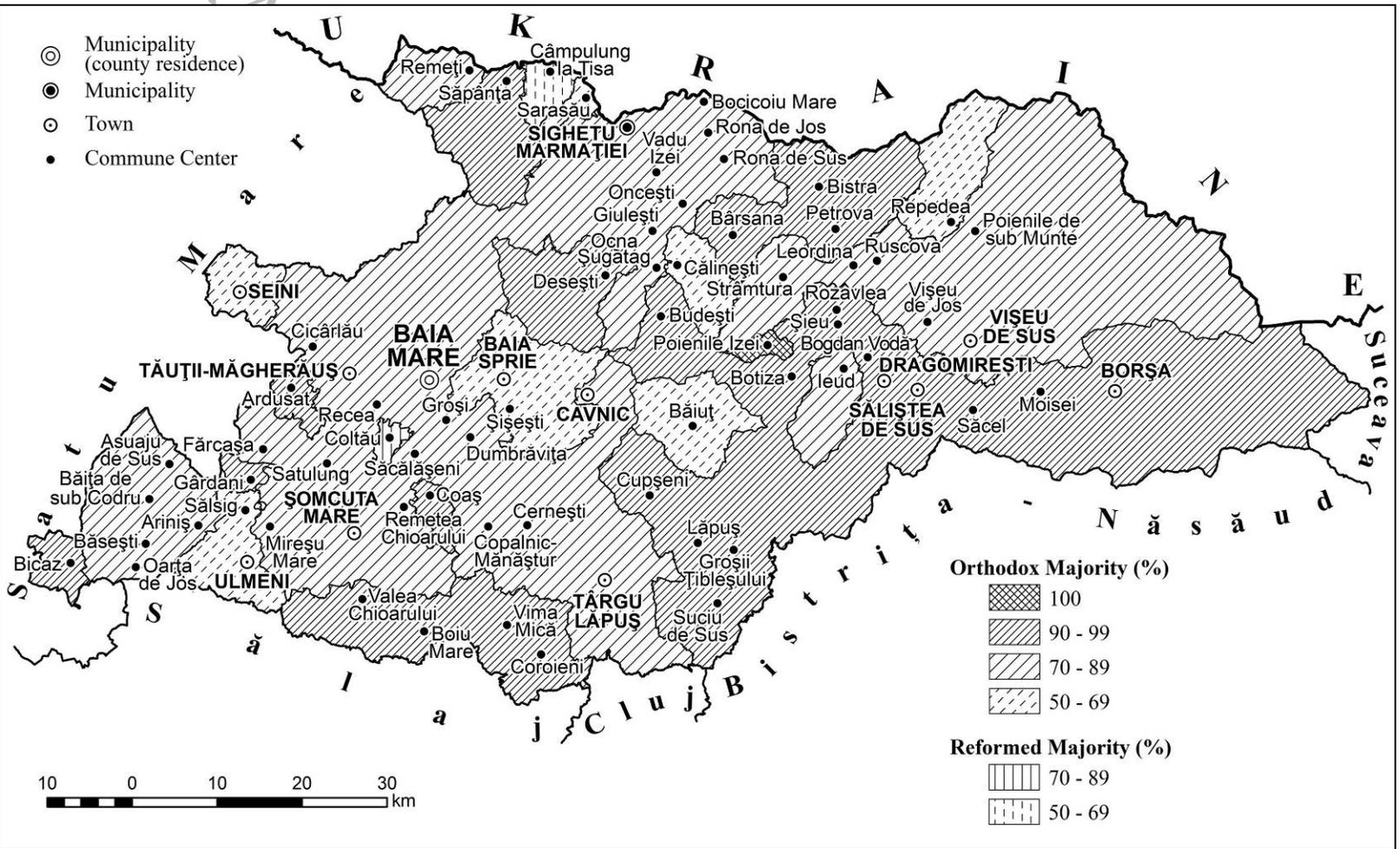


Fig. 1. The territorial distribution of the main religions in Maramureș County, in 2011. (Data source: 2011 Census).

From an organizational standpoint, the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Maramureș and Sătmăr, shepherded by Maramureș and Sălaj Metropolitan Church, led by I.P.S. Andrei Andreicut, and the Justinian Chiră.

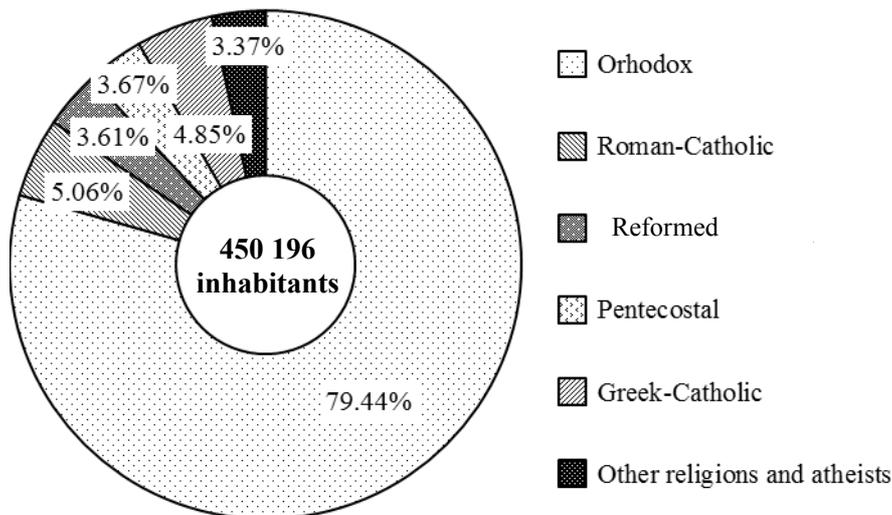


Fig. 2. The religious structure of Maramureş, in 2011.

Roman-Catholic

The percentage for this confession was 5.06% (22 761 adherents) of a total of 450 196 people, most of them residing in urban areas (19 815 people, 7.81%), and only 2946 (1.50%) in rural localities. Roman-Catholics can be found in larger numbers in Baia Mare (8 891 people, 7.94%, out of 111 928 people), 4 138 in Sighetu Maramaţiei (12.10% out of 34 110 people), 2 125 in Baia Sprie (14.60% out of 14 542), 1 351 in Vişeu de Sus (9.71% out of 13 908 people), 895 in Borşa (3.48% out of 25 730 people), 743 in Cavnic (15.50% out of 4 782 people), 725 in Tăuţii Măgheruş (10.60% out of 6 810 people), 573 in Seini (6.66% out of 8 608), 266 in Târgu Lăpuş (2.38% out of 11 169 people), 75 in Şomcuta Mare (1.03% out of 7 257 people), 29 in Ulmeni (0.41% out of 7 003 people), 3 in Dragomireşti (0.10% out of 3 143 people), and fewer than three members in Sălişteia de Sus.

Roman-Catholic presence in rural areas is obviously a more diverse matter, as they can be found in 44 of the 63 administrative-territorial units and missing from 6 communes (Asuaju de Sus, Cupşeni, Onceşti, Poienile Izei, Şieu, and Vima Mică), due to an extremely high Orthodox presence, while the remaining 13 communes are marked by an asterisk (*), meaning fewer than 3 adherents. Thus, the situation in the 44 communes was as follows:

- under 1% Roman-Catholics - in 33 communes, the lowest values being registered in Băseşti (three persons, 0.22%), Cerneşti (three, 0.08%), Giuleşti (three, 0.10%) and Ruscova (three, 0.06%);

- the following category, between 1-10%, includes nine communes, such as Bocicioiu Mare, Cicârlău, Coltău, Fărcaşa, Groşi, Groşii Țibleşului, Ocna Şugatag, Remeţi, and Rona de Sus;

- the last category, over 10%, incorporates two communes (Câmpulung la Tisa, 13.50%, and Băiuţ, with the largest values, 34.70%.

The Roman-Catholics residing in this county are coordinated by the *Roman-Catholic Episcopate of Satu Mare*, led by the Bishop **P.S. Eugen (Jenő) Schönberger**, and by the *Baia Mare Ministry*, under the tutelage of **Román János**, and *Sighetu Maramaţiei Ministry*, led by **Reszler Mihály**.

Reformed

This religion was represented, in 2011, by a total of 16246 followers (3.61%), out of which 12392 were living in urban areas (4.88%) and 3854 in rural parts (1.96%). Unlike the Roman-Catholics, adherents to the Reformed Church form a majority in the two communes with a particularly strong Hungarian presence (Câmpulung la Tisa and Coltău).

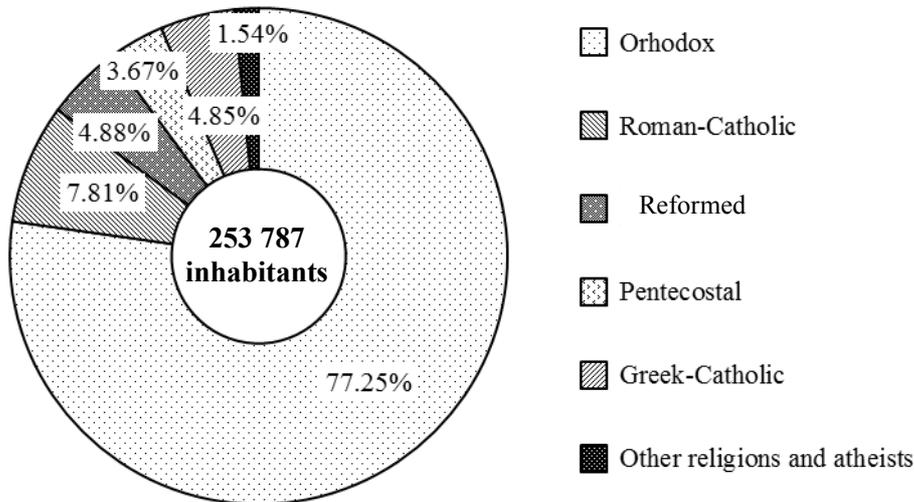


Fig. 3. The religious structure of the urban areas of Maramureș, 2011.

In the county's urban areas, the highest relative values were registered in Ulmeni (21.10%, 1475 followers out of a total of 7003 people), Seini (11.60%, 1001 followers) and Târgu Lăpuș (10.30%, 1147), while in Dragomirești and Săliștea de Sus, there were no registered Reformed adherents, due to a strong Romanian population, over 99%.

In rural areas, the adherents to this religion registered 1.96% (3854 people), residing in 42 communes. In 14 of them there are fewer than three adherents, while in the remaining 21 communes there are none. The 28 communes that have a Reformed presence fall into the following three situations/categories:

- **below 1%** - in 21 communes such as: Ardușat, Asuaju de Sus, Copalnic-Mănăștur, Fărcașa, Ocna Șugatag, Remeți, Sarasău, Valea Chioarului, etc;

- **1-10%**, with only four rural localities (Satulung, 1.42%; Băiuț, 2.10%; Recea, 3.56% and Ariniș, 8.95%);

- the highest values, well above **10%**, were found only in Remetea Chioarului (11.40%), Câmpulung la Tisa (41.00%) and Coltău (78.80%).

The followers of the Reformed Church that live in Maramureș County are shepherded by the *Reformed Eparchy of Piatra Craiului*,

centered in Oradea, one of the two administrative divisions of the Reformed Church of Romania, led ever since 2009 by the Bishop of Oradea, **István Csüry**.

Pentecostal

In terms of number of followers, in 2011, this religion claims the number four slot on our list, after Orthodox, Roman-Catholic and Greek-Catholic, having a total number of 16541 adherents (3.67%) out of the total of 450196 people in the county. In urban areas, they reach percentages of 2.96% (7516 people), with slightly higher values only in Ulmeni (10.20%, 714 followers), due to a more numerous Gypsy population.

In the remaining urban areas, the relative values were either **below 10%** (Târgu Lăpuș, 7.22%, 806 Pentecostals; Șomcuta Mare, 4.07%, 295; Baia Mare, 3.97%, 4442; Baia Sprie, 3.27%, 475; Seini, 1.56%, 134; Sighetu Marmăției, 1.09%, 371); or **below 1%**: Căvnic, 0.96%, 46; Tăuții Măgheruș, 0.84%, 57; Borșa, 0.48%, 123; Vișeu de Sus, 0.35%, 49; Dragomirești, 0.10%, 3 and Săliștea de Sus, with fewer than three worshippers.

In rural areas, there were 9025 people, or 4.60% of the total 196409 people, who declared themselves as Pentecostals.

Based on their relative values, we have the following distribution:

- in seven communes, there was no registered adherent (Bistra, Boiu Mare, Botiza, Poienile Izei, Săcel, Sarasău, and Şieu), while three communes had fewer than three Pentecostals (Câmpulung la Tisa, Rozavlea, and Săpânţa);
- 17 of the 63 communes of Maramureş County were characterised by values below 1% (Băiuţ, Bocicoiu Mare, Budeşti, Cupşeni,

Dumbrăviţa, Ieud, Petrova, Vadu Izei, etc.);

- the next category, **1-10%**, contains 28 communes, for instance: Arduşat, Asuaju de Sus, Bârsana, Călineşti, Coltău, Fărcaşa, Remetea Chioarului, Satulung, etc;

- the last category, **over 10%**, includes only seven communes - Ariniş, Băiţa de sub Codru, Mireşu Mare, Onceşti, Poienile de sub Munte, Repedea (37.70%, the highest value), Ruscova, and Sâlsig;

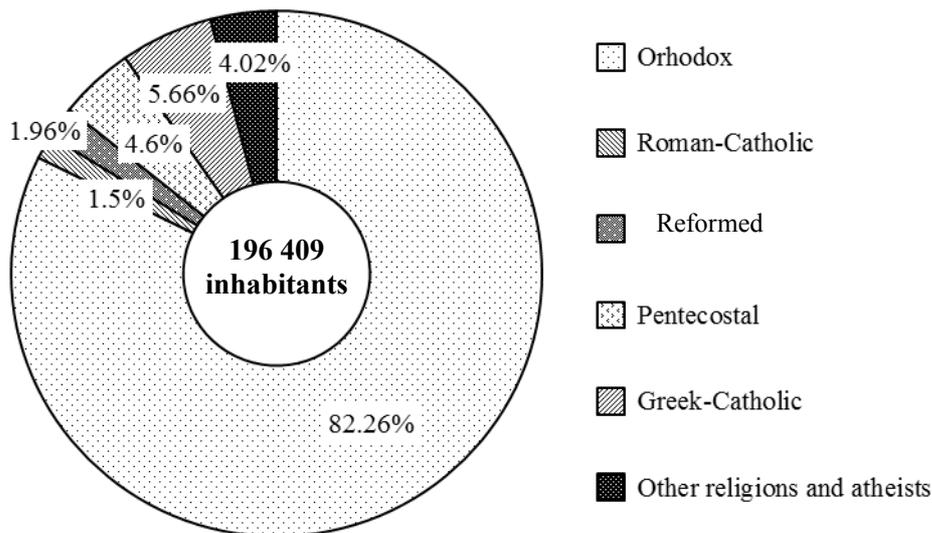


Fig. 4. The religious structure of the rural areas of Maramureş County, 2011.

Greek-Catholic

The third largest religious group was *Greek-Catholic* (4.85%, 21836 people), characterised by a relatively equal rural-urban distribution (10729 people, 4.23% in urban and 11107 people, 5.66% in rural areas).

In urban localities, the highest percentages, above the 10% threshold, were registered in Seini (10.10%, 873 followers). Values below 10% were found in two cities and six towns, while the remaining four urban localities had values below 1% (Borşa, Cavnic, Săliştea de Sus and Ulmeni).

The territorial distribution of Greek-Catholics in rural areas was as follows:

- **below 1%**, in 17 communes, for instance Ariniş (six adherents, 0.57%), Moisei (five, 0.06%), Coltău (four, 0.16%), Bicăz (three, 0.28%), Gârdani (three, 0.27%), as well as in Coroieni and Repedea, with fewer than

three followers, and three communes (Coaş, Cupşeni şi Poienile Izei), with no registered Greek-Catholic;

- the **1-10% category** includes 35 communes, while above 10% only in six rural communes (Băseşti, 15.20%, Giuleşti, 18.70%, Ieud, 25.80%, Călineşti, 31.80%, Şişeşti, 41.60% and Sarasău, 43.30%);

From an organisational standpoint, the *Eparchy of Maramureş* acts as the „governing” body, led by **Bishop Vasile Bizău**, with six archpriestships (*Baia Mare, Seini, Chioar, Mănăştur, Sighet, Ciscarpatin de Maramureş, and Iza-Vişeu*). The eparchy is subordinated to the Archbishopcy of Alba Iulia and Făgăraş.

Other religions and Atheists

After the five main religions (Orthodox, Roman-Catholic, Greek-Catholic, Pentecostal, and Reformed), which comprised a staggering

96.62% (435011 people) out of a total of 450196, the remaining 16 confessions registered 3.37% (15185 followers). We will therefore proceed to present the 16 religions, starting with *Baptists* and ending with *Atheists*, which, due to their low significance, will be analysed with the help of absolute values.

Baptists, with a percentage of 0.46% (2094 people) in 2011, out of which 1429 in urban areas, most of them residing in Baia Mare (658) and Sighetu Marmăției (345) and 665 in rural precincts, such as Băsești, with 109 followers. In 25 communes the situation changes, as there were no registered Baptists.

Seventh-Day Adventists - 3451 followers (0.76%), most of them living in rural areas (2819, 1.43% out of total of 196409 people), in communes such as: Moisei, Vișeu de Jos, Poienile de sub Munte, Leordina, Repedea and Săpânța, missing entirely from 22 communes. In urban areas, there were only 632 followers, out of which roughly 37% reside in Sighetu Marmăției.

Muslims were rather scarce, with only 0.01% or 58 members, mostly found in urban localities (50), especially in Baia Mare (35) and Șomcuta Mare (10). In the rural areas of the county, there were only eight registered Muslims, in the following communes: Ariniș, Bistra, Recea, Rona de Sus, Sarasău, and Satulung, all bearing the (*) mark, meaning fewer than three members.

Unitarians were as scarce as the preceding religion (0.01%, 70 members), all residing in urban localities (Baia Mare, 56 members, Sighetu Marmăției, 5, as well as Baia Sprie, Borșa, Cavnic, Seini, and Tăuții Măgheruș, with fewer than three members, while the remaining urban areas registered zero followers.

Jehova's Witnesses had the most significant increase of all Neoprottestant religions, registering 5960 members, that is 1.32% of the declared population, equally distributed per habitat (2 981 in urban areas and 2 979 in rural areas), most members being found in Baia Mare and Sighetu Marmăției, as well as in Rona de Sus (415), Copalnic-Mănăstur (233), Săcălășeni (199), Mireșu Mare (194), Bocicoiu Mare (143), etc., while Sălișteea de Sus, Boiu Mare, Botiza,

Ieud, Oarța de Jos, Poienile Izei, Rozavlea and Șieu did not register any members.

Christian Evangelicals had a percentage of 0.18% (815 members), most of them found in Baia Mare and in Satulung Commune (114).

Old Rite Christians registered 0.10% (477 members), mainly concentrated in rural localities (386 people), in those communes with strong Ukrainian populations, such as Repedea, 162 members, and Rona de Sus, 53 members.

Lutheran Evangelicals had 0.02%, with 111 members, living almost entirely in urban areas (108 people), in Baia Mare (96 persoane), Baia Sprie (7), Sighetu Marmăției (3), Seini (1), Tăuții Măgheruș (1), while in Borșa, Cavnic, Dragomirești, Sălișteea de Sus, Șomcuta Mare and Târgu Lăpuș no such members was found. In rural areas, three people declared themselves as such, in the following communes: Coltău, Groși, and Ocna Șugatag.

Serbian Orthodox, with a percentage of only 0.01%, or 80 members, found mainly in the county residence, Baia Mare (38 members), while in the remaining localities, their number was insignificant.

Evangelicals, registering 95 members, out of which 74 in urban areas, mostly in Baia Mare (45), and 21 in rural areas, for instance in Bicaz Commune (10 people), situated in Silvaniei Hills.

Augustan Evangelicals hold the penultimate spot (based on number of members), with 14 followers, 13 in urban precincts, in Baia Mare (8), Vișeu de Sus (4) and Târgu Lăpuș (1), and one member in Ocna Șugatag.

The Mosaic Confession was represented by 64 members, residing for the most part in Baia Mare (31) and Sighetu Marmăției (22), but also in Seini, Șomcuta Mare and Târgu Lăpuș, with one member each. The Commune of Moisei registered six members, while Remetea Chioarului and Budești one member each.

Armenians came last, with only two registered members, one in Baia Mare and one in Bistra.

Other religion, with 0.20% (915 people), represent that population segment outside the 18 religions mentioned before (from Orthodox to Armenian), most being found in urban areas (565), while 350 in villages.

No religion, with 0.14% (641) out of a total of 450196 people, chiefly in urban precincts (451), and 190 people in rural areas.

There were 338 people who declared themselves **atheists**, 313 residing in urban areas, mostly in the City of Baia Mare.

4. Unavailable information

For the first time in Romanian census history, for the registration of the three main geodemographic components (ethnicity, religion and mother tongue), a new procedure was employed, one that would collect data indirectly, from administrative sources.

Hence, when it came to the religious structure of Maramureş, in 2011, out of the total stable population, meaning 478659 inhabitants, only 450196 directly declared their religion, resulting a significant portion of the population (28463 people) who was counted as „*Unavailable information*”. As previously stated, this indicator is irrelevant for the evaluation of the values of the 18 confessions, which is why we consider its analysis redundant. Moreover, this situation led to serious problems in ascertaining the correct values of some major religious groups.

5. Conclusions

At the 2011 Census, in Maramureş County, out of the total stable population of 478659 people, only 450196 openly declared their religious affiliation. Therefore, a number of 28463 people were filed under „*Unavailable information*”, either because they did not declare it, or because their data was collected indirectly from other sources. This led to several problems in ascertaining the correct percentages of some of the most representative religions in the county. The religious structure of the county follows the evolution and the territorial distribution of its ethnic groups, with a strong *Orthodox community* (79.44%), which corresponds to the Romanian and Ukrainian population in most administrative units of Maramureş. The exception, the communes of Câmpulung la Tisa and Coltău, where the Hungarian majority are members of the Reformed religious group.

The numerical decrease in population, by 31451 people, compared to 2002, led to relatively significant changes in the existing religious structure, meaning that nine religious communities decreased from 2002 to 2011, the most significant drop being registered for the Greek-Catholics, from 5.52% to 4.85%, or 6346 members. The same descending trend is characteristic of Roman-Catholics (from 5.94% to 5.06%), Reformed (4.07% to 3.61%), Baptists (0.49% to 0.46%), Muslims (0.07% to 0.01%), Unitarians (0.02% to 0.01%), Lutheran Evangelicals (0.03% to 0.02%), Augustan Evangelicals (from 0.006% to 0.003%) and for the *Other religion* category (1.62% to 0.20%).

Seven religious groups registered increases between the two censuses (2002 and 2011): Orthodox (from 77.96% to 79.44%), Pentecostals (3.07% to 3.67%), Seventh-Day Adventists (0.71% to 0.76%), Christian Plymouth Brethren (0.12% to 0.18%), Old Rite Christians (0.03% to 0.10%), Evangelicals (0.01% to 0.02%), and Atheists (0.05% to 0.07%), while for the Mosaic group and those with No Religion, the values remained the same.

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