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**BETWEEN LWÓW AND ROME**  
**ARMENIANS IN TRANSYLVANIA AND ARMENIAN CATHOLIC**  
**ARCHEPARCHY OF LWÓW (1681-1691)<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** In 1988, the renowned Polish-Armenian church historian Gregorio (Grzegorz) Petrowicz published a book in Italian about the history of the Armenian Catholic Archbishopric (1686-1954) in Lwów (Lemberg; now Lviv, Ukraine). In his book, he dedicated a subchapter to the church-union of Armenians in Transylvania in the late 17th century, principally based on the documents kept at the Historical Archive of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) in Rome. At the same time, the scholarship has analyzed this book critically during the past two decades, and unfortunately, his subchapter proved to be very sketchy and poorly elaborated. His argumentations, however, regarding the history of the Armenians in Transylvania were based upon old, obsolete books published in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Therefore, my article also deals with this problem from an ecclesiastical-historical perspective concerning the church-union of the Armenians in Transylvania. Furthermore, my study also aims primarily at analyzing the role of the Armenian Catholic Archiepiscopacy in Lwów in creating the process of the church-union of the Armenians in Transylvania in the years 1681-1691. With regards to the methodology of my article, it is mere critical analysis

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focusing upon the incomplete as well as newly discovered manuscript sources kept in archives in Armenia, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Romania, and the Vatican.

**Keywords:** Lwów, Rome, Apostolic Holy See, Transylvania, Church-Union, Catholicism, Armenian Catholic (Uniate) Church

## Introduction

In 1988, the renowned Armenian-Polish church-historian, Gregorio (Grzegorz) Petrowicz (1916-2004) published a very important monograph, written in Italian, on the history of the Armenian Catholic (Uniate) Archeparchy (1686-1954) of Lwów<sup>2</sup> (Lemberg; Ilov; now Lviv in Ukraine). In his book, he dedicated a subchapter to the church-union of the Armenians in Transylvania in the late-17<sup>th</sup> century, principally based upon the archival documents kept at the Holy See's Archives in Rome and the Vatican City.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the scholarship has analysed this book critically during the past two decades, and unfortunately, his subchapter proved to be very sketchy and poorly elaborated. Indeed, his argumentations regarding the history of the Armenians in Transylvania were based upon old obsolete books published in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, my brief article also deals with this problem from an ecclesiastical-historical point of view concerning the church-union of the Armenians in Transylvania. Furthermore, my study also aims at analysing the role of the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów in creating the process of the church-union of the Armenians in Transylvania between the years of 1681 and 1691. With regards to the methodology of my article, it is a mere critical analysis focusing upon the partly as well as newly discovered manuscript sources kept in archives in Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár, Weissenburg; Romania), Budapest, Esztergom (Hungary), Rome, Vienna, Venice, Vatican City, and Yerevan.

<sup>2</sup> In this article, henceforward, I will use the city's Polish name, Lwów.

<sup>3</sup> G. Petrowicz, *La Chiesa Armena in Polonia e nei paesi limitrofi*, 3, (1686-1954), Roma 1988, *Studia Ecclesiastica*, 17, *Historica*, 10, pp. 78-104.

<sup>4</sup> C. Lukácsy, *Historia Armenorum Transsilvaniae a Primordiis Usque Nostram Memoriam e Fontibus Authenticis et Documentis Antea Ineditis Elaborata*, Viennae 1859, p. 68; L. Bărâny, *Verzirescul Auxendius I*, "Arménia", 4, 1888, 3, pp. 67-68; G. Govrikan, *Elizabet'opolis Dransilvanioy Hayoc' Metropolisë* [Elisabethopolis, The Metropolis of the Armenians in Transylvania], Vienna 1894, pp. 10, 14-17, 122-124; A. Hodinka, *A munkács-i görög-katholikus püspökség története* [The History of the Greek-Catholic Episcopacy in Munkács / Mukačiv], Budapest 1909, pp. 2-3.

## The Armenian Catholic Archiepiscopacy in Lwów after Nikol Torosowicz's Death (1681-1686)

The many years of ecclesiastical service (1627-1681) of Archbishop Nikol Torosowicz (1603-1681) were not quite successful as far as the church-union was concerned.<sup>5</sup> At the beginning of the year 1681, the Holy See's Missionary Institute, the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) in Rome<sup>6</sup> lost its patience and decided to depose the archbishop. In his stead, Bishop Vardan Hunanean<sup>7</sup> (1644-1715), who had been a potential candidate for some time, was appointed as an Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Lwów by the Holy See. At the time, Bishop Hunanean was on a mission in the Armenian Motherland.<sup>8</sup> In the meantime, in 1681, Archbishop

<sup>5</sup> On Archbishop Nikol Torosowicz's church-union and church policy in Lwów see: G. Petrowicz, *L'Unione degli Armeni di Polonia con la Santa Sede*, Roma 1950, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 135; *Step'anosi Rōšk'ay Žamanakagrut' iwn kam tarekank' ekelec' akank'* [Stefan Stefanowicz Roszka's Chronology or an Ecclesiastical Annuals], ed. H. Oskean, Vienna 1964, pp. 172-175; G. Pingirian, *La chapitre 28 du „Livres des Histoire” d'Arak'el Dawrižec' i et ses sources concernant le mouvement des colonies arméniennes d'Ukraine durant les années 20-50 du 17<sup>ème</sup> siècle*, "Revue des études arméniennes, Nouvelle Série", 14, 1980, pp. 443-457; E. Schütz, *An Armenian-Kipchak Document from Lvov and Its Background in Armenia and the Diaspora*, in: *Between the Danube and the Caucasus. A Collection of Sources on the History of the Peoples of Central and South-Eastern Europe*, ed. Gy. Kara, Budapest 1987, pp. 247-330; Arak'el Dawrižec' i, *Girk' Patmut'eanc'* [Book of History], ed. L. A. Xanlaryan, Erewan 1990, pp. 293-303, 305-310, 511-513; B. Kovács, *A galíciai örmények hagyatéka Varsóban* [The Legacy of the Galician Armenians in Warsaw], "Látó – Szépirodalmi Folyóirat", 19, 2008, 4, pp. 53-66; *Stosunki dawnej Rzeczypospolitej z Persją Safawidów i katolikosatem w Eczmiadzynie w świetle dokumentów archiwalnych / The Relations of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with Safavid Iran and the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin in the Light of Archival Documents*, eds S. Jaśkowski, D. Kołodziejczyk, P. Mnatsakanyan, Warszawa 2017, pp. 97-104, 255-362; K. Nagy, *Lembergben kezdődött... Az örmény katolikus egyház születése* [It Began in Lwów / Lemberg... Birth of the Armenian Catholic Church], Nyíregyháza 2020, *Collectanea Athanasiana*, 1, *Studia*, 1, pp. 53-75.

<sup>6</sup> The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) will hereafter be referred to as Propaganda Fide in this article. This was founded by a bull, entitled as *Inscrutabili divinae providentiae*, declared by Pope Gregory XV (1621-1623) on 6 January 1622. APF (= Archivio storico della Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o de "Propaganda Fide", Rome, Italy) CU Collegio Urbano. Vol. 1. Fol. 1r.-27v; I. Gy. Tóth, *A szaggatott kapcsolat. A Propaganda és a magyarországi missziók, 1622-1700* [The Connection Interrupted. The Propaganda Fide and the Catholic Missions in Hungary, 1622-1700], „Századok”, 138, 2004, 6, pp. 843-892.

<sup>7</sup> Regarding the transliteration of Armenian names and terms in this article, the internationally accepted academic norms endorsed by the International Association of the Armenian Studies (*Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes* = *AIEA*) were applied.

<sup>8</sup> APF SC (= Scritture riferite nei Congressi) Fondo Armeni. Vol. 3. Fol. 318r.-319r., Fol. 324r.-v., Fol. 329r.

Nikol Torosowicz died in Lwów before being deposed by the Holy See.<sup>9</sup> In addition, according to the archival sources, the late Archbishop left behind his archiepiscopacy chaotic and crumbling organisationally and, also, devoid of any real authority in Lwów.<sup>10</sup>

The above-mentioned Armenian Catholic prelate Vardan Hunanean was born on 14 February 1644 in the city of T'oxat' (now Tokat in Turkey) as one of the sons of a local Armenian Apostolic priest (*k'ahanay*) called Hunan Hunanean.<sup>11</sup> His parents sent the boy of outstanding intellect to the Seminary of Ęjmiacin where he was ordained as a deacon in 1664. In a time, Vardan Hunanean became increasingly interested in Catholicism. Therefore, he got in touch with Clemente Galano CR (1611-1666), a Theatine father who pursued mission in Armenia at the time. After this meeting, the missionary sent him to Rome in order to study Western theology.<sup>12</sup>

Father Galano was largely instrumental in the process of the church-union of the Armenians in Poland. The Theatine father who knew the Armenian language, culture, and mentality very well was sent by the Propaganda Fide to Lwów in order to counterbalance the strong influence of Nikol Torosowicz and establish a seminary for the local Armenian Catholics, which he successfully founded as the Armenian College (Collegium Armenum) in 1664.<sup>13</sup> He became its first rector at the behest of the Propaganda Fide until his sudden death in 1666.<sup>14</sup>

Returning to Vardan Hunanean, due to Father Galano's recommendation received when still in Armenia, he travelled to Rome to continue his studies at

<sup>9</sup> APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 3. Fol. 282/r.-v., Fol. 310/r.-v.; S. Rōšk'ay, *Žamanakagrut' iwn*, p. 184.

<sup>10</sup> APF SOCG (= Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali). Vol. 483. Fol. 74r.+ Fol. 75/v., Fol. 278r.-281/v., Fol. 282r.-283/v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 484. Fol. 126/r.-v., Fol. 127r., Fol. 473/r.-v.; APF Lettere SC (= Lettere e Decreti della Sacra Congregazione). Vol. 71. Fol. 6/v.-7r., Fol. 102/v.-103/v.; AAV (= Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Vatican City, Vatican) SSP (= Segretaria di Stato, Polonia). Vol. 185. Fol. 14/r.-v.; S. Rōšk'ay, *Žamanakagrut' iwn*, p. 182.

<sup>11</sup> S. Rōšk'ay, *Žamanakagrut' iwn*, p. 183; G. Petrowicz, *La Chiesa Armena in Polonia*, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> APF SOCG. Vol. 225. Fol. 166r.-167/v.; G. Petrowicz, *L'Unione*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>13</sup> APF Acta SC (= Acta Sacrae Congregationis). Vol. 33. Fol. 150r.-154r.; APF CP (= Congregazioni Particolari). Vol. 64. Fol. 41r.-47/v.; APF CP. Vol. 133. Fol. 270r.-310/v.; APF Collegi Vari. Vol. 2. Fol. 2r.-23/v.; APF Miscellanea Varie. Vol. 10. Fol. 432r.-433/v.; AGT (= Archivio Generale dei Teatini, Rome, Italy) CL (= Collegio di Leopoli). Portfolio 1. (Unnumbered folio.)

<sup>14</sup> S. Rōšk'ay, *Žamanakagrut' iwn*, p. 181; D. Blažejovskij, *Ukrainian and Armenian Pontifical Seminaries of L'viv*, Rome 1975, *Analecta OSBM, Series 2, Sectio 1*, pp. 39-40, 86-161, 239-245; D. Blažejovskij, *I teatini e i Pontifici Collegi Armeno e Ucraino di Leopoli (1664-1784)*, "Regnum Dei – Collectanea Theatini a Cleribus Regularibus Edita", 105, 35, 1979, pp. 205-248; K. Nagy, *The Foundation of the Armenian (Ruthenian) College in Lviv (1664-1681)*, "Eastern Theological Journal", 6, 2020, 1, pp. 35-75.

the Urban College (Collegium Urbanum), the seminary of the Propaganda Fide in Rome, where he officially made a confession of faith in the Catholic Church in 1670.<sup>15</sup> Two years later he was ordained as a Catholic priest. One of the important turning points in Vardan Hunanean's life occurred when the Holy See ordered Nikol Torosowicz to go to Rome in 1668 for an investigation due to his scandals and charges of corruption in the 1660s.<sup>16</sup> The Propaganda Fide failed to formally condemn Archbishop Torosowicz but did not trust him. In 1675, the Holy See appointed Vardan Hunanean as a coadjutor to Archbishop Torosowicz and ordained him as a titular bishop (*in partibus infidelium*) of Epiphania in Syria.<sup>17</sup> The Apostolic See sent him to Lwów with the clear intention to keep an eye on Nikol Torosowicz. It was not obvious whether the Armenian Catholic Bishop Hunanean was considered a potential successor to the unreliable prelate. Archbishop Nikol Torosowicz himself soon realised it, and, seeing a rival in the young Armenian priest, did all he could to make his life in Lwów unbearable. Because of his conflict with the archbishop, Vardan Hunanean left for Armenia to proselytise by consent of the Propaganda Fide.<sup>18</sup>

Eliazar I (1682-1691) (Ehiazar Ayntapç'i), catholicos of all Armenians, took sterner steps against the missionaries in the Armenian Motherland. He, in fact, imprisoned and tortured several Roman Catholic missionaries and threatened the converted Armenians with impalement in 1682.<sup>19</sup> Vardan Hunanean himself was among the missionaries imprisoned and was released after four years' incarceration only thanks to the interventions of the Polish king, Jan Sobieski (1674-1696), and Safi II (1667-1694), Persian Shah of Safavid dynasty. After his liberation, when still in Armenia, he received instructions from the Propaganda Fide to take over the leadership of the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów as an appointed archbishop.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The Seminary called Urban College in Rome was established by Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644) on basis of his bull, entitled in Latin as *Immortalis Dei Filius*, and declared on 1 August 1627. APF Collegio Urbano. Vol. 1. Fol. 103r.-120v., Fol. 131r.-139v., Fol. 141r.-142v.

<sup>16</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 39. Fol. 207r.-v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 454. Fol. 53r.

<sup>17</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 47. Fol. 210r.; APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 2. Fol. 199r.-v., Fol. 200r.; *Hierarchia Catholica medii et recentioris aevi*, eds R. Ritzler OFM Conv., P. Se-frin OFM Conv., Patavii 1952, p. 196.

<sup>18</sup> APF SOCG. Vol. 484. Fol. 472r.-v., Fol. 475r.-v.; APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 3. Fol. 310r.-v.+ Fol. 311v.; AAV SSP. Vol. 100. Fol. 74r.-75r.; APF Collegio Urbano. Vol. 2. Fol. 90r.-v., Fol. 91r.-v., Fol. 92r.

<sup>19</sup> Because of the lack of proper information, in 1681 and 1682, the Propaganda Fide thought that the appointed Archbishop Vardan Hunanean had already passed away somewhere in Armenia. APF Lettere SC. Vol. 71. Fol. 47v.-48r., Fol. 192v.-193v.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 74. Fol. 75r., Fol. 174v.-175v. APF SC Fondo Moldavia. Vol. 2. Fol. 126r.-127r.+ Fol. 127v., Fol. 128r.-131r.+ Fol. 131v.; APF Collegio Urbano. Vol. 2. Fol. 1r., Fol. 51r.-52r.+ Fol. 52v.

<sup>20</sup> APF Lettere SC. Vol. 74. Fol. 174v.-175v.; APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 3. Fol. 382r.-v.; APF SC Fondo Moldavia. Vol. 2. Fol. 134r.-135v.; AGT CL. Portfolio 1. (Unnumbered folio.)

In the meantime, because of the Vardan Hunanean's forced stay in Armenia, Nuncio Opizio (Opitius) Pallavicini (1632-1700), the apostolic nuncio to Warsaw, titular archbishop of Epehesus, and Francesco Giambattista Bonesana CR (1649-1709), a Theatine father and rector of the Armenian College in Lwów, in collaboration with the Propaganda Fide were looking for a new candidate while keeping the position of the archbishop for Vardan Hunanean.<sup>21</sup> However, they were still unable to reach Vardan Hunanean due to the chaotic political situation in the Armenian Motherland. Therefore, the Holy See decided to find an interim bishop who would head the archbishop's office until Vardan Hunanean was available.<sup>22</sup> The choice fell on Deodatus Nersesowicz (Astwacatur Nersēsian) (1644-1709), one of the first alumni of the Armenian College in Lwów, whom the Holy See appointed as the titular bishop of Traianopolis in Rhodope on 29 November 1683. Deodatus Nersesowicz's appointment seemed ideal for the Roman Catholic Church since he was faithful to Catholicism.<sup>23</sup>

As a temporary church leader, Deodatus Nersesowicz was consecrated as a bishop by Apostolic Nuncio Opizio Pallavicini in the Armenian Catholic Cathedral in Lwów on 18 January 1684.<sup>24</sup> The main goal of the newly ordained prelate was to consolidate church discipline and eradicate old Armenian liturgies, which were regarded as heretic in the contemporary sources.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, between 1683 and 1686, Bishop Nersesowicz fulfilled masterfully his ecclesiastical and organisational activity until the arrival of Vardan Hunanean, who only returned to Lwów from the Armenian Motherland on 1 October 1686.<sup>26</sup> Thus, on that day,

<sup>21</sup> APF Lettere SC. Vol. 72. Fol. 39/r.-v.; APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 3. Fol. 223r., Fol. 370/r.-v., Fol. 371r.-372r., Fol. 374r.

<sup>22</sup> APF SOCG. Vol. 488. Fol. 272r., Fol. 275r.-276/v., Fol. 283r.-284/v.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 72. Fol. 199/v.-200r.; *Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae*, 24, *Opitius Pallavicini (1680-1688)*, 7, (3 VII 1683 – 31 XII 1683), ed. M. Domin, Kraków 2012, pp. 21-24; 8, (1 I 1684 – 30 VI 1684), ed. M. Domin, Kraków 2015, pp. 77-78, 392-393.

<sup>23</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 53. Fol. 245/r.-v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 488. Fol. 277r., Fol. 278r.-281r., Fol. 286r.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 72. Fol. 69r.; AGT CL. Portfolio 1. (Unnumbered folio.); *Hierarchia Catholica*, p. 243, 384; S. Rōšk'ay, *Žamanakagrut' iwn*, pp. 194-195; G. Petrowicz, *La Chiesa Armena in Polonia*, pp. 5, 7-11.

<sup>24</sup> APF Lettere SC. Vol. 73. Fol. 69/r.-v.

<sup>25</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 55. Fol. 22/r.-v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 495/A. Fol. 138r.-140/v.; APF SC Fondo Moscovia, Polonia, e Rutheni. Vol. 2. Fol. 195/r.-v.

<sup>26</sup> Vardan Hunanean was officially inaugurated as an Armenian Catholic archbishop on 14 February in Lwów. The ceremony was conducted by Nuncio Opizio Pallavicini. APF Acta SC. Vol. 56. Fol. 139/v.-140r., Fol. 256/r.-v.; APF CP. Vol. 29. 165/r.-v.+ Fol. 166/v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 495/A. Fol. 207/r.-v., Fol. 254/v.-256/v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 496. Fol. 503r.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 73. Fol. 66r.-67r., Fol. 72r.-73r., Fol. 98/v.-99/v., Fol. 102/r.-v.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 75. Fol. 54/v.-55r., Fol. 111/r.-v., Fol. 129/r.-v.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 76. Fol. 40r.; APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 3. Fol. 462/r.-v., Fol. 465/r.-v.; APF SC Fondo Moscovia, Polonia, e Rutheni. Vol. 2. Fol. 178/r.-v., Fol. 179/r.-v.; *Hierarchia Catholica*, p. 243.

immediately after his arrival in the city, Archbishop Hunanean composed a very detailed letter addressed to the Propaganda Fide in Rome, in which he said that he had taken over his position in Lwów from Bishop Deodatus Nersesowicz peacefully, without any conflicts, as a 'real' archbishop. Further on, he also related that a certain Armenian Catholic priest and missionary, Oxendio Virziresco Stefanowicz<sup>27</sup> (1654-1715), originating from Moldavia, had been already pursuing his pastoral activity among the Armenians in Transylvania at the behest of the Propaganda Fide since 1685.<sup>28</sup>

## The Church of the Armenians in Transylvania

Significant political changes happened in the Hungarian Kingdom ruled by the Catholic Habsburg dynasty in Vienna and in the Principality of Transylvania at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, which has been regarded as an exciting period for the scholarship, too. The Great Turkish War (1683-1699), the re-integration of the aforementioned Principality of Transylvania into the Habsburg Monarchy (Empire) after almost 150 years of relative independence (circa 1550-1690), the colonisation of the uncultivated (or unpopulated and abandoned) lands during the Ottoman rule, and re-organisation of daily life resulted in serious tasks, and duties for the Habsburg Court in Vienna, too. Furthermore, this period brought serious challenges to the Roman Catholic Church as well. Prior to these challenges, and also because of the strong presence of the Protestantism in Hungary and Transylvania, the process called Re-Catholicisation or Counter-Reformation in the Hungarian Kingdom's Eastern, Southern, and Northern provinces (including Transylvania) was gaining a momentum: Orthodox Ruthenians in Upper Hungary, Serbs in South Hungary, and Romanians in Transylvania united with Rome in a confessional aspect.<sup>29</sup> The prelates, who were highly supported by

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<sup>27</sup> Hereafter, I will use the Italianised form known as Virziresco (as was a Moldavian-Romanian nickname of the family) form in this article. Initially, his family's name was Stefanowicz (Armenian: *Step'anean*), originating from Kamieniec-Podolski. Oxendio Virziresco's ancestors moved from Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to Moldavia in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. In 1668, almost all the members of the family fled to Transylvania. In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the Virziresco family changed (Magyarised or Hungaricised) their surname as Verzár. The afore-mentioned nickname Virziresco, which is an Italianised form, originated from the Moldavian-Romanian Vărzărescul (in the meaning of 'cabbage-bearer', referring presumably to the Vărzărescul/Virziresco family's activity as a trader of vegetables or spices). G. Éble, *A szamosújvári Verzár család* [The Verzár Family of Szamosújvár / Armenopolis], Budapest 1915, pp. 11-19.

<sup>28</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 55. Fol. 234r.-235v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 496. Fol. 92r., Fol. 193r.-v.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 75. Fol. 111r.-v., Fol. 129r.-v.; APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 3. Fol. 462/r.-v., Fol. 465r.; APF SC Fondo Moscovia, Polonia, e Rutheni. Vol. 2. Fol. 264r.-267v.

<sup>29</sup> A. Hodinka, *A munkácsi görög-katholikus püspökség*, pp. 398-408; T. Végheő, „...Mint egy igaz egyházi ember...”. *A történelmi Munkácsi Egyházmegye görögkatolikus*

the missionaries delegated from the Holy See in Rome in order to reorganise and restore the Hungarian Catholic Church's everyday religious life, reappeared at the seats of the abandoned dioceses (and also archdioceses) after almost 200 years of Ottoman occupation. Consequently, the history of the Armenians in Transylvania and their links with the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów should be, in fact, analysed and researched in this very complicated ecclesiastical and historical context in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>30</sup>

Armenians appeared in Transylvania in two great waves. The first group, led by Bishop Minas Alēk'sanean T'oxat'ec'i (1610-1686), escaped from the Principality of Moldavia in 1668 because of the religious persecutions committed against them by the secular authorities.<sup>31</sup> These persecutions were inflicted upon Armenians because of their involvement in the revolt against Gheorghe Duca, the Voivode / Prince of Moldavia (1665-1666, 1668-1672, 1678-1683). The second group of Armenians fled to Transylvania from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów), from the province of Podolia and the city of Kamieniec Podolski (Kamianets-Podilskiyi, Ukraine) due to the military campaigns pursued by the Ottoman Turks in 1672.<sup>32</sup>

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*egyházának létrejötte és fejlődése a 17. században* [“...Like a True Man of Church...”. The Birth and Development of the Greek-Catholic Diocese in Munkács / Mukačiv in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century], Nyíregyháza 2011, *Collectanea Athanasiana*, 1, *Studia*, 4, pp. 111-147; A. Molnár, *Tanulmányok a hódoltsági katolikus művelődés történetéből* [Studies on History of the Catholic Culture in the Ottoman-Occupied Hungary], Budapest 2008, *Régi Magyar Könyvtár; Tanulmányok*, 9, pp. 76-89; Zs. Szirtes, *Kircheunion und Übergang im neu eroberten Siebenbürgen. Der Prozess von Gabriel Nagyszegi und János Sárosi*, in: *Neuaufbau im Donauraum nach der Türkenzeit. Tagungsband der internationalen Konferenz anlässlich der 300-jährigen Jubiläums des Friedens von Passarowitz*, ed. A. Oross, Wien 2021, *Publikationen der ungarischen Geschichtsforschung in Wien*, 19, pp. 273-291.

<sup>30</sup> *Litterae Missionariorum de Hungaria et Transilvania (1572-1717)*, 1, ed. I. Gy. Tóth, Roma–Budapest 2002, *Bibliotheca Academiae Hungariae in Roma. Fontes*, 4, pp. 81-97; A. Molnár, *Lehetetlen küldetés? Jezsuiták Erdélyben és Felső-Magyarországon a 16-17. században* [Mission Impossible? Jesuits in Transylvania and Upper-Hungary in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries], Budapest 2009, *TDI Könyvek*, 8, pp. 213-214, 225-237; B. V. Mihalik, *A Szentszék magyarországi egyházpolitikája a 17. század végén* [The Holy See's Church-Policy in Hungary at the End of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century], „Történelmi Szemle”, 63, 2021, 4, pp. 631-670.

<sup>31</sup> APF SOCG. Vol. 471. Fol. 314r.; APF SC Fondo Moldavia. Vol. 1. Fol. 287r.; APMV (= Archivio dei Padri Mechitaristi di Venezia, San Lazzaro, Isola degl'Armeni, Venice, Italy) MS (= Manuscripta). No. 771. Fol. 124/r.-v.; MAMAT (= Surb Mesrop Maštoc'i Anwan Matenadaran, Erewan / Armenian National Archive called Saint Mesrop Maštoc', Yerevan, Armenia) MS (= Manuscripta). No. 9484. Fol. 304r.; ELTE EKK (= Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Egyetemi Könyv- és Kézirattár / Loránd Eötvös State University's Library and Archive, Budapest, Hungary) Coll. Hev. (= Collectio Hevenesiana). Cod. 21. Pag. 81.

<sup>32</sup> APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 1. Fol. 525r.-526/v., Fol. 602r.-610/v.; APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 2. Fol. 168/r.-v.; AAV ANVAR (= Archivio della Nunziatura Apostolica in Varavia). Vol. 98. Fol. 641r.-644/v.

These Armenians chose Transylvania as their destination on purpose because many of them knew with a complete certainty that the religious circumstances in Transylvania seemed to be, more or less, favourable to them. In other words, they were absolutely aware of the relatively tolerant relations in Transylvania as far as religion was concerned. This was a key motif since Armenians could also flee to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth where they were well aware of the church-union passed in 1630 by the above-mentioned Archbishop of Lwów Nikol Torosowicz and his contradictory church policy.<sup>33</sup>

Still, during the office of Archbishop Nikol Torosowicz in the late 1670s, the cardinals of the Propaganda Fide in Rome and the leadership of the Armenian College in Lwów agreed that, besides the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, strong Catholic missions should be established in Armenian colonies or communities such as those in Crimea and Moldavia. At first sight, it seemed evident that the Armenians in Moldavia could be an ideal target in this missionary case, because this land was relatively close to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and many Apostolic (Eastern) Armenians led spiritually by their bishops had lived there since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Francesco Martelli (1633-1717), an apostolic nuncio to Warsaw, titular archbishop of Corinth (later cardinal), and Father Clemente Galano's successor, Louis-Marie Pidoux d'Olon CR (1637-1717),<sup>34</sup> Theatine father and the rector of the Armenians College (later titular bishop of Baghdad), proposed a possible Catholic mission for Moldavia to the Propaganda Fide in 1676.<sup>35</sup> They strongly recommended Jan Kieremowicz (1631-1677), alumnus of the Armenian College in Lwów, to lead the missions among Armenians in Moldavia. The Propaganda Fide accepted their suggestions and reached out to the Holy See's higher circles in Rome to arrange for him to be appointed and consecrated as a titular bishop of Hymeria. However, while Bishop Kieremowicz was waiting for his official documents of further authorisation from Rome, he unexpectedly became ill and soon passed away in the last days of 1677. For this reason, this mission was temporarily not on agenda until the 1680s.<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, in 1684, Nuncio Francesco Martelli's successor, Opizio Pallavicini and Francesco Giambattista Bonesana CR, a Theatine father, the new rector of

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<sup>33</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 48. Fol. 166r.-168v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 475. Fol. 359r.-v., Fol. 370r.-v.; T. Ferro, *I missionari cattolici in Moldavia, Studi storici e linguistici*, Cluj-Napoca 2005, pp. 62-70, 97-98.

<sup>34</sup> *Hierarchia Catholica*, p. 110.

<sup>35</sup> APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 2. Fol. 394r.-v.; APF SC Fondo Moldavia. Vol. 1. Fol. 168r.-169v., Fol. 233r.-236v., Fol. 257r.-259v.; AAV ANVAR. Vol. 176. Fol. 71r.; A. Osipian, *Trans-Cultural Trade in the Black Sea Region, 1250-1700: Integration of the Armenian Trading Diaspora in Moldavian Principality*, "New Europe College Yearbook", 13, 2012-2013, 1, pp. 133-134.

<sup>36</sup> APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 2. Fol. 630r., Fol. 631r.-v.

the Armenian College in Lwów (later bishop of Caiazzo and Como),<sup>37</sup> and Bishop Deodatus Nersesowicz, coadjutor of the Armenian Archiepiscopacy of Lwów, sent detailed reports to the Holy See in Rome, in which they emphasised the importance of the Catholic missions organised among the Armenians in Moldavia in order to convert them to the Roman Catholic faith.<sup>38</sup> For this reason, they were starting to organise the Catholic mission to Moldavia in Lwów, but in the meantime, the Propaganda Fide in Rome suggested that the key to unite the Armenians in Moldavia with the Roman Catholic Church was primarily to convince the local Armenian Apostolic bishop upon a possible church-union with Rome.<sup>39</sup> However, the Minorite (Conventual Franciscan) missionaries operating in Moldavia sent many letters to the Propaganda Fide in Rome, in which they reported that majority of the Armenian Apostolic clergy, including their bishop, Minas T'oxat'ec'i, had already escaped to Transylvania in 1668. Moreover, they had also informed the Holy See and the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy that the Armenian bishop of Moldavia with his followers and clergy was residing in the Transylvanian city of Bistrița (Bistritz, Beszterce; Romania) at that moment.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, following brief and intensive negotiations, the Propaganda Fide, the Apostolic Nunciature in Warsaw, the leadership of the Armenian College in Lwów, and the Armenian Archiepiscopacy led by Bishop Deodatus Nersesowicz, had agreed to first organise Catholic missions among the Armenians in Transylvania who had escaped from Moldavia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.<sup>41</sup> And, after Transylvania, they would have focused upon the Armenians in Moldavia. In addition, the mission aiming at catholicising Armenians in Transylvania was increasingly forced by the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów in 1684.<sup>42</sup> The Propaganda Fide supported strongly the archiepiscopacy's claim by stating that the Armenians who had fled to Transylvania had originally been under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Armenian Archdiocese of Lwów and they intended to keep this right after the church-union as well. So, the cardinals of Propaganda Fide in Rome had accepted this claim and approved that the Armenians in Transylvania

<sup>37</sup> *Hierarchia Catholica*, pp. 134, 166.

<sup>38</sup> APF SOCG. Vol. 482. Fol. 132/r.-v.; APF SC Fondo Moldavia. Vol. 1. Fol. 106r.; AAV ANVAR. Vol. 98. Fol. 661r.; AAV SSP. Vol. 101. Fol. 498r.-499/v.

<sup>39</sup> APF Lettere SC. Vol. 72. Fol. 1/v.-2r.; APF SC Fondo Moldavia. Vol. 1. Fol. 265r.-267/v.; BMK (= Bibliothek des Mechitaristenklosters, Vienna, Austria) MS (= Manuscripta). No. 511. Fol. 1r., Fol. 199r.

<sup>40</sup> APF Fondo di Vienna. Vol. 8. Fol. 74r.-77/v., Fol. 80/r.-v.; APMV MS. Vol. 775. Fol. 124/r.-v.; ELTE EKK Coll. Hev. Cod. 21. Pag. 81.

<sup>41</sup> APF SC Fondo Moldavia. Vol. 2. Fol. 41r.-46/v.

<sup>42</sup> APF SC Fondo Moldavia. Vol. 2. Fol. 134r.-135/v., Fol. 260r.-261/v.; APF Fondo Visite e Collegi. Vol. 21. Fol. 3r.-22/v.

would be subjected to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów.<sup>43</sup>

The Propaganda Fide soon found a person capable of carrying out this mission in Transylvania. Their choice fell upon Oxendio Virziresco, an Armenian Catholic priest originating from Moldavia. His family produced many priests for the Armenian Apostolic Church for several generations, and his relatives arrived in Transylvania as refugees led by Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i in 1668. Oxendio Virziresco's main task was crystal clear: to create the church-union of Armenians and organise their Armenian Catholic Church in Transylvania loyal to Rome in place of the Armenian Apostolic Church.<sup>44</sup>

The priest himself, Oxendio Virziresco, was born on 30 June 1654 in the city of Botoşani (Botusán) in Moldavia. He converted to Roman Catholic faith in 1676 under the influence of Minorite missionaries, who were very active in Moldavia at that time, and commenced his studies in theology at the Armenian College in Lwów under the supervision of Rector Marie-Louis Pidoux d'Olon.<sup>45</sup> Because of the wars between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Oxendio Virziresco was sent to Rome by Francesco Martelli, the apostolic nuncio in Warsaw, and Father Bonesana (Father Pidoux's successor) in 1678. There, he continued his studies in theology at the Urban College in Rome. He was ordained a priest according to the Latin rites on 9 August 1681. The ceremony of his ordination was conducted by Edoardo Cybo (1619-1705), General Secretary of the Propaganda Fide and titular archbishop of Seleucia in Isauria (later cardinal), at the Basilica of Santa Maria in Traspontina in Rome. After his ordination, for three years, Oxendio Virziresco served as a chaplain at the Egyptian Saint Mary Armenian Catholic Church in Rome (Chiesa Armena Cattolica di Santa Maria Egizziaca).<sup>46</sup>

Before he started his mission among the Armenians in Transylvania, Oxendio Virziresco, first of all, had to go to Warsaw and then to Lwów, negotiating with Opizio Pallavicini, the apostolic nuncio to Warsaw and Bishop Deodatus Nersesowicz upon his missionary tasks. Oxendio Virziresco arrived in Warsaw on 9 August 1685 and had an audience with Nuncio Pallavicini, and a few days later he met with Bishop Nersesowicz in Lwów as well. Following these "strategic" discussions, Oxendio Virziresco departed at the end of August to Transylvania,

<sup>43</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 53. Fol. 248r.; APF SOCG. Vol. 496. Fol. 503r.

<sup>44</sup> APF Lettere SC. Vol. 73. Fol. 252/r.-v.; AAV ANVAR. Vol. 183/A. Fol. 140r.-141/v.

<sup>45</sup> APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 3. Fol. 457r.; AGT CL. Portfolio. No. 1. (Unnumbered folio.); ELTE EKK Coll. Hev. Cod. 16. Pag. 33; ELTE EKK Coll. Hev. Cod. 21. pp. 81-82.

<sup>46</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 51. Fol. 81r., Fol. 114r., Fol. 154/r.-v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 490. Fol. 110r.; APF SOCG. Vol. 493. Fol. 30r.+ Fol. 31/v., Fol. 376r.+ Fol. 377/v., Fol. 378/v.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 70. Fol. 2/r.-v., Fol. 42r., Fol. 53/r.-v. Fol. 54r.; APF Ospizi. Vol. 1. Fol. 196r.-200/v.

where he started his pastoral and religious activity as a missionary in the Gheorghen (Gyergyó, Gyergyószék; Romania) Region of Transylvania at the end of September in 1685.<sup>47</sup>

In the beginning, Oxendio Virziresco's religious activity as a missionary did not result in the full approval of Armenians in Transylvania. Instead, it met hatred and tacit resistance. The masses, celebrated by him, were regularly disturbed by the outrageous behaviour of the Apostolic (Eastern) Armenians. In his reports addressed to the Propaganda Fide, Oxendio Virziresco mentioned the fact that the local Hungarian Catholic clergy and residents helped his mission. With the aid of the local Hungarian priests, Oxendio Virziresco was allowed to hold a holy mass at the Roman Catholic parish church in the city of Gheorgheni (Gyergyószentmiklós; Romania). Oxendio Virziresco was informed by the local Catholic clergy that Armenians had two wooden churches in Transylvania. One of the wooden churches and the chapel was in Gheorgheni while the other wooden church in Frumoasa (Csíkszépvíz; Romania) where, according to his opinion, Armenians held their heretical liturgies.<sup>48</sup> Oxendio Virziresco made matters worse by trying to confiscate the local Armenian wooden churches and to forbid the priests of the Armenian Apostolic Church to conduct their liturgies in their heretical manner – funerals, wedding and baptism ceremonies, and so on.<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, Armenians turned to the Calvinist protestant Mihály Apafi I (1661-1690), Prince of Transylvania, for a legal redress, according to Oxendio Virziresco's report. His relationship with the Propaganda Fide in Rome and the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów almost cost him dearly since their letters written to Oxendio Virziresco by Bishop Deodatus Nersesowicz from Lwów and Archbishop Edoardo Cybo, General Secretary of the Propaganda Fide from Rome were intercepted. Armenians, who hated his missionary activity, denounced him to the prince of Transylvania as a spy or a foreign agent of the "Western Frankish or Latin heretic" Rome. What the result of this charge was, Oxendio Virziresco did not say anything about. At the same time, in spite of this resistance by the local Armenians, he was able to pursue further his priestly and pastoral activity without any obstacles as a Catholic missionary in Transylvania in order to convert more Armenians in Transylvania to Roman Catholicism. However, the

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<sup>47</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 54. Fol. 207/r.-v.; APF Acta SC. Vol. 55. Fol. 60/v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 491. Fol. 12/r.-v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 492. Fol. 310/v., Fol. 313/r.-v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 495B. Fol. 232r.-234/v.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 74. Fol. 19/r.-v.; APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 3. Fol. 417r.; APF SC Fondo Moscovia, Polonia, e Rutheni. Vol. 2. Fol. 315/r.-v.; APF Collegio Urbano. Vol. 1. Fol. 268r.; APF Collegio Urbano. Vol. 2. Fol. 156/r.-v.; S. Rõšk'ay, *Žamanakagrut' iwn*, p. 186.

<sup>48</sup> ELTE EKK Coll. Hev. Cod. 15. p. 248.

<sup>49</sup> APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 3. Fol. 468r.-469/v.

climate remained still very tense and hostile to him henceforward.<sup>50</sup> Thus, Oxendio Virziresco's devotion did not affect Armenians at the very beginning of his mission. Bishop Minas and his followers did not accept him because they thought that a "Frankish / Latin" heretic priest wanted to take over the bishop's position in Transylvania. He was also accused of inciting conflicts with his Catholicism, instead of creating a full unity among his fellow Armenians.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the initial hatred towards him, the situation started to change around Oxendio Virziresco by summer 1686.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, a serious turning point occurred, when his family and relatives living in the Transylvanian city of Bistrița converted to the Roman Catholic faith, an important factor because Oxendio Virziresco's brothers were influential merchants before their conversion to Catholicism. This was a great aid and support for the Armenian Catholic priest who was pursuing his priestly and missionary activity practically on his own.<sup>53</sup> Oxendio Virziresco contacted Bishop Minas T'oxat'eci through his family and persuaded the Armenian Apostolic prelate to accompany him to Lwów or Warsaw where he could meet with Archbishop Vardan Hunanean or Nuncio Opizio Pallavicini. Although Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i had a very definite opinion about Catholicism, he remained open to negotiations despite his reservations. But Oxendio Virziresco, on his part, was tenaciously trying to win Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i to a possible church-union. He realised that Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i could be converted because the Armenian Apostolic prelate had a difficult relationship with his own Armenian clergy in Transylvania as well. Another reason why Oxendio Virziresco wanted to take Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i to Lwów was to prevent him from destroying the work he had already done "in the Lord's vineyard" (*In vinea Domini*), undermining Virziresco's position behind his back. He was convinced that he could persuade Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i to convert and saw it as the key to the success of his mission. The majority of the Armenians in Transylvania, however, especially the local Armenian Apostolic clergy, close adherents of Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i, were highly opposed to him and rejected decidedly any idea of a church-union with the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>54</sup>

One of the most mysterious issues in the ecclesiastical history of the Armenians in Transylvania is the alleged confession in the Catholic faith by Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i in late 1686, which has been long identified with the church-union

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> APF SC Acta SC. Vol. 54. Fol. 117r.-119/v.; APF Acta SC. Vol. 55. Fol. 234r.-235/v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 496. Fol. 193/r.-v.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 75. Fol. 54/v.-55r.; APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 3. Fol. 462/r.-v.; APF SC Fondo Moscovia, Polonia, e Rutheni. Vol. 2. Fol. 244/r.-v., Fol. 260r.-261/v., Fol. 264r.-267/v.

due to the lack of sufficient information. According to the well-known tradition in the Armenian and Hungarian historiography, as a result of Oxendio Virziresco's pastoral activity, Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i left for Lwów in 1686, where he negotiated the issue of the church-union. The same year, Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i made a confession of faith on behalf of the whole Armenian community and converted to Roman Catholicism in the presence of Opizio Pallavicini, the apostolic nuncio to Warsaw, and Archbishop Vardan Hunanean, and joined the church-union of the Armenians in Transylvania. After converting to Catholicism, Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i intended to return with a great joy to his followers but on his way home the old Armenian bishop fell ill and died in the Carpathian Mountains towards the end of 1686.<sup>55</sup> Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i's confession of faith was underpinned by some doubtful manuscript sources, written by two Jesuit fathers and chroniclers pursuing missions in Transylvania, namely the Czech-Moravian Rudolf Bzensky SJ (1651-1715) and the Hungarian István Csete SJ (1648-1718), after the death of Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i about ten years later. The two Jesuit fathers did not state precisely their sources of information on Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i's confession of faith and church-union. At any rate, their information on Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i's act spread in historiography. According to critical analysis of these sources, it turned out that the historical events attributed to Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i in Lwów absolutely misled the scholarly researches and investigations for more than 300 years.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> C. Lukácsy, *Historia Armenorum*, pp. 65-68; *Symbolae ad illustrandam historiam ecclesiae orientalis in terris Coronae S. Stephani*, ed. N. Nilles, 2, Oeniponte 1885, p. 920; *Kamenic' : Taregirk' Hayoc' Lehastani ew Rumenioy* [Kamenic' : Yearbook of the Armenians in Poland and Romania], ed. Ł. Ališan, Venetik 1896, pp. 125-127; S. Kolandjian, *Les Arméniens en Transylvanie, X<sup>ème</sup> -XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècles*, "Revue des études arméniennes, Nouvelle Série", 5, 1967, pp. 359-362; G. Petrowicz, *La Chiesa Armena in Polonia*, pp. 78, 82, 85; P. Shore, *Jesuits and Politics of Cultural Pluralism in Eighteenth Century Transylvania: Culture, Politics, and Religion, 1693-1773*, Rome 2007, *Bibliotheca Institutivi Societatis Iesu*, 61, pp. 75-79; A. Molnár, *Lehetetlen küldetés?*, pp. 221-222, 227; L. Balla, *Csete István kéziratok prédikációi és Gyalogi János-féle kiadásai. Eredetiség, fordítás, közvetítés a kora újkori jezsuita prédikációkban* [István Csete's Manuscript Sermons and Its Editions by János Gyalogi. Originality, Translation, and Mediation in the Early Modern Jesuit Sermons], Kolozsvár 2017, *Doktori dolgozatok*, 20, pp. 42-44; Father Bzensky's and Csete's information on Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i's alleged confession of faith in the Catholic faith was adopted almost word by word by the Hungarian-Szekler Chronicler, István Lakatos (circa 1635-1706), parish-priest in Cozmeni (*Csikkozsmás*; Romania), in his work entitled in Latin *Siculia*. L. Pap, *The Integration of the Armenian Immigrants in Lakatos' Siculia*, "Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica", 10, 2018, 1, p. 112.

<sup>56</sup> ARSI (= Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Rome, Italy) Fondo Austria. Historia. Vol. 155. Fol. 81/r.-v.; ARSI Fondo Austria. Catalogi Breves. Vol. 126/II. Fol. 455/r.-v., Fol. 536r., Fol. 602r.; PL (= Prímási Levéltár / Hungarian Catholic Primate's Archive, Esztergom, Hungary) AEV (= Archivum Ecclesiasticum Vetus) SPSZ (= Sub Primate Széchenyi). No. 273/2; ELTE EEK Coll. Hev. Cod. 15. Pag. 249; ELTE EKK Coll. Hev. Cod. 16. Pag. 32;

As a contemporary source, the Chronology written by the Armenian Catholic priest and church-historian, Stefan Stefanowicz Roszka (1670-1739), an alumnus of the Urban College in Rome (and Oxendio Virziresco's nephew), only mentioned the circumstances of Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i's death and funeral and that Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i had suffered from illness caused by a kidney stone (*mizargelut'iw*n). He also added that after the funeral, Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i's tombstone was surrounded by light descending from Heaven. On the other hand, Roszka never mentioned of Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i's confession of faith in the Catholic Church in Lwów in 1686.<sup>57</sup>

At the same time, not long ago, newly discovered contemporaneous sources kept at the Holy See's Archives from the years 1686-1687 have emerged, which told the scholarship a different "story" regarding Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i confession of faith and the church-union in Lwów. However, it was true that Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i and Oxendio Virziresco negotiated with Archbishop Vardan Hunanean on the incidental church-union of the Armenians in Transylvania in Lwów. Notwithstanding, these documents unequivocally challenged the claims of Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i's confession of faith. Firstly, Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i never met Nuncio Pallavicini personally in Warsaw or Lwów. He only made an official appointment with Archbishop Vardan Hunanean in Lwów.<sup>58</sup> Secondly, the newly-discovered sources demonstrate that violent disagreements and disputes occurred between the two prelates over the true Christian faith, the Armenian theology and dogmas. Moreover, Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i did not accept Vardan Hunanean's attempts to create the church-union and, furthermore, he refuted the confession of faith in the Catholic Church. Finally, Bishop T'oxat'ec'i returned, disappointed, to Transylvania in the last days of 1686. In other words, the negotiations on the church-union carried out by Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i and Archbishop Vardan Hunanean in Lwów proved to be unsuccessful.<sup>59</sup>

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ELTE EKK Coll. Hev. Cod. 21. Pag. 82; ELTE EKK Coll. Hev. Cod. 29. Pag. 346; ELTE EEK Coll. Kapr. A. (= Collectio Kaprinayana, Első Sorozat / First Series). Cod. 11. Pag. 112.

<sup>57</sup> S. Rōšk'ay, *Žamanakagrut'iw*n, p. 186; Stefan Stefanowicz Roszka in his *Chronology* also mentioned a certain vardapet, Minas T'oxat'ec'i, Armenian Apostolic archbishop and patriarch of Jerusalem, who made a confession of faith in the Catholic Church in 1699. However, this Minas T'oxat'ec'i was not the same person as Minas T'oxat'ec'i, bishop of the Armenians in Transylvania (earlier in Moldavia). APF Acta SC. Vol. 70. Fol. 341r.-346v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 534. Fol. 6r.-7v., Fol. 29r.-32v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 537. Fol. 418r.-v.; PLAEV SK (= Sub Primate Kollonich). No. 361; S. Rōšk'ay, *Žamanakagrut'iw*n, pp. 190-191.

<sup>58</sup> APF Lettere SC. Vol. 76. Fol. 33v.-34v., Fol. 40r., Fol. 41r.-42r., Fol. 135v.-136r.

<sup>59</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 70. Fol. 103r.-105v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 532. Fol. 456r.-457r.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 76. Fol. 90r.-v., Fol. 90v.-91r.; APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 4. Fol. 220v.-221r., Fol. 374r.-375v.; AAV ANV (= Archivio della Nunziatura Apostolica in Vienna). Vol. 196. Fol. 219r.-220r.

In addition, another document written in Italian by Oxendio Virziresco himself in 1687 had recently emerged from the Archive of the Propaganda Fide in Rome, which unanimously confirmed that Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i did not convert to Catholicism or accept the church-union on behalf of the whole Armenian community in Transylvania. The Armenian Catholic missionary addressed this document to Archbishop Edoardo Cybo, the general secretary of the Propaganda Fide, in which he related that Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i deceased as a heretic and not as a Catholic in late 1686.<sup>60</sup> So, it can be safely concluded that Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i did not make a confession of faith in the Catholic Church or accept the church-union with Rome. Consequently, the whole story seems to be a fiction, a legend or a later-fabricated myth.<sup>61</sup>

In any case, because of Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i's death, the Armenians in Transylvania remained leaderless in both spiritual and secular aspect. This, however, facilitated Oxendio Virziresco's position in Transylvania from a religious point of view.<sup>62</sup> Until mid-February, he stayed in Lwów to communicate with Archbishop Vardan Hunanean on his further missionary duties concerning the Armenians in Transylvania that resulted from Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i's death. Thus, Archbishop Vardan Hunanean appointed him as an apostolic administrator on 14 February 1687 in order to perform his pastoral activity with a stronger authorisation.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, after his return to Transylvania in 1687, Oxendio Virziresco continued his missionary work and went on preaching, praying and especially teaching. He was trying to win over the Armenians in Transylvania again for the Roman Catholic Church. Archbishop Vardan Hunanean and Father Bonesana provided him with considerable financial aid and moral support for maintaining the school he had founded in Gheorgheni in 1686.<sup>64</sup> Due to his missionary efforts, between in 1687 and 1689, many Armenians started converting to Catholicism. At the beginning of the year 1689, Giacomo Cantelmi (1645-1702), the titular archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia and a newly-appointed apostolic nuncio to Warsaw, related in his letter addressed to the Propaganda Fide that on behalf of the Armenians in Transylvania, priests, laymen and the representatives of rich merchant families sent to Oxendio Virziresco a letter written in Armenian and signed by them declaring that they were ready to accept the church-union

<sup>60</sup> APF Collegio Urbano. Vol. 3. Fol. 472/r.-v.

<sup>61</sup> K. Nagy, *The Church-Union of the Armenians in Transylvania: A Portrait of Uniate Bishop Oxendio Virziresco*, in: *Far Away from Mount Ararat, Armenian Culture in the Carpathian Basin*, eds B. Kovács, E. Pál, Budapest 2013, pp. 18-19; C. Mutafian, *La Saga des Arméniens de l'Ararat aux Carpates*, Paris 2018, pp. 250-251.

<sup>62</sup> APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 4. Fol. 13/r.-v.

<sup>63</sup> Archbishop Vardan Hunanean informed the Propaganda Fide in Rome about his acts, too. APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 3. Fol. 434/r.-v.+ Fol. 435/v., Fol. 498/r.-v.

<sup>64</sup> APF SC FA. Vol. 3. Fol. 464r., Fol. 488r., Fol. 490r.; ELTE EKK Coll. Hev. Cod. 21. Pag. 77-80.

with Rome. Before long, led by two Armenian priests, namely archpriest (*awagerēc*) Eliay Mēntrul (circa 1630-1700), and vardapet Vardan Martinos Potoczky (1640-1702), a large delegation of the Armenians in Transylvania was sent to Lwów in February 1689, where they personally put forward their request to Archbishop Vardan Hunanean and made a confession of faith in the Roman Catholic Church officially on behalf of the whole Armenian community in Transylvania. The delegation declared solemnly that they were willing to sign the church-union agreement right away and they submitted in all religious matters to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów, and accepted the primacy of the Roman Pope.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, their confession of faith and church-union with the Catholic Church were not related to other important questions or issues at all such as the right way of singing the Trisagium (*Trisagion*) hymn, the Armenian Catholic rite, the usage of language in liturgies, the question of *Filioque procedit-prayer* (*ew bxli y Ordwoyn*), clarifying the term Purgatory (*K'awarann*), the acceptance of the teaching decreed at the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (the problem of Monophysitism) in 451 A.D., or the legal and marital status of the Armenian Catholic clergy, etc. Archbishop Vardan Hunanean had just one definite objective: to extend the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów over all the Armenian Catholics and their future episcopacy's seat in Transylvania.<sup>66</sup>

### Oxendio Virziresco's Appointment as an Armenian Catholic Bishop in Transylvania

After the church-union concluded in 1689, the Armenians from Transylvania remained in Lwów for a while, and composed two letters written in Classical Armenian (*grabar*) that were sent to the Propaganda Fide, asking for helping them appoint Oxendio Virziresco as their Catholic (Uniate) Bishop. Archbishop Vardan Hunanean forwarded these letters to Nuncio Cantelmi. Therefore, concerning this case, the nuncio wrote a letter sent to Rome, in which informed the Holy See that he received letters through Archbishop Hunanean signed by fourteen converted Armenians in Transylvania. On behalf of the community, they expressed their great desire to appoint Oxendio Virziresco as their bishop loyal to the Catholic Church.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 59. Fol. 165r.-169v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 504. Fol. 104r.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 78. Fol. 36/v -37r., Fol. 37/v.-38r., Fol. 102r.; APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 4. Fol. 105/r.-v.; MAMAT MS. No. 1512. Fol. 557r.-560/v.; MAMAT MS. No. 3912. Fol. 344r.; ELTE EKK Coll. Hev. Cod. No. 16. Pag. 34; ELTE EEK G (= Res Transylvanica. Historia). Cod. 522. Fol. 96r., Fol. 137/r.-v.

<sup>66</sup> S. Rōšk'ay, *Žamanakagrut' iwn*, p. 186; G. Petrowicz, *La Chiesa Armena in Polonia*, pp. 87-88; A. Molnár, *Lehetetlen küldetés?*, pp. 222, 229.

<sup>67</sup> These two letters written in Armenian were translated into Latin language at the behest of the Propaganda Fide in Rome. APF CP. Vol. 29. Fol. 644r.+ Fol. 646/v., Fol. 645r.,

To justify their recommendation, they first mentioned his piety and faith, then the school for young people he founded in Gheorgheni in about 1686, and also the fact that he had been working as an apostolic administrator in Transylvania since 14 February 1687.<sup>68</sup> In spite of their church-union concluded in Lwów, the Armenians in Transylvania were not aware at the time how the Roman Catholic tradition of electing and ordaining bishops worked and their ignorance could have met with disapproval on the part of the local Roman Catholic clergy. In any case, the Armenians in Transylvania turned to Pope Innocent XI (1676-1689) and requested him to ordain a bishop for them. They found Oxendio Virziresco as the most capable person of this ecclesiastical office.<sup>69</sup>

Nuncio Cantelmi expressed his full support of the Armenians' appeal. He pointed out the selfless work that Oxendio Virziresco had done for the church-union and named him as a possible candidate for episcopacy. Oxendio Virziresco led the pastoral work as an apostolic administrator (*administrator apostolicus*) of the Catholic Armenians in Transylvania. At the end of his letter, Nuncio Cantelmi mentioned Pope Innocent XI and assured the Armenians that his successor, Pope Alexander VIII (1689-1691) would also bear in mind the Armenians' situation and the appointment of their bishop. Finally, he sent these letters to Rome.<sup>70</sup>

The Propaganda Fide decided on Oxendio Virziresco's appointment as a Bishop at its general session (Congregatio Generalis, Congregazione Generale) held on 23 January 1690. It was then submitted for opinion to Cardinal Giulio Spinola (1612-1691), former apostolic nuncio to Vienna as well as to Cardinal Michał Stefan Radziejowski (1643-1705), the archbishop of Gniezno, Roman Catholic primate of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.<sup>71</sup> Three weeks later, on 14 February 1690, the cardinals of the Propaganda Fide prepared a very long report on the status of the Armenian Catholic Church in Transylvania in which they approved Oxendio Virziresco's bishopric candidacy.<sup>72</sup> However, they did not make a decision but asked for a new investigation. Therefore, before the ultimate decision, Secretary Edoardo Cybo<sup>73</sup> intended to double-check very thoroughly whether it was necessary to establish an Armenian Catholic (diocesan) episcopacy in Transylvania and if it would not clash with the interest of the local Catholic Church in Hungary and Transylvania. Secretary Cybo himself agreed with Car-

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Fol. 647/r.-v., Fol. 648/r.-v.; K. Nagy, *Two Letters of the Armenians in Transylvania to the Holy See from 1689*, "Revista Archivelor – Archives Review", 86, 2009, 2, pp. 226-243.

<sup>68</sup> APF CP. Vol. 29. Fol. 610r.-612r.

<sup>69</sup> APF CP. Vol. 29. Fol. 636r.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 79. Fol. 15r.

<sup>70</sup> APF CP. Vol. 29. Fol. 630r.

<sup>71</sup> APF CP. Vol. 29. Fol. 613r., Fol. 628r.-629/v.

<sup>72</sup> APF CP. Vol. 29. Fol. 636/r.-v.

<sup>73</sup> In the meantime, Edoardo Cybo was appointed as a titular (Latin) patriarch of Constantinople in 1689 by the Roman pope. *Hierarchia Catholica*, pp. 170, 352.

dinal Spinola's suggestion that the would-be Armenian Catholic episcopacy in Transylvania should not be dependent from the Armenian Catholic archbishop of Lwów either.<sup>74</sup>

The cardinals of the Propaganda Fide could not make a final decision. Nuncio Giacomo Cantelmi was staying at the Holy See in Rome, because he was made cardinal by Pope Alexander VIII around this time. He urged the cardinals regarding the matters of the Armenian Catholic Church in Transylvania to speed up the decision-making process.<sup>75</sup> He also recommended them to appoint and ordain Oxendio Virziresco as the bishop of the Armenian Catholic Church in Transylvania.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, in the years 1689-1690, Nuncio Cantelmi was almost constantly on the move between Lwów, Rome, and Warsaw having diplomatic discussions about the church-union of the Armenians in Transylvania and the future Armenian Catholic episcopacy.<sup>77</sup> The so-called Particular Congregation (Congregatio Particularis, Congregazione Particolare)<sup>78</sup> of the Propaganda Fide had a session on 1 March 1690 with the Armenian Catholic episcopacy in Transylvania on the agenda. The Propaganda Fide's cardinals stated that Oxendio Virziresco was directly subordinated in all matters to the Propaganda Fide and not to Lwów. This Particular Congregation allocated a salary of a hundred Roman scudos (*scudi romani*) to him. They also decided that the Armenian archiepiscopacy and the Armenian College in Lwów would hand over the Armenian missions in Transylvania to Oxendio Virziresco.<sup>79</sup> Finally, they suggested that the Propaganda Fide would exercise the ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Armenian Catholic episcopacy of Transylvania, stating that the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów had no jurisdiction over it. The next general session of the Propaganda Fide held on 1 April 1690 accepted and approved this decision.<sup>80</sup> Consequently, the Armenians of Transylvania were detached from the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów as far as ecclesiastical jurisdiction is concerned.<sup>81</sup> Next, Secretary Edoardo Cybo instructed Father Francesco Bonesana on 3 June 1690 to inform Archbishop Vardan Hunanean of the final decision made by the Propaganda Fide. Thus, the Propaganda Fide also recommended to appoint Oxendio Virziresco only as a titular bishop in order to avoid a clash with the interest of the Hungarian Catholic Church's interest since there was a separate Catholic (Latin Rite) episcopacy

<sup>74</sup> APF SOCG. Vol. 506. Fol. 64r.

<sup>75</sup> APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 4. Fol. 142/r.-v.; ELTE EKK Coll. Hev. Cod. 21. Pag. 83.

<sup>76</sup> APF CP. Vol. 29. Fol. 651r.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 79. Fol. 129r.-132/v.

<sup>77</sup> APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 4. Fol. 22r.

<sup>78</sup> This congregation (or session) of the Propaganda Fide was primarily engaged in the thorough investigations of bishops' appointment in connection with the Catholic missions. *Litterae Missionariorum*, pp. 59-63.

<sup>79</sup> APF CP. Vol. 29. Fol. 609r.

<sup>80</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 59. Fol. 33r.-34r.; APF CP. Vol. 29. Fol. 628r.

<sup>81</sup> APF Lettere SC. Vol. 79. Fol. 134r.-135/v.

and diocese, with the centre in Alba Iulia in Transylvania that had been vacant for a long time (since 1601).<sup>82</sup>

Archbishop Vardan Hunanean reacted strongly against the Holy See's and the Propaganda Fide's final decision about Oxendio Virziresco's appointment as the bishop of the Armenians in Transylvania. He had sent many letters from Lwów addressed to the Holy See, the Propaganda Fide, and the pope, appealing and demanding of them to change their mind concerning this decision. But his appeals fell on deaf ears in the Holy See's higher circles in Rome. Finally, Archbishop Vardan Hunanean had no other choice but to accept this decision made as *fait accompli*.<sup>83</sup>

So, in light of this, Pope Alexander VIII promulgated two papal briefs (*breve*) on 2 and 3 October 1690, respectively, in which he, officially and solemnly, appointed Oxendio Virziresco as a titular bishop of Aladia in Hibernia (now Killalich in Northern-Ireland) and authorised him as a apostolic vicar (*vicarius apostolicus ad Armenos per Transylvaniam*) to bring his missionary activities initiated in 1685 to fruition.<sup>84</sup> Of course, the pope made sure that Oxendio Virziresco was not appointed as a (diocesan) bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in Transylvania. The Holy See weighed the situation of the Catholicism in Transylvania. The

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<sup>82</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 59. Fol. 151r.-154/v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 503. Fol. 111r.-112/v.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 78. Fol. 172/v.-173r.; APF SC Fondo Ungheria e Transilvania. Vol. 2. Fol. 309/r.-v.; ARSI Fondo Austria. Historia. Vol. 149. Fol. 76r.; ARSI Fondo Austria. Historia. Vol. 155. Fol. 75/r.-v.; GYFL (= Gyulafehérvári Főegyházmegyei Levéltár / Archive of the Transylvanian Roman Catholic Archdiocese in Alba Iulia, Alba Iulia / Gyulafehérvár, Romania) I/1a. (= Püspöki Iratok; Iktatókönyvek / Bishopric's Acts and Registers). No. 1. Pag. 6. (1689. XI. 3.); GYFL I/4 (= Canonica visitationes). Vol. 3. Fol. 247r.; MNL-OL (= Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára / National Archive of Hungary, Budapest, Hungary) A 57 (= Magyar Kancelláriai Levéltár / Archive of Hungarian Chancery, Királyi Könyvek / Royal Books – Liber Regii). Vol. 20. No. 101. Pag. 385-386; F. Gallá, *Ferences misszionáriusok Magyarországon: a Királyságban és Erdélyben a 17-18. században* [Franciscan Missionaries in Hungary: in the Kingdom and Transylvania in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries], ed. I. Fazekas, Budapest–Róma 2005, *Collectanea Vaticana Hungariae*, 2, pp. 256-286; B. V. Mihalik, *A Szentszék és a katolikus restauráció ügye. Illyés András püspök kinevezése (1696)* [The Holy See and the Case of Catholic Restoration. András Illyés's Appointment as a Roman Catholic Bishop in Transylvania in 1696], in: *Catholice reformare: katolikus egyház a Fejedelemség korában* [Catholice reformare: Catholic Church during the Period of Transylvanian Principality], eds D. Diósi, J. Marton, Budapest–Kolozsvár 2018, pp. 283-304; B. V. Mihalik, *Az erdélyi katolikus újjászerveződés ügye az 1690-es évek elején* [The Case of the Re-Catholicisation in Transylvania at the Beginning of 1690's], in: *Reformer vagy lázadó? Bethlen Miklós és kora* [A Reformist or An Insurgent? Count Miklós Bethlen and His Age], eds I. Horn, Gy. Laczházi, Budapest 2020, pp. 123-135.

<sup>83</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 62. Fol. 125r.-128/v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 512. Fol. 180/r.-v.

<sup>84</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 60. Fol. 14r.-19/v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 506. Fol. 61/r.-v., Fol. 63r.-64/v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 507. Fol. 87r.-88/v.; APF SC Fondo Armeni. Vol. 4. Fol. 82r.; S. Rōšk'ay, *Žamanakgrut' iwn*, p. 187.

manner, in which Oxendio Virziresco was appointed as a bishop with a titular episcopacy, can be interpreted in the context of the controversies that had lasted for several decades regarding appointing the bishop of Transylvania.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, the Propaganda Fide was well aware that, despite the fact that the political influence of the Viennese court was increasingly growing, the political position of the Protestants in Transylvania was still very strong, and they could easily expel the Armenian Catholic bishop referring to the fact that the *Diploma Leopoldinum* mentioned an episcopal vicar (and not a bishop) only and did not say anything about a Catholic episcopacy.<sup>86</sup> Oxendio Virziresco must have been informed that he had to obey some unwritten laws or customs after his appointment in order not to be sent away from Transylvania: that is, not to show that he was subjected directly to the Holy See in Rome, to dress in very simple clothes as a common priest, to exercise only spiritual jurisdiction, restrain from acquiring estates, and so on. Finally, Oxendio Virziresco was officially consecrated as a bishop only ten months after his official appointment on 31 July 1691 in the Armenian Catholic Cathedral in Lwów according to the Latin and Armenian Catholic rites. The act of his ordination was celebrated by Archbishop Vardan Hunanean, Konstanty Samuel Lipski (1625-1698), Catholic (Latin rite) archbishop of Lwów, and Andrea Santacroce (1655-1712), the apostolic nuncio to Warsaw, titular archbishop of Seleucia in Isauria. Then, the newly ordained bishop left for Transylvania where the Propaganda Fide assigned Gheorgheni as the capital of his temporary

<sup>85</sup> APF SOCG. Vol. 510. Fol. 95/r.-v., Fol. 94r., Fol. 101/r.-v.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 79. Fol. 133/r.-v., Fol. 134/v.-135/v.

<sup>86</sup> The *Diploma Leopoldinum* itself was a legal document, which determined the basic government and legal status of the Principality of Transylvania in the Habsburg Monarchy (after Prince Mihály Apafi I's death). The document was drafted by Count Miklós Bethlen (1642-1716), chancellor of Transylvania. The document was approved officially by Emperor and King Leopold I (1657-1705) in Vienna on 16 October 1690, which was announced in the Transylvanian Diet in Fogaraș (Fogaras, Fogarasch; Romania) on 4 December 1691. The *Diploma Leopoldinum* restored civil administration in the Principality of Transylvania, and furthermore, it confirmed the traditional liberties of the Three Nations in Transylvania (Hungarians, Saxons, and Szeklers) and the freedom of the four "received" religions (Calvinist, Lutheran, Anti-Trinitarian, and Roman Catholic Churches in Transylvania) known in Latin as *religio recepta*. But in December 1691, Emperor and King Leopold I issued a reformulated version of this *Diploma*, in which the confirmation of the elected Prince Mihály Apafi II (1676-1713) was omitted. He established a Gubernium (Governorship), constituted in Sibiu (Nagyszeben / Hermannstadt) in 1691 for the administration of Transylvania. By the year 1693, the Court Chancery for Transylvania was established, and thus the Principality of Transylvania gradually got under control of the Viennese Court, losing its former independency. On this *Diploma*, see: Zs. Trócsányi, *A Habsburg vezető elit és Erdély (1685-1699)* [The Habsburg Political Elite and Transylvania, 1685-1699], "Jogtudományi Közlöny", 41, 1986, 8, pp. 369-375; T. Oborni, *Erdélyi országgyűlések a 16-17. században* [Transylvanian Diets in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries], Budapest 2018, pp. 360-373; L. Pap, *The Integration*, pp. 105-106.

episcopacy's see.<sup>87</sup> Following Oxendio Virziresco's consecration as a bishop in 1691, the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów did not intervene in the inner life of the Armenian Catholic Church of Transylvania directly until the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>88</sup>

## Conclusion

To sum up, the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów was largely instrumental in the church-union of the Armenians in Transylvania. Moreover, the archiepiscopacy's role in initiating the missions and creating their church-union amongst the Armenians in Transylvania has proven to be unquestionable. In other words, the missions among them, the aim of which was to create the aforementioned church-union were initiated by the archiepiscopacy, namely Bishop Deodatus Nersesowicz as a coadjutor, in 1684. The intention of the archiepiscopacy to unite them with the Catholic Church was that Lwów had ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Armenians living in Crimea and Moldavia, before its church-union in 1630. In this manner, the Armenians in Transylvania did not avoid the spiritual and ecclesiastical leadership of Lwów because they escaped from the countries for example the Principality of Moldavia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1668 and 1672, which were subdued to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów. Therefore, this claim of the archiepiscopacy was accepted by the Holy See and the Propaganda Fide in Rome as well.

According to the newly-discovered sources emerged from the Holy See's archives in Rome and the Vatican City, Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i' had never made his alleged confession of faith in the Roman Catholic Church in Lwów at the end of 1686. They also show that hectic religious disputes and quarrels occurred between the Armenians prelates in Lwów on the teaching of Armenian theology and christianity. In fact, they were never resolved. The news of his alleged confession of faith were spread over the Catholic Church ten years after his death in the 1690s by the Jesuit fathers and chroniclers (namely Rudolf Bzensky SJ, and István Csete SJ), when the Counter-Reformation was strongly getting under-way in Transylvania. They propagated it as a historical fact (and also a kind of Catholic propaganda) in the historiography. In this manner, the Jesuits fathers (and chroniclers) managed to lead astray their contemporaries as well as posterity with

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<sup>87</sup> Oxendio Virziresco's principal consecrator was Archbishop Vardan Hunanean. APF Acta SC. Vol. 61. Fol. 84r.-87v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 510. Fol. 97r.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 80. Fol. 65r.-v.; APF SC FA. Vol. 4. Fol. 140r., Fol. 146r.-v.; APF Collegi Vari. Vol. 2. Fol. 704r.-705v.; ELTE EKK G. Cod. 522. Fol. 173r.-v.; PL AEV SPSZ. No. 273/2.

<sup>88</sup> APF Acta SC. Vol. 152. Fol. 378r.-395v.; APF Acta SC. Vol. 154. Fol. 302r.-310v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 861. Fol. 65r.-81v.; APF SOCG. Vol. 867. Fol. 99r.-v.+ Fol. 102v.; APF Lettere SC. Vol. 240. Fol. 730r.-734v.

their story. However, during his ecclesiastical office, all the reports and letters were written by Oxendio Virziresco, as an eyewitness of the events, and sent to the Holy See, and the Propaganda Fide, ultimately denied Minas T'oxat'ec'i's confession of faith and possible church-union with Rome in Lwów.<sup>89</sup>

At the same time, the church-union of Armenians was closely related to Oxendio Virziresco delegated as a missionary to Transylvania in 1685 by the Propaganda Fide's decision with the acceptance of the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów. Further on, the Propaganda Fide decided that Oxendio Virziresco should be subordinated to the archiepiscopacy in Lwów in the scope of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, too. The archiepiscopacy appointed Oxendio Virziresco as an apostolic administrator in order to provide his mission begun in 1685 with greater authorisation on 14 February 1687. The church-union of the Armenians in Transylvania was concluded in Lwów in the Archbishop Vardan Hunanean's presence in February 1689. Thus, the archiepiscopacy highly supported Oxendio Virziresco's candidacy and appointment as a bishop of the Armenians in Transylvania. However, significant political changes occurred in Transylvania. In 1690, after Prince Mihály Apafi I's death, as a consequence of the Great Turkish War against the Ottoman Empire, the Principality of Transylvania was reintegrated into the Habsburg Monarchy. This event radically affected the Armenians in Transylvania, too. The Viennese Court, which strongly supported Catholicism, and the Hungarian Catholic Church intended to reorganise the Catholic episcopacy in Transylvania under the auspice of the Counter-Reformation, which had been vacant since 1601 as a consequence of the strong presence of Protestantism. In spite of the fact that the Holy See and the Propaganda Fide firmly backed Oxendio Virziresco's candidacy and appointment as a bishop of the Armenians in Transylvania, they had to take the Hungarians Church's interests into consideration. For this reason, by the appointment of Oxendio Virziresco as a Bishop in 1690, the Holy See removed the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów. The Armenians of Transylvania with Bishop Oxendio Virziresco were subjected to ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Propaganda Fide in Rome in a direct manner. The Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of Lwów, including Bishop Deodatus Nersesowicz and Archbishop Vardan Hunanean, strongly protested against the Holy See's decision but their complains in that scope addressed to Rome were totally neglected. The last official act of the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy on the issue of the Armenians in Transylvania was Oxendio Virziresco's consecration as a bishop on 30 July 1691 in Lwów. Therefore, in the forthcoming decades until the 1780s, the Armenian Catholic Archeparchy of

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<sup>89</sup> K. Nagy, *Did Vardapet Minas Tokhatetsi, Bishop of the Armenians in Transylvania, Make a Confession of Faith in the Roman Catholic Church?*, "Haigazian – Armenological Review", 31, 2011, pp. 434-435.

Lwów had absolutely nothing to do with the further fate of the Armenian Catholic Church in Transylvania.

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### **Կորնել Նագի, Լվովի և Հռոմի միջև: Տրանսիլվանիայի հայերը և Լվովի հայ կաթողիկ արքեպիսկոպոսությունը**

**Համառոտագիր.** 1988-ին Հայ Եկեղեցու նշանավոր պատմաբան Տ. Գժեգոժ Պետրովիչը (1916-2004), իտալերեն լեզվով գիրք է հրատարակել՝ նվիրված 1686-1954 թվականներին Լվովի հայ կաթողիկ (միասնական) արքեպիսկոպոսության պատմությանը: Աշխատության ենթագլուխներից մեկը նվիրեց 17-րդ դարի վերջում Տրանսիլվանիայի հայերի եկեղեցական միությանը, գլխավորապես հիմնվելով Հռոմի՝ Հավատքի Տարածման Միաբանության (Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide) արխիվում պահվող փաստաթղթերի վրա: Վերջին երկու տասնամյակների ընթացքում կատարված հետազոտությանները ցույց տվեցին, որ վերոնշված ենթաբաժինը շատ ուրվագծային էր և թույլ զարգացած: Պետրովիչը Տրանսիլվանիայի հայերի պատմության վերաբերյալ իր փաստարկները հիմնել է 19-րդ և 20-րդ դարերում լույս տեսած և արդեն իսկ հնացած ուսումնասիրությունների վրա: Սույն հոդվածում նորովին վերլուծվում է Տրանսիլվանիայի հայերի եկեղեցական միության հիմնախնդիրը եկեղեցու-պատմության տեսանկյունից: Առաջին հերթին ցուցադրվում է Լվովի հայ կաթողիկե արքեպիսկոպոսության դերը 1681–1691 թվականներին հայկական միության ձևավորման գործում: Օգտագործվել և քննադատաբար վերլուծվել են Հայաստանի, Ավստրիայի, Հունգարիայի, Իտալիայի, Ռումինիայի

և Վատիկանի արխիվներում պահվող մասնակի հայտնի կամ նոր հայտնաբերված ձեռագիր աղբյուրները:

**Քանալի բառեր.** Լվով, Հռոմ, Սուրբ Աթոռ, Տրանսիլվանիա, եկեղեցական միություն, կաթոլիկություն, Հայ կաթոլիկ (միասնական) եկեղեցի