

**THE LIGHT OF  
THY COUNTENANCE  
GREEK CATHOLICS  
IN HUNGARY**

METROPOLITAN  
CHURCH  
SUI IURIS OF  
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## IV.2.1 From the Hajdúdorog Movement to the Creation of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog (1868–1912)

Tamás Véghseő

Embedded in the context of early-modern age confessionalisation,<sup>1</sup> initiatives leading to the creation of the Greek Catholic Churches in various regions of the Kingdom of Hungary were started from the first decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> Following the unions concluded in the Southern Territories (Márca, 1611),<sup>3</sup> in the north-eastern counties (Uzhhorod/*Ungvár*, 1646),<sup>4</sup> in the Partium (last decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>5</sup> and in Transylvania (turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries)<sup>6</sup> – as a result of several centuries of development – Greek Catholic ecclesiastical organisation evolved gradually. The liturgical language of the Eparchy of Mukacheve (*Munkács*) of ancient foundation yet canonically established only in 1771, as well as of the Eparchy of Prešov (*Eperjes*) created out of it in 1818 was Old Slavonic (or, more accurately, Church Slavonic). By contrast, in the Eparchies of Făgăraş (*Fogaras*) and Oradea (*Nagyvárad*) established in 1721 and 1777 respectively, as well as in the Eparchies of Gherla (*Szamosújvár*) and Lugoj (*Lugos*) established in conjunction with the 1853 creation of the Romanian Greek Catholic Metropolitanate – primarily under the influence of the activities of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Protestant Princes of Transylvania – services were conducted in Romanian.

In the evolution of the Greek Catholic communities with a Hungarian national identity in these eparchies, population movements beginning at the time of the Ottoman-Hapsburg wars and concluding with the resettlements of the period following the expulsion of the Ottoman Turks from Hungary played an important part. The most ancient area of Hungarian Greek Catholics, the majority of the villages of historic Szabolcs County, were depopulated in the course of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. As the investigations of Russian historian Alexei Petrov reveal, a considerable proportion of the population fled from the military conflicts to the north, to today's Transcarpathia, where

they would exchange their language and become Rusyn and Byzantine-rite. In the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the villages of Szabolcs County were, among others, repopulated by Rusyns, with the names of those previously escaping from the area likely to be found in their ranks. The religion of the new inhabitants of the Szabolcs villages was adopted by the remaining Hungarian population as well, which would cede the medieval church of the particular settlement to the Greek Catholic community, provided it had been left intact. In everyday language use, however, the language of the indigenous residents came to be prevalent: The newcomers adopted the names of settlements, fields, meadows, brooks, etc.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, demand for the use of Hungarian appeared even in church language use. The late 18<sup>th</sup> century saw a succession of Hungarian translations of the liturgy, and Hungarian would also become the language of church sermons in a number of places.<sup>8</sup>

Another important centre of the Hungarian Greek Catholic community is Southern Zemplén. During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, this region sustained substantial population losses as well. Concerning the evolution of Greek Catholic communities in the area, Péter Kónya, a historian from Prešov, has demonstrated that, as of the 1670s, as well as after 1711, when the re-Catholicisation of the region gathered new momentum, numerous Calvinist Hungarian families would become Greek Catholic. Furthermore, many of the Rusyns planted in villages of a mixed ethnic composition became Magyarised, as was the case in the villages of Szabolcs.<sup>9</sup>

Among Hungarian Greek Catholic communities, Hajdúdorog, the most populous parish in the Eparchy of Mukacheve, merits special attention.<sup>10</sup> The denominational features of the town remaining dominant even today developed in the first years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the Hajduks of Stephen Bocskai

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<sup>1</sup> On early-modern age confessionalisation and the evolution of the Greek Catholic Churches, see: Véghseő, Tamás. *Unió, integráció, modernizáció: A Rómával való egység háttere a munkácsi püspökségben (17. század közepe)*, *Athanasiana*, 32(2010), 9–36.

<sup>2</sup> For sources on early-modern age unions, see: Nilles, 1885.

<sup>3</sup> On the union in the Southern Territories of historic Hungary, see: Šimrak, 1931; Horányi, 1936; Džudžar, 1986; Ikić, 1989; Molnár, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> On the Union of Uzhhorod, see: Hodinka, 1909; Lacko, 1959; Lacko, 1965 and Véghseő, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> On the development of the Greek Catholic Church in the Partium, see: Ghitta, 2008; Gorun, 2008 and Véghseő, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> From the extensive literature on the union of Transylvanian Romanians, see: Bârlea, 1990; Suttner, 2005 and Suttner, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Udvari, 1994, 109–111.

<sup>8</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2014, 51–55.

<sup>9</sup> Kónya, Péter. A zempléni magyar görög-katolikusok származásához, in: Buzalic, Alexandru – Dușe, Călin Ioan (Eds.). *Biserică și societate*, Cluj, 2015, 289–300.

<sup>10</sup> Udvari, 1990, 119.

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(Prince of Transylvania and Hungary from 1605 to 1606) settled in the region and in the town of Hajdúdorog. Although the majority of the Hajduks, as well as of the six towns of Hajdú County settled by the Hajduks, were Calvinists, Hajdúdorog was colonised by Orthodox Hajduks called 'Rascians', suggesting that they must have been groups mainly relocating from the southern portions of the country, holding on not to their language but to their religion. Similarly to the villages of Szabolcs, Hajdúdorog also endured massive losses during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, the market town survived the troubled times and became the centre of Byzantine-rite Christianity in the region. For historical reasons (cf. the memory of Bocskai) and under the influence of the nearby Calvinist towns of the Hajduks, in the identity of the residents of Hajdúdorog, affiliation with the Hungarian nation came to be an essential component.

In some parts of Szatmár and Bihar Counties, processes akin to those in Szabolcs and Southern Zemplén took place in a Romanian–Hungarian relation. In certain villages of Szabolcs, besides Rusyns, Romanians were also planted, assimilating as the Rusyns did.

Thus, regarding the origins of Hungarian Greek Catholics, two sources may be identified: the conversion of an ethnically Hungarian population to the Byzantine Rite and the Magyarisation of communities with a Rusyn and Romanian ethnic background.

From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Greek Catholic communities with a Hungarian national identity promoted the use of Hungarian in liturgical praxis. The movement of national awakening commencing with the Diet of the years 1790 and 1791, with the programme of cultivating the Hungarian language featured prominently, had an impact on Hungarian Greek Catholics as well. As tradition has it, the parish priest of Hajdúdorog, András Bacsinszky (parish priest from 1763 and, subsequently, Bishop of Mukacheve from 1772 to 1809), supported the liturgical use of the Hungarian language.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, it is not a matter of accident that György Kritsfalusi, a teacher from Uzhhorod and author of one of the first surviving translations of the liturgy into Hungarian, dedicated his work to him in 1795. In his dedication, Kritsfalusi writes:

'... not only ever since I have had the honour to reside in this city of Ungvár (i.e. Uzhhorod) but in other places, too, I have been exhorted to undertake this Work by some benefactors of mine in every way' (... *nem tsak a' miólta ezen Ungvár várossában szerentsém vagyon lakni, hanem máshelyütt-is némelly jóakaróimtól ezen Munkának fel-vállalására minden módon ösztönöztem*).<sup>12</sup> This remark is a reference to the fact that, among Hungarian-speaking Greek Catholics, a pronounced demand for a Hungarian translation of the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom had been registered by then. The young teacher working at an episcopal see must have been motivated to prepare his translation by the prospect of it serving as the basis for an official Hungarian-language edition once it secured the Bishop's imprimatur. Translations of the liturgy would, however, circulate only in manuscript for a long time;<sup>13</sup> the first to be published in print was a prayer book containing liturgical texts and private prayers in 1825.<sup>14</sup>

A series of acts passed by Reform-era parliaments seeking to expand the scope of the usage of the Hungarian language, closing with the declaration of Hungarian as the language of the state in 1844, spurred Hungarian Greek Catholics to action as well. In those decades, the counties also made a significant contribution to the cultivation and propagation of the Hungarian language. All this would result in the use of Hungarian becoming increasingly connected to affiliation with the Hungarian nation and loyalty to the state at the level of local communities. This way, Hungarian Greek Catholics found it ever harder to bear the situation that, while they identified themselves as Hungarian and spoke Hungarian in their everyday lives, the majority of society would question their Hungarian identity and loyalty on account of the Old Slavonic or Romanian language they used in their church services. Despite the instruction of the liturgical language in schools, the number of those understanding church services declined rapidly, frequently generating instances of mishearing bordering on the ridiculous.<sup>15</sup>

The question of introducing the Hungarian language in the liturgy was for the first time exposed nationally in the Parliament of 1843 and 1844. Via their envoy, the people of Hajdúdorog requested that Greek Catholic liturgical books be translated into Hungarian

<sup>11</sup> Udvari, 1997, 139. Most recently on Bishop András Bacsinszky: Véghseő, 2014; Janka, 2014; Vasil', 2014 and Véghseő, 2016a.

<sup>12</sup> The text of the liturgy translation was published by Hiador Sztripszky: Szabó – Sztripszky, 1913, 463–501.

<sup>13</sup> The latest edition of two hand-written 19<sup>th</sup>-century *Euchologia*: Nyírán, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> *Imádságos könyvetske*, Kassa, 1825. For its description, see in the present volume: Cat. IV.38.

<sup>15</sup> E.g., with the simplest Trinitarian formula: 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, [and of the Holy Spirit. Amen]' – *Otsa i syna? – Adsz-e szénát?* (Hungarian for 'Will you give me hay?')

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and published at the expense of the state. Even though, in principle, the idea was widely endorsed, Parliament failed to pass legislation on the required amount.<sup>16</sup> Attending Parliament as a young clerk, Lajos Farkas (1821–1894), a native of Hajdúdorog and the initiator of the organised movement of Hungarian Greek Catholics, as well as its leader for decades, on that occasion, had the first chance to experience the indifference and ungenerosity of national politics about Hungarian Greek Catholics.<sup>17</sup>

It was not long before the obstacles to the liturgical use of the Hungarian language became obvious in ecclesiastical contexts as well. In 1845, the priest Antal Petrus conducted the whole liturgy in Hungarian in Hajdúdorog, prompting protest from the Archdiocesan Authority of Eger. The letter sent to the Bishop of Mukacheve cited a fact that would be reiterated so many times afterwards: Hungarian was not a canonised liturgical language, and hence its use was not permitted.<sup>18</sup> In spite of the difficulties, the Hajdúdorog community kept the issue of translating and publishing liturgical books on the agenda. The formation of the first Hungarian government responsible to Parliament (17 March 1848) shone a light of hope that the cause of the Hungarian Greek Catholics would receive support at the highest levels of politics. Such a hint is found in the letter of József Eötvös, Minister of Religion and Education, to Vazul Popovics, Bishop of Mukacheve (1837–1864), dated 19 June 1848, stating that, on his part, he was ready to lend all manner of support for the publication of liturgical books translated into Hungarian.<sup>19</sup> This light of hope was extinguished by the eruption of the War of Independence and its subsequent suppression. In the Bach Era, as opposed to Hungarian national questions, the demands of ethnic groups were given priority. From the perspective of Hungarian Greek Catholics, support for the governance of Romanian Greek Catholics was of special significance. As, during the Hungarian War of Independence, Transylvanian Romanians had evidenced their fidelity to the Hapsburg Dynasty, they could justifiably count on support for their national demands. Their requests for the development of their ecclesiastical organisation were heeded in 1853, when the Monarch elevated the Eparchy of Făgăraş to the rank of

archbishopric under the name Alba Iulia (*Gyulafehérvár*)-Făgăraş, assigned the Eparchy of Oradea, previously under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Esztergom, to the new Archbishopric and established new episcopates in Gherla and Lugoj. Thereby, the new Romanian Greek Catholic Ecclesiastical Province of Transylvania was created, with its ethnic character clearly accentuated. A particularly strong and, thanks to the schooling system, efficient ecclesiastical organisation was successful in representing Romanian national interests, even vis-à-vis the efforts of Hungarian Greek Catholics, among others.

In this unfavourable political situation, preparing further Hungarian translations and removing the hurdles from the path to the liturgical use of the Hungarian language seemed to be a viable course of action. It was under such circumstances that *Óhitű imádságos- és énekes könyv* [Old Believers' Prayer- and Song-Book], edited by Ignác Roskovics, a priest from Hajdúböszörmény, was published in 1862;<sup>20</sup> its use would spread widely. In 1863, the people of Hajdúdorog submitted a petition about the use of the Hungarian language to Vazul Popovics, Bishop of Mukacheve (1837–1864). The hierarch appeared to be open in relation to granting approval but asserted that this could only happen if official and verified liturgical translations were made. In his circular issued on 22 May, he was, however, obliged to order that, until the official approval of Hungarian, the Divine Liturgy was to be celebrated exclusively in Old Slavonic, and only certain parts (the Gospel, the prayer 'O Lord, I believe and confess...' and hymns) could be conducted in Hungarian.<sup>21</sup> The ordinance was issued at the behest of János Scitovszky, Archbishop of Esztergom (1849–1866), whose stance on the question of language use was determined by the apprehensions of the Roman Catholic Church. As, in many settlements, Greek Catholics lived side-by-side with Roman Catholics, it was feared that demand for the use of Hungarian would be articulated among the Latin-rite faithful as well. This fear profoundly defined the thinking of Roman Catholic bishops, who ignored the fact that the attitude of the Eastern Church to national languages traditionally differed from that of the Western Church.

<sup>16</sup> Petrus, 1897, 20–21.

<sup>17</sup> Farkas, 1896, 56.

<sup>18</sup> Petrus, 1897, 22–23.

<sup>19</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2014, 66–67.

<sup>20</sup> Debrecen, 1862. By 1898, a total of eight editions had been published. On liturgical publications in Hungarian, see: Ivancsó, 2006. For a description, see in the present volume, Cat. IV.40.

<sup>21</sup> *Emlékkönyv*, 1901, 79.

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The intervention of the Archbishop of Esztergom compelled the Hajdúdorog community to realise that, concerning the question of language use, they were to move beyond the eparchial context. They were encouraged even by a more liberal political climate to advance their claims publicly nationwide again. In 1866, they presented petitions to the Monarch, the Prince-Primate, the Lord Chancellor's Office and to Parliament. In these petitions, they declared their national identity ('... we are Hungarians and wish to remain so to eternity') and requested that this be acknowledged. They painfully observed that, despite living in their own country as Hungarians, they were mocked as *Muszkas* (Hungarian folk term for Russians) or *Oláhs* (Hungarian folk term for Romanians) due to the language of their rite. They cited the example of the Romanian Greek Catholics, who had also been granted the privilege to develop their ecclesiastical organisation shortly before. They were justified in posing the question: Once the Romanian Greek Catholics could use their native language in the liturgy and have their own ecclesiastical organisation in Hungary, why could the Hungarian Greek Catholics not claim the same? At the same time, they also alluded to the fact that the intensifying nationality movements posed a serious threat to the Hungarian Greek Catholics. They repeatedly requested that Byzantine-rite liturgical books be translated and published at public expense, and they voiced their demand for the creation of a separate eparchy for the Hungarian Greek Catholics, or – in case this was not possible for financial reasons – a vicariate with its seat in Hajdúdorog.<sup>22</sup>

The afterlife of the petitions had a sobering effect on the people of Hajdúdorog: They would never receive a reply from anywhere. Notwithstanding their references to national interests, the 200-thousand-strong Hungarian Greek Catholic population and its rightful claims, they were unable to overcome the stereotypes ingrained in the public mind. Public opinion would closely associate the Eastern Rite with the world of ethnic groups and was unable to abandon the notion that 'Hungarian identity' and 'Byzantine Rite' were two mutually exclusive concepts. Albeit officially unarticulated, the idea that those Greek Catholics who wished to identify with the Hungarian nation in their emotions and language use ought to opt for rite- or denomination-changing prevailed tacitly. In contrast to this proffered option, the road on which Greek

Catholics – with the people of Hajdúdorog in the vanguard – staunchly adhering to the Byzantine Rite, the Catholic faith and Hungarian identity set out was one of struggle for acceptance and tribulations.

Whereas, in Hajdúdorog, the liturgical use of the Hungarian language in practice was mostly ensured by the town government, in other places, church authorities would enact restrictive measures. Incidents in Makó underscoring the gravity of the conflicts stemming from the employment of Hungarian as a liturgical language happened to coincide with the petitions of 1866. The town's nearly 2000-member Greek Catholic community had used Hungarian as a church language for decades. In 1866, a Romanian speaking minority of fifty intended to terminate this custom, and they were supported in their effort by Iosif Papp-Szilágyi, Bishop of Oradea (1863–1873). In the antagonistic situation disrupting the internal peace of the community for years, the Bishop adopted the position that services were by no means to be conducted in Hungarian. He was determined to force the residents of Makó to hire a Romanian school master and cantor, who would also be responsible for leading church singing.<sup>23</sup> The actions of Bishop Papp-Szilágyi justified the fears cited by the people of Hajdúdorog in their petitions in the year 1866: An alien liturgical language was a threat to Hungarian identity and could lead to the assimilation of Hungarian communities.

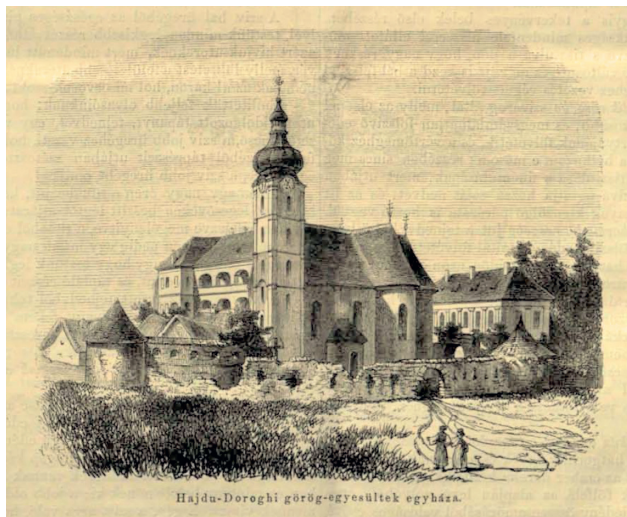
The people of Hajdúdorog recognised that it did not suffice to make references to the Hungarian Greek Catholic faithful of other towns and villages, but they should join forces and bring their cause to the public's attention nationwide. Even in their petition to the House of Representatives in 1866, they sought permission to hold a national conference for Hungarian Greek Catholics. This national congress was convened for 16 April 1868 in Hajdúdorog. 33 parishes delegated their representatives (as many as 220 of them), and 20 priests attended the event. In addition, 19 parishes and 11 priests expressed their approval of the resolutions in writing. As a result of the deliberations, the goals to be attained were formulated: 1. the creation of a Hungarian bishopric with its seat in Hajdúdorog; 2. the translation and publication of liturgical books at public expense; 3. the affirmation of Hungarian as a liturgical language. The congress established a Standing Executive Committee with Lajos Farkas, Lieutenant of Hajdúdorog,

<sup>22</sup> Farkas, 1896, 24–41.

<sup>23</sup> Janka, György. A magyar liturgikus nyelv és a makói görög katolikusok, *Athanasiana*, 9(1999), 51–70.

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a person with outstanding merits in the organisation process, elected as its head<sup>24</sup> (Picture 1).

The Standing Executive Committee dispatched delegations to Uzhhorod, Pest and Esztergom. Despite the favourable reception, the petitions were not responded to this time, either. Amid all the urging and repeated enquiries, it became straightforward again that the question of the liturgical use of the Hungarian language aroused considerable fears in the Roman Catholic hierarchs. This was unequivocally communicated by Titular Bishop István Lipovniczky, Advisor to the Ministry of Religion and Education, to Lajos Farkas, who recalls the Advisor's words thus: 'For who can guarantee that, once today they allow us to conduct worship in the Hungarian tongue, tomorrow the Hungarian-speaking Latin-rite faithful of Komárom will not demand the same? This is, after all, impossible to grant' (translated from the Hungarian original).<sup>25</sup>

The Congress of Hajdúdorog combined the cause of the Hungarian liturgy with the demand for the creation of a separate bishopric for the Hungarian Greek Catholics. During his canonical visitation in Hajdúdorog in September 1871, István Pankovics, Bishop of Mukacheve (1866–1874), displayed signs in his conduct that would confirm a sense of conviction in the community of Hajdúdorog that, in spite of the myriads of obstacles, the accomplishment of their objectives had come within reach. He did not raise any objections to

the Divine Liturgy being conducted in Hungarian in his presence. Moreover, in one of the moments of solemnity, he even declared that he considered it the greatest mission of his life to become the first Hungarian Greek Catholic bishop.<sup>26</sup>

Following such antecedents, the Monarch's decision to found an external vicariate on 17 September 1873, within the Eparchy of Mukacheve, for 33 Hungarian-speaking parishes, with its seat to be located in Hajdúdorog, caused immense disappointment. The state authority overseeing the preparations for the establishment of the external vicariate took full account of the concerns of the Roman Catholic hierarchs about the use of Hungarian as a liturgical language. Furthermore, since the Greek Catholics openly admitted that one of the chief purposes of a bishopric of their own would be 'to raise the Hungarian language to the altars', they unintentionally supplied a substantive counter argument against the establishment of the eparchy. Although the idea of founding an external vicariate was proposed by none other than the Hajdúdorog community in case the creation of the eparchy was impeded by financial difficulties, they envisaged that its jurisdiction would encompass all Hungarian-speaking congregations. As opposed to the previous proposal, the Congress of Hajdúdorog held in 1868 made an unambiguous request for the establishment of an autonomous eparchy. The central government realised that it had to provide some kind of response to the demands of the Hungarian Greek Catholics, which in turn needed to be harmonised with the other interests of the Church. Therefore, the founding of the external vicariate may be seen rather as an intermediate solution. In 1875, Bishop Pásztelyi appointed Cathedral Canon János Danilovics as the first external vicar, whose, by any standards, rather limited jurisdiction extended only to the parishes of the Deaneries of Hajdúdorog, Karász, Máriapócs, Nagykálló, Nyírbéltek and Timár within the Archdeanery of Szabolcs. Although, subsequently, this would be expanded by the addition of the Deanery of Nyír from the Archdeanery of Szatmár, it would continue to comprise only a fragment of the Hungarian-speaking Greek Catholic parishes.

Vicar Danilovics scored substantial success in the area of liturgical translations though. In May 1879, he

<sup>24</sup> Farkas, 1896, 44–56. On the Congress of Hajdúdorog, see: Janka, György. A magyar görögkatolikusok első nagygyűlése Hajdúdorogon 1868-ban, in: Véghseő, Tamás (Ed.). Hajdúdorog, 1868–2018: *Tanulmányok és források a magyar görögkatolikusok történetéhez*, Nyíregyháza, 2019, 29–54; Véghseő, Tamás. Hajdúdorog, 1868 – Hajdúdorog, 1912, in: Id. (Ed.). *Hajdúdorog, 1868–2018: Tanulmányok és források a magyar görögkatolikusok történetéhez*, Nyíregyháza, 2019, 55–74.

<sup>25</sup> Farkas, 1896, 72.

<sup>26</sup> Farkas, 1896, 80–82.

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proposed the creation of a translation commission, the thirteen-year-long work of which he would supervise himself. The outcome of these operations was the translation and publication of four liturgical books.<sup>27</sup>

No sooner had the Translation Commission been established and news of its activities spread than, on the initiative of Cardinal Lajos Haynald, Archbishop of Kalocsa (1867–1891),<sup>28</sup> a prohibitive ordinance on the liturgical use of the Hungarian language was dispatched from Rome. The Holy See obliged the Bishop of Mukacheve to restore the use of the Old Slavonic language completely. Bishop Pásztyei apprised the priests of the ban on the use of the Hungarian language in a circular, but this would fail to bring about any fundamental changes in the established practice.<sup>29</sup> The Standing Executive Committee, however, holding a meeting in Hajdúdorog on 23 January 1881, was all the more prompted by this circumstance to take action. As a result of the consultations, members of the Committee presented petitions to the King, the House of Representatives and Ágoston Trefort, Minister of Culture. In the submitted documents, it was pointed out that the external vicariate had not solved the problems of the Hungarian Greek Catholics, and thus the request for the creation of an independent eparchy was reiterated.

In the petition presented to Parliament, it was hinted that the new Eparchy would be conducive to the spread of Hungarian as the language of the state in parishes inhabited by ethnic groups.<sup>30</sup> Although this allusion was primarily designed to enlist the support of representatives sensitive to political messages, it did prove to be fatal for the domestic and international assessment of the Hajdúdorog Movement. From that moment, the initiative launched mainly with a view to fulfilling spiritual needs would be interpreted by society at large and, most of all, by part of the press as a nationalist movement, aimed at Magyarising ethnic

minorities. This stigma was virtually irrevocably attached to the movement by those opposing the Hungarian liturgy and the creation of a Hungarian Greek Catholic bishopric.

The petitions submitted in the year 1881 were favourably received by King and Parliament alike. The Government solicited members of the Episcopacy and the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Budapest for their opinions, all but Pásztyei, Bishop of Mukacheve, and Miklós Tóth, Bishop of Prešov (1876–1882), objecting to the foundation of the new bishopric. The words Advisor Lipovniczky uttered in connection with the introduction of Hungarian as a liturgical language a decade earlier remained applicable. Upon seeing the bishops' opposition, the Government removed the question of the establishment of the eparchy from the agenda for one decade, and, from that point, those in government circles would adopt the position that the founding of a new Greek Catholic eparchy was not to be considered until the Holy See permitted the use of the Hungarian language.<sup>31</sup>

Unexpected and humiliating rejection would frustrate the activities of the Standing Executive Committee for years. Further concrete steps were enabled by the political atmosphere of the 1896 Millennium celebrations, marking the 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hungarian Conquest of the Carpathian Basin. Hopes, however, ended in painful failure this time as well. Members of the Committee sought to give weight to their embassy to Budapest before the public of the capital city and of the country by celebrating the Divine Liturgy in Hungarian in the University Church on the morning of 27 June. The event was covered by the press in great detail: Many press reports were made on both the preparations and the festive Divine Liturgy itself. The report of *Pester Lloyd* soon reached Rome, where, on 20 August, the Sacred Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs

<sup>27</sup> 1) *Aranyszájú Szent János atya szent és isteni Liturgiája* [The Holy and Divine Liturgy of Our Father Saint John Chrysostom], Debrecen, 1882. 2) *Görög katolikus egyházi szerkönyv (Euchologion)* [Greek Catholic Euchologion], Debrecen, 1883. 3) *Szent Nagy Bazil atya szent és isteni Liturgiája, továbbá az előszentelték liturgiája s egyéb egyházi szolgálatok papi imádságai* [The Holy and Divine Liturgy of Our Father Saint Basil the Great and the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, with the Priestly Prayers of Other Church Services], Debrecen, 1890. 4) *Görögszertartású általános egyházi énekkönyv a hozzávaló imákkal*, fordította: Danilovics János [A General Byzantine-Rite Ecclesiastical Chant Book with Related Prayers, translated by János Danilovics], Debrecen, 1892. For a more detailed description of the liturgical books, see in the present volume, Cat. IV.41.

<sup>28</sup> The role of Cardinal Haynald is illuminated by a document on the Hungarian liturgy kept in the Archives of the Sacred Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs: Véghseő – Katkó, 2014, 397–403.

<sup>29</sup> Pirigyi, 1990, 93.

<sup>30</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2014, 138–182.

<sup>31</sup> On the failed attempt, see: Véghseő, Tamás. Kísérlet egy magyar görögkatolikus püspökség felállítására 1881-ben, in: Somorjai, Ádám – Zombori, István (Eds.). *Episcopus, Archiabbas Benedictinus, Historicus Ecclesiae: Tanulmányok Várszegi Asztrik 70. Születésnapjára*, Budapest, 2016, 315–325.



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discussed the case along with the dispatches of Kolos Vaszary, Archbishop of Esztergom (1891–1912), and János Vályi, Bishop of Prešov (1882–1911), which had been requested in the meantime. As a result of the inquiry conducted by the Holy See, on 2 September, it was decided that both the use of Hungarian language and the publication of liturgical books amounted to grave abuse calling for termination. This was communicated to the Prince-Primate, as well as to the Bishops of Mukacheve and Prešov by Cardinal Mieczysław-Halka Ledóchowski on 20 September. The Holy See obliged the bishops concerned to do everything in their power to terminate the introduced instances of abuse, exercise strict control over the parishes that were most prominent in using Hungarian and remove those priests who were sympathetic to the Hajdúdorog Movement.<sup>32</sup>

Until March 1898, the Hungarian Government sent as many as three memoranda to the Holy See, each urging that the prohibition be revoked. Apart from a spiritual need and historical antecedents, the memoranda mostly cited the language use of the Romanian Greek Catholics and expressed a sense of resentment that the Holy See denied Hungarians what it granted to the Romanians. As for the church response, Prince-Primate Vaszary and Gyula Firczák, Bishop of Mukacheve (1881–1912), were unanimous in requesting relaxation of the rigour of the prohibition, while János Vályi, Bishop of Prešov, would promulgate the prohibitive decision without delay. Opponents of the Hungarian liturgy also sent their position to the Holy See. Of ecclesiastics, Gyula Drohobeczky, Bishop of Križevci (*Kőrös*) (1891–1920), presented his gravely deprecatory opinion in detail on the movement of Hungarian Greek Catholics and on Bishop Gyula Firczák, sympathetic to their cause, alike in several letters. On the part of the Romanians, Vasile Lucaciu, a Greek Catholic priest engaged in politics in the Romanian National Party, as well as Vasile Hossu, subsequently Bishop of Lugoj and Gherla, strove to make the movement of Hungarian Greek Catholics look like an initiative with a purely political focus and discredit it before the Holy See. Pope Leo XIII (1878–1903) requested Jesuit scholar Nikolaus Nilles, an academic authority on the history and liturgy of the Eastern Churches, to study the question as an expert.

Though discarding the arguments of the Hungarian Government, he did not regard prohibition of the Hungarian language as warranted. Inconclusively, he advised that the Holy See had better exploit the zeal of the Hungarian Government, succeeding in having doctrinally impeccable liturgical books published at the expense of the state.<sup>33</sup>

The exchange of diplomatic notes following the Hungarian liturgy in the University Church of Budapest and its implications for domestic politics gave the movement of Hungarian Greek Catholics an irreversibly political angle. On account of the consequences, the celebration of the liturgy in Hungarian in the capital was seen by some as a mistaken action and an unnecessary provocation. Extremely harsh as the reaction of the Holy See was, entailing major disadvantages, it simultaneously compelled Hungarian Greek Catholics to take well-considered action and search for new avenues. As a new initiative, in June 1898, the National Committee of Greek-Rite Catholic Hungarians was formed in Budapest, with Jenő Szabó (1843–1921), retired ministerial advisor and member of the House of Magnates, as its president (Picture 2). In the course of his long career at the Ministry, Szabó had had the opportunity to acquaint himself with the traps of politics, so, under his leadership, the National Committee made an attempt at bringing the cause of Hungarian Greek Catholics out of the quagmire of politics. As the issue of the establishment of the eparchy was primarily dependent on political will and negotiations and was susceptible to becoming hostage to uncontrolled games, the National Committee adopted the position that it would try to obtain endorsement for the Hungarian liturgical language under the existing diocesan circumstances. Additionally, the purification of the liturgical movement from nationalistic hints, as well as the introduction of the Gregorian Calendar in Hungarian-speaking parishes were identified as objectives. 113 parishes, 568 affiliated churches and 134 527 believers subscribed to the programme.<sup>34</sup> After slightly longer than a decade – having experienced the intransigence and Romanianising efforts of the bishops of the Romanian eparchies – the National Committee returned to the idea of an independent eparchy, all the while unrenounced by the Standing Executive Committee of Hajdúdorog.

<sup>32</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2014, 245–246.

<sup>33</sup> Véghseő, Tamás. Nikolaus Nilles és a magyar görögkatolikus liturgia ügye, in: Id. (Ed.). *Symbolae: Ways of Greek Catholic Heritage Research*, Papers of the conference held on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Nikolaus Nilles, Nyíregyháza, 2010, 81–89.

<sup>34</sup> *Emlékkönyv*, 1901, 3–10; Mayer, 1977, 144–152.



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The programme of the National Committee included the organisation of a pilgrimage to Rome aimed at demonstrating the existence of Hungarian Greek Catholics. The first call issued in early November 1898 read: '1. To prove that Greek Catholic Hungarians faithfully adhere to the centre of the unity of the Church, Rome, and that this adherence is predicated upon living faith, pure conviction and unstinting love. 2. To counter

those who have informed the Holy See that there are no Greek Catholic Hungarians at all, we intend to use this pilgrimage to evidence our existence and the fact that we are sufficiently numerous to be taken into account. 3. Finally, we must demonstrate to His Holiness that, when, akin to our brethren in faith, we seek that our tongue be elevated to the rank of liturgical language, we but fight religious indifference, disdain for the faith and apostasy,

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which have reared their head in our midst, and our movement is thoroughly pure, genuine and Catholic' (translated from the Hungarian original).<sup>35</sup>

The pilgrimage took place from 6 to 9 March in the Jubilee Holy Year of 1900. It was attended by 461 pilgrims (including 67 priests). János Vályi, Bishop of Prešov, accepted to lead the pilgrimage, while Gyula Firczák, Bishop of Mukacheve, joined the pilgrims in Rome. They arrived in the Eternal City after many vicissitudes, where they learnt the disconcerting news that Pope Leo XIII might not even receive them. The papal audience was eventually held on the last day of their stay in Rome. In his brief greeting speech, Bishop János Vályi requested approval for the Hungarian liturgy from the Pope and he handed over the memorandum in which the Hungarian Greek Catholics had summarised their request. The organisers had previously informed the Secretariat of State of the content of the request to be submitted. Via the Nuncio, the latter clarified that a prompt response to it from the Holy Father was obviously not to be expected. Subsequent documents of the Secretariat in conjunction with scrutiny of the memorandum by the Holy See highlight its respectful tone and moderate style.<sup>36</sup> Both the behaviour of the pilgrims and the text of the memorandum significantly ameliorated the unfavourable assessment of Hungarian Greek Catholics in Rome formed on the basis of the incoming information hitherto.

After the Roman pilgrimage, the National Committee published an ornately designed memorial volume with two maps, a number of photographs, the story of the antecedents and process of the pilgrimage, the text of the memorandum handed over to the Pope and a list of the participants.<sup>37</sup> The cover page of the memorandum was decorated by the painting *Our Lady of Hungary* by painter Ignác Roskovics (1854–1915), member of the National Committee (son of Arch-Provost Ignác Roskovics, translator of the liturgy). The historical section was compiled by historian Antal Hodinka (1864–1946), the ultimate authority on the history of the Greek Catholics. In the presentation of the history of Byzantine-rite Catholic Hungarians, he marshals the facts and arguments that were increasingly relevant to the self-reflection of Hungarian Greek Catholics as of

the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the thinking of the majority of society, Eastern Rite was associated with Slavic and Romanian ethnic groups, whereas, the stereotypical religious attribute of the Hungarian nation was the Latin Rite or Protestantism. Meanwhile, as an outcome of historical research, it became ever more indisputable that the Hungarians had first encountered Byzantine-rite Christianity, certain Hungarian dignitaries had converted to Christianity in Byzantium in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and, consequently, in the person of Bishop Hierotheos, an Eastern-rite missionary bishop had operated in Hungary. Even though King Saint Stephen decided in favour of Latin-rite Christianity, representatives of the Byzantine Rite – mainly monastics – would be able to continue their work among the Hungarians for a long time. The presence of the Byzantine Rite among the Hungarians in the era of the Árpád Dynasty, as well as the series of historical facts supporting that, played a considerable part in the development of the self-reflection of 19<sup>th</sup>-and-20<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian Greek Catholics. It was especially important in the atmosphere of the 1896 Millennium celebrations that they could point to the fact that the history of the Hungarian nation served as proof that 'Hungarianness' and 'Eastern Rite' were not mutually exclusive concepts. Thus, the process of their identification started from the distant past. Having the majority of society accept it did prove to be a journey rife with trials and tribulations though.

Although the pilgrimage failed to produce a total breakthrough, and the Holy See would continue to maintain the strict prohibition in principle, it undoubtedly rendered great service to the cause of the Hungarian Greek Catholics. It may be interpreted as a sign of relaxation that, after the pilgrimage to Rome, Viennese Nuncio Emidio Taliani (1896–1903), in agreement with the aforementioned Nikolaus Nilles, proposed tacit tolerance of the established practice of language use.<sup>38</sup> The Holy See did in fact choose this option: It was decided that only then would a new official position be issued if further signals were sent by the respective bishops and the Hungarian Government, or word of tendencies endangering the Greek Catholic Churches (such as schisms or instances of apostasy) was received. In this case, the Holy See appeared to be ready to leave decisions on language use to the wise discretion of the

<sup>35</sup> *Emlékkönyv*, 1901, 11.

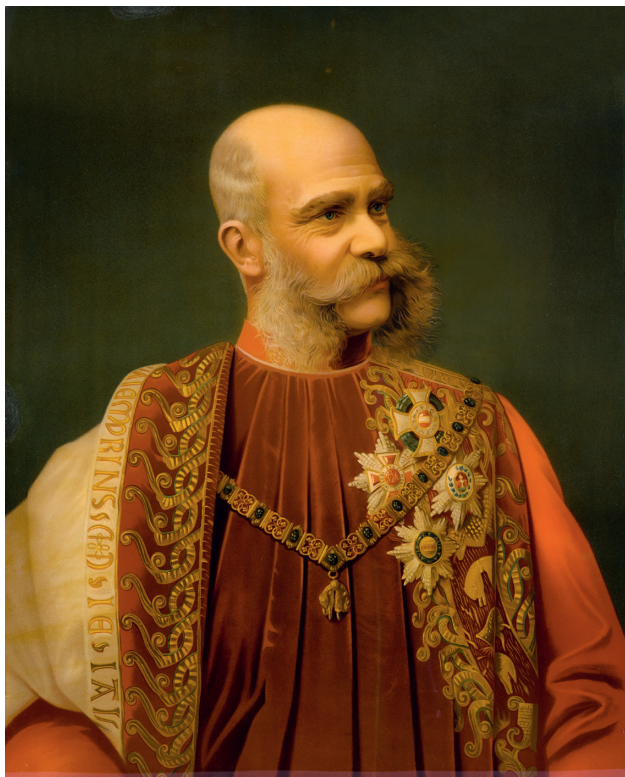
<sup>36</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2014, 487

<sup>37</sup> *Emlékkönyv*, 1901, 67–98.

<sup>38</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2014, 476–480.

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bishops concerned and have the published Hungarian liturgical books inspected by experts.<sup>39</sup>

Concerning the liturgical use of the Hungarian language, even prior to the Roman pilgrimage, Prince-Primate Kolos Vaszary articulated the proposal that it should affect only certain parts of the liturgy deemed to be less important. He also sent this proposal to the Holy See, adding that there was no chance left for the complete exclusion of the Hungarian language – i.e. for the prohibition of the Holy See to be imposed in full.<sup>40</sup> Subsequently, he recommended the use of Koine Greek to the National Committee because he was well aware that the Holy See would not approve the complete liturgy in Hungarian only. This suggestion was not accepted by the National Committee because it continued to trust that the request submitted in 1900 would be given a positive assessment.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, temporary tolerance of the practice introduced in the Greek Catholic parish of Budapest organised as of 1895 and officially established within the Archdiocese of

Esztergom in 1905 also reinforced such impressions. The parish of Budapest was headed by Emil Melles, Archdean of Szatmár, who was a committed exponent of the Hungarian liturgy. In the parish established for all the Greek Catholic faithful of the capital – i.e. not only for Hungarian-speaking believers – he introduced the practice established in the Hungarian-speaking areas of the country: Apart from the Words of Institution and the priest's silent prayers, he would conduct all other parts of the liturgy in Hungarian. This would lead to internal conflict, eventually necessitating action by the Holy See. In 1907, first the Romanians of Budapest were removed from the jurisdiction of the parish and returned to the control of the competent Roman Catholic parishes. Finally, in 1909, in consequence of repeated complaints to Rome, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith declared the parish of Budapest Ruthenian-rite and prohibited the liturgical use of Hungarian. At that point, accepting the Prince-Primate's previous recommendation, Budapest Greek Catholics began to use Koine Greek in the essential parts of liturgy.<sup>42</sup>

Koine Greek as a liturgical language was just as alien to Hungarian Greek Catholics as Old Slavonic or Romanian. Through its usage, the widespread accusation, especially intensively propagated by Hungary's ethnic communities in Rome, that the Hungarian liturgical movement was but a political device exploited by the Government to achieve the Magyarisation of ethnic groups could be invalidated.

In response to yet another prohibition by the Holy See, the National Committee also reverted to the ideal of an independent bishopric and, at the end of 1910, jointly with the Standing Executive Committee of Hajdúdorog, it proposed to the Government that it make an authoritative decision on the creation of a Hungarian Greek Catholic eparchy.<sup>43</sup> This proposal was seemingly inconclusive. On 30 June 1911, Jenő Szabó repeated the appeal for foundation in an emotional speech in the House of Magnates, suggesting that it was hoped that a Hungarian Greek Catholic bishopric would be instrumental in legalising the existing praxis around the use of Hungarian as the language of the liturgy. Responding on behalf of the Government, Minister of Religion and Education János Zichy ensured Hungarian Greek Catholics of his good will but continued to stress

<sup>39</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2014, 490.

<sup>40</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2014, 386–387.

<sup>41</sup> Szabó – Sztripszky, 1913, 332.

<sup>42</sup> Pirigyi, 1990, 108.

<sup>43</sup> Pirigyi, 1990, 105.

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that first the Hungarian language was to be recognised by the Holy See, and only then could the foundation of an eparchy be considered.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps, even the Minister himself was unaware that, authorised by Franz Joseph, Prime Minister Károly Khuen-Héderváry had initiated secret negotiations with the Holy See about the establishment of a Hungarian Greek Catholic eparchy in April<sup>45</sup> (Picture 3). Following the first favourable reactions from the Holy See, at the time of Jenő Szabó's speech in the House of Magnates, the Hungarian Government was resolved to obtain the consent of the Holy See and present it to the public as soon as possible. The proposal of the National Committee and of the Standing Executive Committee was received by the Government at a time when, along with the Monarch, it prepared for the parliamentary debates of laws of great import. Of these, the new Army Act, the acceptance of which appeared uncertain, was highly prominent. To gain the support of political parties, the Monarch needed a gesture that could enable him to evince his attention to the Hungarian nation. By fulfilling

<sup>44</sup> Szabó – Sztripszky, 1913, 307–318.

<sup>45</sup> The letter of Prime Minister Khuen-Héderváry to Pope Saint Pius X: Véghseő – Katkó, 2019a, 190–191.

<sup>46</sup> The authorisation of Lippay by the Prime Minister's Office: Véghseő – Katkó, 2019a, 183–184.

<sup>47</sup> The Prime Minister's letter to the Pope: Véghseő – Katkó, 2019a, 198–199.

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the old desire of Hungarian Greek Catholics, the national character of which was undeniable, the Monarch was bound to secure the backing of Parliament. However, as the Holy See was also to assent, initially bypassing diplomatic channels, Franz Joseph made an enquiry at the Holy See via Papal Count and Chamberlain Bertalan Lippay, a painter, as an intermediary,<sup>46</sup> and subsequently – officially but still in secret – initiated the necessary talks through the Prime Minister. With full sincerity, Prime Minister Khuen-Héderváry exposed the benefits of the establishment of a Hungarian Greek Catholic eparchy for domestic politics to the Holy See and explained how pleased the Monarch would be if the Holy See were to assist him in implementing his plans.<sup>47</sup> It was also obvious to the Hungarian Government that negotiations were time-consuming, but, from the summer of 1911, it would make repeated requests to the Holy See to let it make its consent to the establishment of the new Eparchy public for political reasons as soon as possible. On the contrary, the Holy See wished to refrain from

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public announcements until it was the given assurances by the Government not only for the funding of the diocese but about the prohibition of Hungarian as a liturgical language as well.<sup>48</sup>

As part of the negotiation process, on 9 November, the Episcopacy was also solicited for its position. Three decades earlier, Hungarian Greek Catholics had been deeply crushed by the bishops' refusal. This time, however, a powerful monarchic will was evident to all the bishops, so there was no question about adopting the endorsement.<sup>49</sup> Franz Joseph's petition was delivered to the Holy See by the newly appointed Archbishop of Kalocsa, János Csernoch (1911–1912); it specified Koine Greek as the liturgical language of the new Eparchy. Episcopacy deliberations were attended by the hierarchs of the Romanian Greek Catholic Metropolitanate as well – Archbishop Victor Mihályi (1894–1918), Demetriu Radu, Bishop of Oradea (1903–1920) and Vasile Hossu, Bishop of Gherla (1903–1912) – who also voted in favour of the foundation of the new Eparchy. In their letter to Viennese Nuncio Alessandro Bavona (1911–1912), they stated: '... we applauded the plan [i.e. the foundation of an eparchy for the Hungarian Greek Catholics] supportively and did not raise any objections upon hearing that as many as seventy parishes of our Archiepiscopal Province were to be reassigned to the new Eparchy...' (translated from Hungarian). At the same time, they asked the Nuncio to ensure that the parishes to be reassigned be not selected without their approval.<sup>50</sup> After their sessions over the following months, however, they acted jointly to further their interests and succeeded in having the already demarcated boundaries of the new Eparchy changed and the parishes claimed by them unselected. Simultaneously, they deployed all means available to bring it to the attention of the Holy See that, even though the official liturgical language of the new

Eparchy was to be Koine Greek, it would definitely be used to foster Magyarisation. Fervent attacks against the proposed Eparchy were carried out by Demetriu Radu, Bishop of Oradea, in particular, prompting reactions of dismay from Francesco Rossi-Stockalper in charge of the Nunciature following Archbishop Bavona's death (12 January 1912). As early as February 1912, the *Chargé d'affaires* signalled to the Holy See that not only did Bishop Radu incite the clergy of his Eparchy to rebel against the proposed Eparchy but he had also contacted Heir Presumptive Franz Ferdinand and sought his intervention.<sup>51</sup> The Heir Presumptive fully sided with the Romanians and instructed Ludwig von Pastor, Director of the Austrian Historical Institute in Rome, to ensure that the Holy See would attempt to prevent the establishment of the Eparchy.<sup>52</sup>

Talks were also meant to be disrupted by a newspaper article that, on 9 February, made a sensation out of the false news that the Holy See had approved the liturgical use of the Hungarian language.<sup>53</sup> This made the Holy See cautious, and it would take the Hungarian Government several months of negotiations and a written undertaking to dispel uncertainties.<sup>54</sup> The successful conclusion of the negotiations was reported in the papers on 13 April 1912. Afterwards, on 6 May 1912, Franz Joseph, as Patron of the Hungarian Catholic Church, founded the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog in accordance with the regulations of Hungarian public law, to be canonised by Pope Saint Pius X (1903–1914) in his Bull *Christifideles graeci* on 8 June<sup>55</sup> (Pictures 4 and 5). The Preamble of the Bull of Foundation sets out the reasons justifying the creation of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog. Hungary's Byzantine-rite Catholics had always evidenced their adherence to the faith, as well as their affiliation with the Apostolic See. At the same time, by creating their ecclesiastical structure, the Popes promoted their development and, whenever it was necessary, established new eparchies for them.

<sup>48</sup> On 28 June 1911, via Bertalan Lippay, the Hungarian Government requested permission for making a public announcement, which was nonetheless prevented by Giovanni Bressan by wire the next day: Véghseő – Katkó, 2019a, 210.

<sup>49</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2019a, 370–371.

<sup>50</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2019a, 363–365.

<sup>51</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2019a, 415–418.

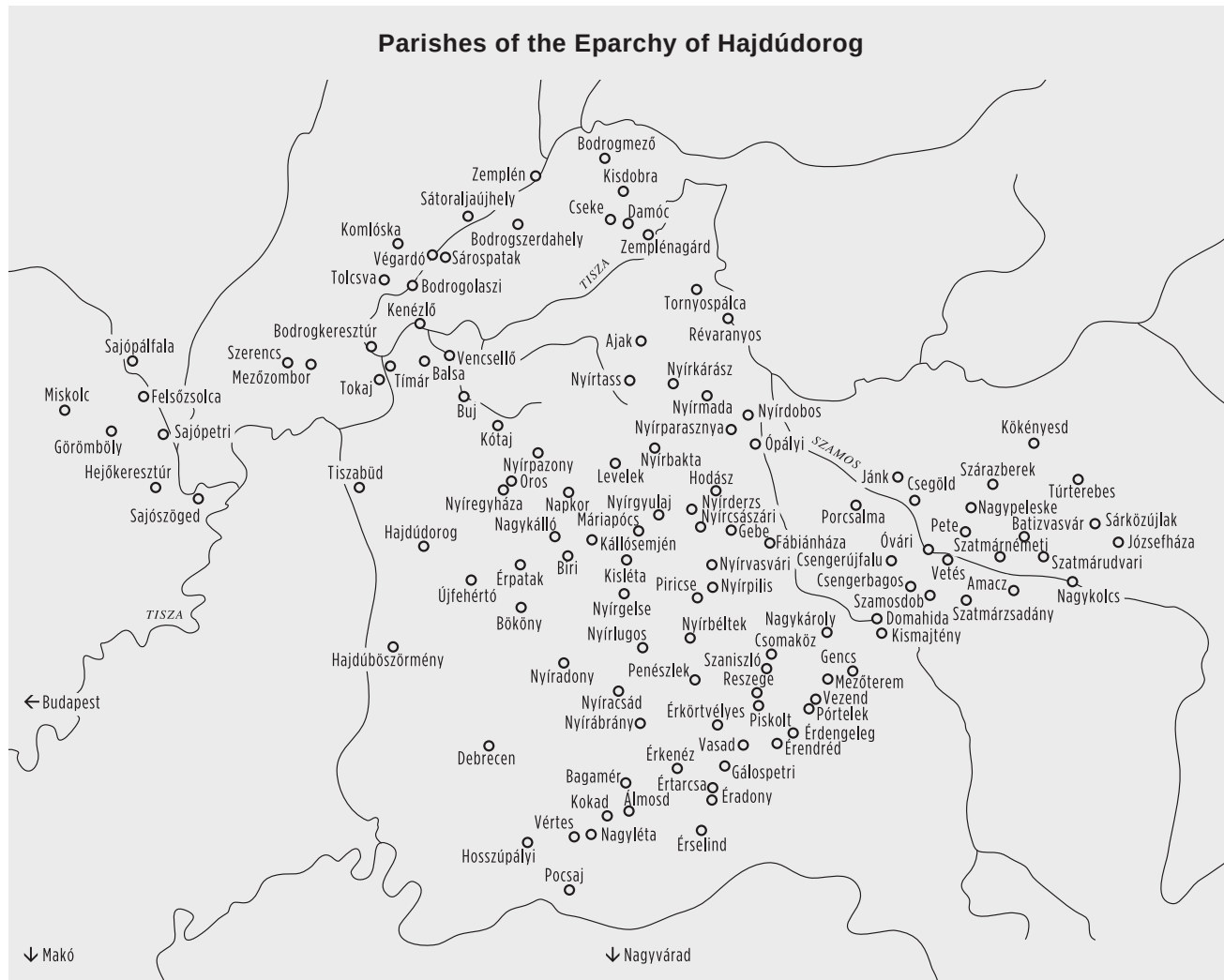
<sup>52</sup> On the authorisation of Pastor, see: Véghseő – Katkó, 2019a, 688–689. See also: Salacz, Gábor. *Egyház és állam Magyarországon a dualizmus korában: 1867–1918*, Munich, 1974, 157; Niessen, James. Hungarians and Romanians in Habsburg and Vatican Diplomacy: The Creation of the Diocese of Hajdudorog in 1912, *The Catholic Historical Review*, LXXX(1994), 253–254; Cârja, Ion. La Santa Sede e l'identità nazionale romana nel contesto della fondazione del Vescovado di Hajdudorogh (1912), *Anuarul Institutului Italo-Român de Studii Istorice*, I(2004), 152–161; Id. L'arciduca Francesco Ferdinando e i romeni greco-cattolici nel contesto della creazione della diocesi di Hajdudorogh (1912), *Quaderni della Casa Romana*, 3(2004), 341–352.

<sup>53</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2019a, 575–579.

<sup>54</sup> Some versions of the undertaking: Véghseő – Katkó, 2019a, 528, 634, 638, 646.

<sup>55</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2019a, 708–714.

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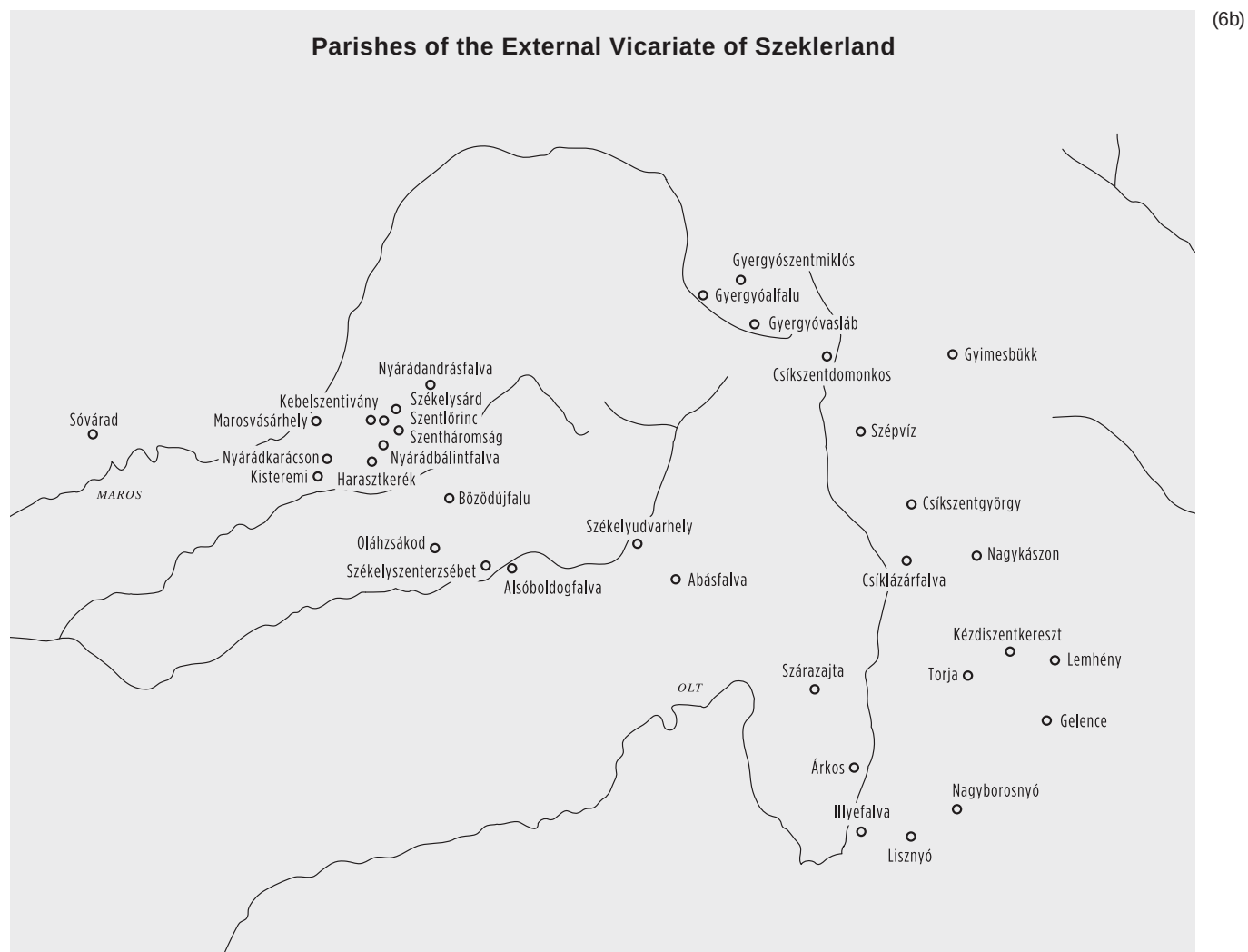


This was the reason why Pope Pius IX founded the Bishopsrics of Lugoj and Gherla and the Archiepiscopal Province of Alba Iulia-Făgăraș for the Romanian Greek Catholics. The Bull notes that, among the Byzantine-rite faithful, the number of those who use the Hungarian language, incessantly asking the Holy See to found an eparchy for them, has increased. Compliance with their request has become urgent for two reasons:

1. The creation of the Eparchy may contribute to the strengthening of religion, peace and unity among the Byzantine-rite faithful speaking different languages;
2. The danger of employing national languages in the liturgy, condemned by the Popes on several occasions, may thus be eliminated. To add emphasis to this point, the Bull of Foundation clarifies that Hungarian may never be used in the liturgy. The liturgical language of the new Eparchy is Koine Greek. The national language may be utilised to the extent allowed by the Holy See for the Western Church. However, the official liturgical language is to be introduced only three years later;

by that time, all priests must master it. In the interim, in every church, services may be conducted in the language in which they are conducted currently, except for Hungarian. Thus, according to the position of the Holy See, the purpose of the new Eparchy is precisely to curb the liturgical use of the Hungarian language.

At the recommendation of the Hungarian Government, the Holy See assigned 162 parishes to the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog. Of these, one had belonged to the Archdiocese of Esztergom, eight to the Eparchy of Prešov, seventy to the Eparchy of Mukacheve, four to the Eparchy of Gherla, forty-four to the Eparchy of Oradea and thirty-five to the Archeparchy of Alba Iulia-Făgăraș (Picture 6). According to census data from the year 1910, 215 498 believers were incorporated into the new Eparchy. Of this number, 183 757 were native speakers of Hungarian, 26 823 were native speakers of Romanian, 1623 were native speakers of Slovakian, 968 were native speakers of Ruthenian, and 2509 were



native users of other languages. 40 per cent of Greek Catholic Hungarians, i.e. 120 747 people, were not comprised in the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog; two-thirds of them remained under the jurisdiction of Slavic and one-third under the jurisdiction of Romanian bishoprics. This apparently odd arrangement was warranted by an idiosyncratic vision of national policy. The Government did not deem it expedient to include all the Hungarian Greek Catholic communities in the new Eparchy, causing the former eparchies to assume a purely ethnic character. The Government did not perceive any threat to the existence of Greek Catholics with a Hungarian identity in the Eparchies of Prešov and Mukacheve as the leading elite of both eparchies, including the Bishops, tended to have a Hungarian identity.

The Romanian eparchies, however, had served as institutions of Romanianisation even in the preceding decades. The Government intended to cater for the language-use-related right of those Hungarian Greek Catholics who were not incorporated into the new Eparchy by assigning as many as two dozen Romanian parishes to the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog in the hope that a sense of reciprocity would evolve between neighbouring Hungarian and Romanian bishops: Once the rights of Hungarians remaining in the Romanian eparchies were respected by the Romanian bishops, the Bishop of Hajdúdorog would also care for his Romanian faithful.<sup>56</sup>

As the parishes annexed from the Archeparchy of Alba Iulia-Făgăraş were rather far from the centre, the

<sup>56</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 537. This purely political idea based on reciprocity would for decades stigmatise the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog as, both in the eyes of Hungary's ethnic groups as well as internationally, it was degraded to a device of the nationalistic Hungarian Government.



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Pope permitted the Bishop of Hajdúdorog to govern them with the help of an external vicar. The church of Hajdúdorog was elevated to the rank of cathedral by the Pope. In line with the agreement with the Hungarian Government, the remuneration of the Bishop, the canons and the central officials was to be provided by the Hungarian state. The endowments of the eparchies ceding the parishes were left intact. The Bull emphasised that one of the most pressing tasks was the establishment of a seminary, the financial conditions for which were to be provided by the Government. The Eparchy of Hajdúdorog was incorporated into the Archiepiscopal Province of Esztergom.

To enact the provisions of the Bull of Foundation, the Pope authorised Viennese Nuncio Raffaele Scapinelli di Leguigno (1912–1916), who issued the implementing Regulation of the Bull *Christifideles graeci...* on 17 November 1912.<sup>57</sup> Therein, he notified all concerned that, as Apostolic Administrator of the new Eparchy, he had appointed Antal Papp, Bishop of Mukacheve. The implementing Regulation highlighted the act of the Bull of Foundation concerning the prohibition of the liturgical use of the Hungarian language and pointed out that not only was Koine Greek to be mastered by the priests, but they were also supposed to ensure that the faithful participating in liturgical actions would at least learn to read it. It allowed the use of Hungarian solely in devotions outside the liturgy, private prayer, homilies and the teaching of the people.

News of the foundation of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog filled Hungarian Greek Catholics with an immense sense of joy. Their decades-long fight and struggle riddled with disappointments had ended. New avenues and prospects opened to them. Although it was clear that considerable tasks lay ahead of the new Eparchy, at the moment of foundation, Hungarian Greek Catholics made a move towards autonomy full of well-founded hopes.

Even the moments of celebration were tarnished by events that foreshadowed the severe problems of the

future. Immediately after the announcement of foundation, a blizzard of protesting telegrams were sent from the Romanian eparchies – primarily from that of Oradea headed by Demetriu Radu – to the Viennese Nunciature.<sup>58</sup> A few weeks later, parishes assigned to the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog were able to voice their disapproval in forms in Romanian and Italian prepared by the Romanian Bishop in advance. The Romanian press would also join in this organised protest.<sup>59</sup> Articles fuelled by strong sentiments called on both bishops and priests, along with their congregations, to engage in resistance. They demanded withdrawal of the ‘murderous Bull’ by the Holy See and threatened schism with Rome.<sup>60</sup> In a number of places, organisation of the Eparchy was hindered by returning the Apostolic Administrator’s first circular, hampering the activities of the installed priests and even assaulting Mihály Jaczkovics, External Vicar of Hajdúdorog (1911–1913), dispatched to oversee the takeover of parishes.<sup>61</sup> The Romanian bishops sought to send a delegation to Rome, but this was firmly rejected by Secretary of State Merry del Val.<sup>62</sup>

To enable a speedy resolution of the intense situation and alleviate tensions, the appointment of the first Bishop of Hajdúdorog in short order and a possible revision of the Bull of Foundation seemed necessary.

Franz Joseph appointed the first Bishop of the Eparchy on 21 April 1913, in the person of István Miklósy (1857–1937), parish priest of Sátoraljaújhely and Archdean of Zemplén.<sup>63</sup> The Bishop-Elect had been a member of the National Committee and attended the pilgrimage to Rome. For his episcopal motto, he chose: ‘Success in Perseverance’ – as a reference to Hungarian Greek Catholics’ decades-long struggle ultimately closing with success. He was consecrated in Hajdúdorog on 5 October 1913. The rite of consecration and enthronement was performed by Gyula Drohobeczky, Bishop of Kriş (1891–1919), with the assistance of Ágoston Fischer-Colbrie, Bishop of Košice (1907–1925) and József Lányi, Consecrated Bishop of Tinnin, Canon of Oradea, a confidant of Franz

<sup>57</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 234–236.

<sup>58</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 141–143.

<sup>59</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 275–277.

<sup>60</sup> For an overview of press reactions, see: Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 102–106. On the protest, see: Papp, György. *Voci Romene Contro la Diocesi di Hajdudorog*, Budapest, 1942.

<sup>61</sup> The letter of Nuncio Scapinelli to the Secretariat of State: Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 338–341. Reports by local state authorities: Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 343–348. Press coverage of the attack against Vicar Jaczkovics: Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 330–338; as well as: *Görög Katholikus Szemle*, 14(1913), 11(16 March), 2.

<sup>62</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 61.

<sup>63</sup> Documents of the negotiations between the Holy See and the Hungarian Government: Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 289–291, 293–295.

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Ferdinand. The ordination was attended by 136 priests, including a large number of Romanians. The Papal Bull of Appointment was read by Artúr Boér, Romanian Dean of Caşin (*Magyarkászon*). Bishop Miklósy appointed Mihály Jaczkovics as his vicar and János Slepkovszky, parish priest of Nyírpazony, as his secretary. Once the official documents had been received, the new Eparchy began a life of its own.

During the time between the appointment and ordination of Bishop Miklósy, the Holy See and the Hungarian Government agreed to conduct partial revision of the Bull of Foundation. Russia, Serbia and Romania had also protested at the creation of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog through official channels to the Holy See. Cardinal Secretary of State Rafael Merry del Val considered the revision necessary with a view to allaying international tension. For reasons of international and domestic politics, Prime Minister István Tisza endeavoured to reach a compromise with the Romanians. The creation of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog came to be a point on the agenda of the talks. In the course of the negotiations extending into the year 1914, both the Prime Minister and Béla Jankovich, Minister of Religion and Education, advocated the position that a revision was possible on the basis of the principle of reciprocity. It was argued that parishes with a demonstrably Romanian majority ought to be returned to the Romanian mother eparchies, but, in places with a considerable number of Hungarian Greek Catholics in Romanian eparchies, separate parishes were to be organised and added to the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog. This was, however, rejected by the Romanian bishops.<sup>64</sup> Owing to the eruption of World War I, revision stalled, and, due to the Diktat (i.e. dictated peace) of Trianon concluding the war, it became anachronistic as, this way, the Romanians gained substantially more. Prior to the completion of the revision, the Viennese Nuncio refused to hand over the original copy of the Bull *Christifideles graeci...* to Bishop Miklósy, causing it to remain at the Nunciature, from where, along with other files, it was transferred to the Secret Archives of the Vatican, where it is still kept.

The first issue of eparchy organisation of outstanding immediacy was to determine the location of the episcopal seat. The Bull of Foundation specified Hajdúdorog as seat, and, on account of the indisputable merits and sacrifices of the town, it was widely anticipated that Bishop Miklósy would establish his

residence there. Naturally, the people of Hajdúdorog expected such a scenario as well and, ready to make further sacrifices, announced their claim for the seat on 12 September 1911. At the same time, it was also an undeniable fact that, logistically, Hajdúdorog was positioned unfavourably. Lacking any major cultural institutions, the town was hard to access from most parishes. Conversely, three cities, Debrecen, Nyíregyháza and Carei (*Nagykároly*), appeared to be superior choices from the point of view of transport and educational institutions alike. At that time, the Hungarian Royal University opened its doors in Debrecen, with the possibility for the creation of a Greek Catholic Theological Faculty – as envisaged primarily by the National Committee. In Nyíregyháza, plans for the establishment of a state teacher training institute were under way, potentially suitable for laying the foundations of Greek Catholic higher education as well. Carei had a Piarist principal grammar school and a boarding house. The latter two cities positively applied for the episcopal seat and required funds for the creation of the related institutions.<sup>65</sup> The majority of the Eparchy's clergy championed Nyíregyháza, and the National Committee would also throw its weight behind this option soon. Bishop Miklósy elected not to close the question of seat permanently but opt for a temporary solution. This was also justified by the fact that the Government had undertaken to create the necessary eparchial institutions, and the relevant details had not been clarified yet. The development of an institutional system was to be preceded by a long series of negotiations, which the Bishop would not want to influence by appointing a seat prematurely. In the summer of 1913, Bishop Miklósy decided to establish his seat in Debrecen provisionally, for a period of three years. For this purpose, he rented spaces in the building of the City Chamber of Commerce and Industry and, after his consecration in Hajdúdorog, he entered the city on 15 October amid great pomp and ceremony.

Once the question of seat was temporarily yet rationally solved, it seemed that nothing could impede the process of eparchy organisation. Gradually, order and calm were restored even in the parishes annexed from the Romanian eparchies as discussions between the respective bishops, the Government and the Holy See about the revision of the Eparchy gave the Romanians cause for hope. This peaceful period would last only for a few months though. In January 1914,

<sup>64</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 605–607.

<sup>65</sup> Documents on the question of seat: Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 65–76, 79–84, 505, 514.

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Bishop Miklósy publicly repudiated the idea of revision,<sup>66</sup> filling wide sections of the Romanian Greek Catholic community with a sense of disappointment. On 17 February, the talks held by Prime Minister István Tisza with the representatives of Hungary's Romanians on a possible political agreement, including the question of a revision of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog, were interrupted for good.<sup>67</sup>

A few days later, on 21 February 1914, a letter sent from Chernivtsi under the pseudonym 'Anna Kovács' arrived at the Episcopate. The author of the letter informed the Bishop that she had posted a box containing 100 koronas, a gilded church chandelier and a leopard-skin rug to his address. The parcel weighing 20 kg (44.09 lb) was received on 23 February. When Episcopal Secretary János Slepkovszky attempted to open the parcel with an axe, its contents exploded. The explosion of a pressure of nearly 2000 atmospheres destroyed the walls, ripped the ceiling and shattered Vicar Mihály Jaczkovics and Secretary János Slepkovszky into pieces and lethally wounded lawyer Sándor Csath LLD, Legal Adviser of the Eparchy, who would stay alive for one hour after the assassination. József Dávid, a student of law, as well as Eparchial Scribes Elek Kriskó and Miklós Bihon sustained severe injuries, while several residents of the house suffered minor injuries. Before the parcel was opened, Bishop István Miklósy had been invited to a different room to answer a telephone call, so he sustained only lighter injuries.<sup>68</sup>

The plot shocked the whole of Hungarian society. The funeral of the victims on 25 February was attended by 30-thousand people. The funeral service was conducted by Bishop Miklósy himself. The martyrs were regarded by the entire nation as its own. The Bishop received a large number of condolences from all parts of the country and even from abroad. Launched at once and extended to Romania as well, the investigation determined that the parcel had been posted by two adventurers: the Romanian Ilie Cătărău and the Russian Timotei Kirilov. As both were associated with the Romanian and Russian secret services, it was obvious

that they had acted on authority. The eruption of World War I and the counteraction of the Romanian authorities<sup>69</sup> prevented their arrest and the case from being fully unravelled. The plot was aimed at disrupting the internal peace of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which particularly served the interest of Russia readying itself for war. It was also during these weeks that the notorious 'schism-suit' of Maramureş (*Máramaros*) took place, with a Russian secret service background as well through the person of Count Vladimir Bobrinsky, President of the Russian Association of Galicia.<sup>70</sup> As Romanian–Hungarian tensions fomented in the course of the creation of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog had seemed to subside, a bloody bomb plot with leads to Romanian perpetrators and to Romania appeared to be a suitable device to deepen ethnic antagonisms and, consequently, to undermine the power of the Monarchy. A few months later, another assassination, the murder of Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo, led to World War I, which would end with fatal consequences for both Hungary and Hungarian Greek Catholics.

The Debrecen bomb plot raised the problem of the episcopal seat again. On 21 March, Bishop Miklósy held talks with Prime Minister István Tisza and Minister of Culture Béla Jankovich. At the meeting, it was decided that the episcopal seat would be transferred to Nyíregyháza. On 23 September 1914, Bishop Miklósy moved to Nyíregyháza.<sup>71</sup>

On 31 July 1915, Bishop Miklósy appointed Gyula Hubán, a priest from Satu Mare (*Szatmárnémeti*), as External Vicar for the governance of the Szeklerland parishes reassigned from the Archeparchy of Alba Iulia-Făgăraş. The organisation of the External Vicariate had been started by Exarch Antal Papp, authorising Vicar Jaczkovics to select a suitable seat. Drawing on his locally based experience, he favoured Târgu Mureş (*Marosvásárhely*). Later, this choice was endorsed by Bishop Miklósy as well, so the city became the seat of the Hungarian Greek Catholic Vicariate of Szeklerland.<sup>72</sup>

The eruption and prolongation of World War I, as well as a constantly deteriorating economic situation, had

<sup>66</sup> Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 590–591.

<sup>67</sup> At the same time, interruption of the talks was proposed by Archduke Franz Ferdinand to the Romanian party because the heir to the throne preparing for his reign would not benefit from a Romanian–Hungarian compromise: Horváth, 2004, 139.

<sup>68</sup> The details of the Debrecen bomb plot were explored by Márton Áron Katkó on the basis of archival sources: Katkó, Márton Áron. Az 1914-es debreceni merénylet, in: Véghseő, Tamás (Ed.). *Symbolae: Ways of Greek Catholic Heritage Research*, Papers of the conference held on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Nikolaus Nilles, Nyíregyháza, 2010, 289–321.

<sup>69</sup> In his memoirs, Romanian politician Alexandru Marghiloman recalls hearing from King Charles himself how difficult it had been for the Romanian authorities to hide Cătărău from the investigators. Horváth, 2004, 140.

<sup>70</sup> Bobrinsky was present at the second hearing of the schism-suit in Maramureş and, on his way home, he met Cătărău. Horváth, 2004, 139.

<sup>71</sup> *A Hajdúdorogi Egyházmegye Kőrlevelei*, 1914/XI. Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 721, 742–743.

<sup>72</sup> *A Hajdúdorogi Egyházmegye Kőrlevelei*, 1916/VII. Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 787.

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an extremely negative impact on the organisation process of the Eparchy. Owing to the war situation, the Government was unable to deliver on its undertakings. The failure to construct an episcopal seat and a seminary in particular entailed substantial disadvantages. The Eparchy was not properly endowed, either. This was somewhat offset by the legacy of Árkád Pásztor, a Basilian monk outside monastery, who, in 1915, bequeathed 1149 hectares (2840 acres) of arable land and 172 hectare (426 acres) of forest and vineyard, along with farm-buildings, in Szatmár County, to the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog.<sup>73</sup>

With the approval of Antal Papp, Bishop of Mukacheve, ordinands of the Eparchy were educated at the Seminary of Uzhorod. At Bishop Miklósy's request, the superiors paid special attention to ensuring that, in accordance with the provisions of the Bull of Foundation, seminarians from the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog would acquire the necessary skills in the use of Koine Greek.<sup>74</sup>

The joint meetings of the three Hierarchs, Antal Papp, István Novák and István Miklósy, held in Nyíregyháza in 1916 and 1918, were an apt expression of the close ties between the three Eparchies. At the first conference, the Bishops made a decision to switch to the Gregorian Calendar, which was introduced on 24 June 1916. The transition happened seamlessly in the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog, while, in the Eparchies of Mukacheve and Prešov, it was met with massive resistance. In response, in 1918, the Julian Calendar was reinstated in the former, whereas, in the latter, the use of the Gregorian Calendar was made optional. At the 1918 conference, discussions focused on the situation of Hungarian-speaking Greek Catholics left outside the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog, the extension of the effect of the 1917 Code of Canons, as well as on the question of the pension of priests and widowed priests' wives.<sup>75</sup> The cooperation of the three Greek Catholic Bishops with a promising start was crushed by the changes after World War I.

The turmoil following the war-induced collapse of 1918 had an immediate effect in the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog. Under the leadership of Romulus Marchiș, parish priest of Carei and Archdean of Szatmár, part of the parishes formerly under the jurisdiction of Oradea

arbitrarily pronounced their session from the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog. Through the Nuncio, they requested the Holy See to create a vicariate for all the parishes previously allocated to Oradea. Bishop Radu officially disowned the arbitrary step amounting to a gross violation of canon law, yet he asked the Holy See that he might be the Ordinary of the parishes concerned. On the contrary, Bishop Miklósy sought severe punishment for the rebellious Archdean. Heartened by the successes of the Romanian offensive beginning in the spring of 1919, Bishop Radu urged the Holy See to issue a response in a succession of letters. Romanian troops occupying Nyíregyháza captured Bishop Miklósy and took him to Debrecen, coercing him into surrendering forty-four parishes. At his point, the Nunciature could no longer establish contact with Bishop Miklósy, and no substantive reaction to the communications sent by the Holy See was received from the Hungarian Government. As the areas of the respective parishes were effectively placed under the control of the Romanian Army, the Holy See assigned them to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Oradea on 10 May 1919. A few months later, Vasile Suci, Vicar of the Archeparchy of Alba Iulia-Făgăraș, requested that the thirty-five parishes of the External Vicariate of Szeklerland be reassigned to the Archeparchy, which was ordered by the Holy See on 29 July.<sup>76</sup>

### List of pictures

1. The church of Hajdúdorog. Woodcut, *Vasárnapi Ujság*, 6(1859), 3, 29.
2. The portrait of Jenő Szabó by an unknown painter. Canvas, oil, early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Collection of the Greek Catholic Ecclesiastical Museum, Nyíregyháza (GKEMGY), Inv. No. 1999.71 (A. 27)
3. The portrait of Franz Joseph. Paper, oleograph, early 20<sup>th</sup> century. GKEMGY, Inv. No. 2015.313. (A.139)
4. The portrait of Pope Pius X. Photograph, early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Diocesan Library, Székesfehérvár
5. The title page of the Bull *Christifideles graeci...* Parchment, painted. Vatican Apostolic Archive (Archivio Apostolico Vaticano), Arch. Nunz., Vienna, busta 766, fasc. 9, fol. 461v
6. The parishes of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog in 1912. Map

<sup>73</sup> For recent discussions on Árkád Pásztor, see: Endrédi, Csaba. Pásztor Árkád: A legenda tovább él, *Athanasiana*, 35(2013), 122–169. Honca, Ciprian-Emanuel. Árkád Pásztor: O schiță biografică, *Satu Mare – Studii și Comunicări*, XXXVIII(2019), 19–37.

<sup>74</sup> Pirigy, 2001, 88.

<sup>75</sup> Pirigy, 1990, 119–120; Véghseő – Katkó, 2019b, 809–823.

<sup>76</sup> The documents of the case in the Vatican Apostolic Archive: Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Arch. Nunz., Vienna, busta 797, fasc. 9/2, fol. 300–317.