

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

METROPOLITAN
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Edited by: Szilveszter Terdik (Greek Catholic Heritage Research Group under the Joint Programme *Lendület/ Momentum* of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and St Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological College)

Associate editor: Irén Szabó

Assistant: Lilla Nagy

Specimen descriptions were written by: Péter Borbás (P. B.), András Dobos (A. D.), Xénia Golub (X. G.), Mátyás Gödölle (M. G.), Hedvig Harmati (H. H.), György Janka (Gy. J.), Etele Kiss (E. K.), Annamária Tóth-Kollár (A. T. K.), András Koltai (A. K.), Bertalan Láda (B. L.), Zsuzsanna Ujteleki-Majchrics (Zs. U. M.), Imri Ozsvári (I. O.), Márta Pallag (M. P.), Anikó Pataki (A. P.), Gábor Prodán (G. P.), Bernadett Puskás (B. P.), Gruber H. Reinhard (G. H. R.), Krisztina Sedlmayer (K. S.), Irén Szabó (I. Sz.) and Szilveszter Terdik (Sz. T.).

Editor of the English text: David Veljanovszki

Translators: David Veljanovszki (the main text with notes in all chapters, foreword and epilogue – except IV.2.2), Dénes Neumayer (Cat. II.01–II.33), Aliz Tóka (Cat. II.34–II.66; Cat. III.01–III.30; Cat. III.37–59), Romulus Varga (Cat. III.31–36) and Péter Veres (Cat. IV.1–63; Chapter IV.2.2; Glossary)

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Index compiled by: Lilla Nagy

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IV.3.1 The Trauma of Trianon: The Eparchy's Losses and Fight for Survival

Tamás Véghseő

Concluding World War I, the Peace Treaty of Trianon also shook the community of Hungarian Greek Catholics to its core. As a result of border changes, the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog lost half of its parishes: Seventy-five were transferred to Romania and four to Czechoslovakia. Besides the eighty-two parishes of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog, twenty parishes from the Eparchy of Prešov (*Eperjes*) and one parish from the Eparchy of Mukacheve (*Munkács*) remained in Hungary (Picture 1). Beyond severe land losses, Hungarian Greek Catholics had to endure the consequences of a conspicuous decline in their social relevance and perception as well. Whereas, before World War I, 9.8 per cent of Hungary's population were Greek Catholic, this ratio decreased to 2.2 per cent by 1920.¹ This fact, as well as the economic problems of the country, in themselves posed a serious challenge to the fulfilment of the Government's undertakings made in 1912 and thus to the development of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog.

The fundamental change in the situation of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog prompted the officials of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches to raise the possibility of effecting essential amendments to the Bull of Foundation (*Christifideles graeci...*, 1912).² As the introduction of Koine Greek as a liturgical language failed during the first decade of the Eparchy's existence, Cardinal Nicolò Marini, Secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, proposed that the Pope make the Old Slavonic language obligatory for Hungarian Greek Catholics. Cardinal Marini's proposal speaks of a lack of familiarity with the actual situation in Hungary,³ as well as of a sense of distrust of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog.⁴ It was Budapest Nuncio

Lorenzo Schioppa who was tasked with informing Prince-Primate János Csernoch, István Miklósy, Diocesan Bishop of Hajdúdorog, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the Secretary's proposal. The position of the last one was formulated by Bishop Elect János Csiszárík, Advisor for Church Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In agreement with the two church leaders consulted, on behalf of the Government, Bishop Csiszárík firmly opposed the proposal, which would present the Holy See to the Hungarian public as an instrument of Slavic policies threatening Hungary's very existence. In the face of resolute objections, the introduction of Old Slavonic in the liturgical life of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog would not be put on the agenda again.⁵

In drawing the new state borders as part of the peace treaties ending World War I, decision makers were primarily mindful of economic and ethnic considerations. As aspects of ecclesiastical governance were not prominent, the new frontiers would in a number of instances sever parishes from the corresponding episcopal sees. The Apostolic See sought to remedy the concomitant problems by creating provisional units of ecclesiastical governance.

In post-Trianon Hungary, twenty Greek Catholic parishes were left from the Eparchy of Prešov and one from the Eparchy of Mukacheve; their fate was decided by the Holy See in the summer of 1924 along the lines discussed above, with the persons of the respective bishops also taken into account.⁶ The strongly anti-Catholic Czechoslovak Government aimed not only to remove the (Latin- and Byzantine-rite) bishops appointed in the 'Hungarian Era' but, by supporting the

The paper was written with the support of the Research Group 'Greek Catholic Heritage' under the Joint Programme 'Lendület' (Momentum) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and St Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological College.

¹ Pirigy, 1990, 123.

² For more detail on the proposal, see: Véghseő, Tamás. *Az Apostoli Szék és a magyar görögkatolikusok kapcsolata a két világháború között*, in: Fejérdy, András (Ed.). *Magyarország és a Szentszék diplomáciai kapcsolatai, 1920–2015*, Budapest–Róma, 2015, 152–154.

³ He mistakenly surmised that, in post-Trianon Hungary, the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog was only left with parishes from the erstwhile Eparchies of Mukacheve and Prešov, i.e. ones using Old Slavonic as the language of the liturgy in the past.

⁴ Officials of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches founded in 1917 had been selected from the Congregation *Propaganda Fide*, a dicastery vehemently opposing the creation of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog in 1912. Therefore, the Hungarian Greek Catholic Eparchy would for a long time remind the officials concerned of their loss of prestige with the Holy See's Secretariat of State.

⁵ The public could learn about this initiative only in 1933, when István Gróh greeted Bishop Miklósy in the columns of the church gazette *Görög Katolikus Szemle* on the twentieth anniversary of his ordination. Gróh describes the foiling of the initiative (which he attributes to Sheptytsky, Ukrainian Archbishop of Lviv) as the accomplishment of the Bishop of Hajdúdorog. See: *Görög Katolikus Szemle*, 20(1933), 1, quoted in: Janka, György. Miklósy István püspök (1913–1937) a korabeli görög katolikus sajtó tükrében, in: Véghseő, Tamás (Ed.). *Symbolae: Ways of Greek Catholic Heritage Research*, Papers of the conference held on the 100th anniversary of the death of Nikolaus Nilles, Nyíregyháza, 2010, 341.

⁶ For more detail on the foundation of the Apostolic Exarchate of Miskolc, see: Véghseő, 2015, 154–156. On the history of the Apostolic Exarchate of Miskolc, see: Szántay-Szémán, István. A Miskolci Apostoli Kormányzóság első tizenöt éve (1925–1940), in: *A Miskolci Görög Szertartású Katolikus Apostoli Kormányzóság története, területi és személyi adatai fennállásának 15. éves évfordulóján*, Miskolc, 1940, 3–21; as well as: Szántay-Szémán, István. Tizenöt éves a Miskolci Görögkatolikus Apostoli Kormányzóság, *Keleti Egyház*, 11(1940), 235–238.



schismatic movement, to weaken the Greek Catholic Church as well. István Novák, Bishop of Prešov, abandoned his episcopal seat before the new state borders were designated and entrusted his Eparchy to the governance of his Vicar. In 1920, the Pope ordered that the Bishop settling in Budapest be relieved of his duty, who, declining the assistance offered by Holy See, chose to retire despite his young age.⁷ Conversely, Antal Papp, Bishop of Mukacheve, stayed in Uzhhorod. The Czechoslovak Government refused to accept his person for political reasons (as was the case with most of his fellow bishops), endangering the effectiveness of his governing and pastoral activities. Moreover, the

Apostolic See was also concerned about the successes of the schismatic movement. The Holy See found that Bishop Antal Papp, who, during his visit to Rome at the beginning of 1924, reported on the condition of his Eparchy in person as well, could no longer keep the situation that had evolved under control.⁸

In 1923, Czechoslovakia and the Holy See established diplomatic relations, as a result of which a Papal Legate was installed in Prague. Thus, the ordinance of Pope Pius XI regarding the Eparchy of Mukacheve and its hierarch was communicated to those concerned by Prague Nuncio Francesco Marmaggi. At the order of the Secretariat of State,

⁷ The records of Bishop István Novák's case in the Vatican Apostolic Archive (Archivio Apostolico Vaticano): AAV Arch. Nunz., Budapest, busta 5, fasc. 7/7, Eperjes fol. 591–605; as well as: AAV, Arch. Nunz., Budapest, busta 11, fasc. 11/6 (8), Eperjes fol. 440–466.

⁸ The records of Antal Papp's case in the Vatican Apostolic Archive: AAV, Arch. Nunz., Budapest, busta 11, fasc. 11/6 (9), Munkács fol. 467-497.

(2)



on 4 June 1924, Nuncio Marmaggi issued a decree wherein Pope Pius XI appointed Antal Papp Titular Archbishop of Cyzicus, created an Apostolic Exarchate for the parishes of the Eparchies of Prešov and Mukacheve remaining in Hungary, instated the newly appointed Archbishop as Exarch at its head with effect from 1 July 1924 and, effective from the same day, declared the Bishoprific of Mukacheve vacant (Picture 2).

The Decree triggered shock in government circles in Budapest as, contrary to prior practice, the Holy See had enacted policies affecting parishes in Hungary without consulting the Hungarian Government. According to the assessment of Budapest, which was amply divulged by the press, with this step, the Holy See had taken the side of Czechoslovakia ill-disposed towards Hungary. The Hungarian authorities attempted to hinder the execution of the Decree by not granting Archbishop Antal Papp a passport despite his repeated requests and, driven by political considerations, they encouraged him to wait until he would be expelled by the Czechoslovak authorities.

The creation of the Apostolic Administration came as a surprise even to the clergy of the respective parishes as, led by Endre Mocsár, Dean and parish priest of Homrogd, they were in favour of joining the

Eparchy of Hajdúdorog or establishing an external vicariate under its auspices. As Vicar-General, governing twenty parishes formerly in the Eparchy of Prešov, Antal Vaskovics, parish priest of Múcsony, also subscribed to this endeavour. By contrast, in his memorandum submitted to Prince-Primate János Csernoch, István Szémán (from 1934, Szántay-Szémán), former Chief School-Inspector of the Eparchy of Prešov, relocated to Hungary, argued for a separate entity as more conducive to the preservation of the temporary character of the status quo – in line with the position of the Holy See.

Organisation of the created Apostolic

Administration suffered delay as long as the prevailing situation around the person of the Exarch Elect remained unresolved. The Hungarian Government would not want to acknowledge the action of the Holy See and of the Czechoslovak State by issuing an entry permit and saw waiting for expulsion as expedient in every respect. Thus, it was able to demonstrate the oppressive policies of Czechoslovakia internationally and shift the burden of care for the hierarch to the expeller. Meanwhile, enjoying the hospitality of his successor, Péter Gebé in Uzhhorod, Archbishop Antal Papp was cognisant that the situation was irreversible, and he would soon have to leave the territory of Czechoslovakia notwithstanding the objections of the Hungarian Government. At the same time, he was also aware that he was not to ignore the political interests of the Hungarian Government as his operation in Hungary, along with the recognition of the Apostolic Exarchate, depended on the Hungarian State. On 1 September 1925, the Archbishop received a ten-day ultimatum from the Czechoslovak authorities to leave the country. Via the Nuncio in Budapest – i.e. bypassing the official diplomatic channels – the Hungarian Government sent him the message that, upon his expulsion, the Hungarian border control agency would register a protest, without preventing his entry though. It was after such antecedents that, on 11 September 1925, Archbishop Antal Papp was expelled and conveyed to Hungary amid a large muster of police force and great publicity.

At first, the Archbishop went to Budapest, then moved to Miskolc and, on 27 October 1925, took over the governance of the Exarchate. He created a consultory body as substitute for the chapter. After some hesitation, the Hungarian Government gave its consent to the retention of the endowment of the Abbey of Tapolca, to which he had possessed a personal entitlement as Bishop of Mukacheve.

In organising the Apostolic Exarchate, the first issue to settle was the selection of a seat. Even though

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the city of Miskolc proved to be suitable in all respects, it belonged to the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog. Therefore – with the support of Archbishop Antal Papp – on 9 November 1925, the Consultory Body requested from the Holy See that the parish of Miskolc be reassigned to the Apostolic Exarchate, and that the Búza tér church be elevated to the rank of cathedral.⁹ The aspect that led to the creation of the Apostolic Exarchate, in this instance, became an impediment to the development of this new unit of ecclesiastical governance. In fact, the Holy See rejected the Consultors' request on the grounds that the temporary character of the Apostolic Exarchate did not warrant expansion of its territory. The Holy See would adhere to this position even at the time of Exarch Antal Papp's subsequent attempts (1929 and 1938).

Later historical events justified the Apostolic See. The number of the Exarchate's parishes would grow not only as a result of organic development (five new parishes were established by 1945) but due to the modification of state borders as well. Following the First Vienna Award (1938), in the territories reverting to Hungary, six parishes of the Košice (Kassa) Deanery of the Eparchy of Prešov and, subsequently, after the reconquest of Transcarpathia (1939), an additional five parishes were added to the Exarchate. Simultaneously, Rudabányácska and Beregdaróc (an affiliated church at the time of the foundation of the Exarchate), originally under the jurisdiction of the Eparchy of Mukacheve, returned to their Mother Diocese. Archbishop Antal Papp (died on 24 December 1945) did not live to see that, in the wake of post-World War II frontier adjustments, these parishes would revert to the Eparchy of Prešov, and Rudabányácska and Beregdaróc, left in Hungary again, would finally be allocated to the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog.

In Hungarian society, in a state of shock after the Trianon trauma, attitudes to Greek Catholics were marred by a growing suspicion, and the idea that a 'dependable' Hungarian could not be Byzantine-rite reared its head again.¹⁰ As such sentiments would be

palpably manifested in everyday life as well (in public administration, for example, even employment or career advancements could be impacted), a large number of Greek Catholics chose to abandon their rite when selecting individual life strategies. Rite changing was facilitated by the 1929 decision of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches to assign such cases to the competence of nuncios, a major change from previous practice.¹¹ Among the records of the Budapest Nunciature, bulky files dating from the 1930s are found, filled with rite changing requests, with a large proportion pertinent to marriage.¹² In these instances, the Greek Catholic party would typically justify his or her request for rite changing with the argument that, in the absence of such, the family of his or her future spouse would simply not admit him or her. Rite changing decimated the Greek Catholic intelligentsia as predominantly those living in an urban environment came to such decisions. However, (partially successful) rite changing attempts involving entire parishes are also evidenced from the countryside.¹³ Bishop Miklósy strove to stem the surge of rite changing by denying a discharge (*episcopus a quo*), but, through these efforts, he only succeeded in provoking the Latin hierarchs' antipathy, mostly considering transfer to the 'superior' Latin Rite as a natural consequence. As a serious outcome of Bishop Miklósy's resistance, he was completely isolated within the Episcopacy. Furthermore, he would refuse to alter his royalist political views even as the consolidation of the Horthy regime progressed, pitting himself against a Government that generously supported Churches. An apt example of the related detrimental effects was the failure to establish an eparchial seminary and a Greek Catholic theological faculty – magnanimous offers of the cultural policy epitomised by the name of Kuno von Klebelsberg, Minister of Culture. Bishop Miklósy declined this gesture pointing out that he did not see the location in Szeged – where a new academic centre was built by drawing on the relocated University of Cluj

⁹ The documents of the case: AAV, Arch. Nunz., Budapest, busta 14, fasc. 8/5, fol. 300–316.

¹⁰ In 1937, in his speech in Parliament, Smallholders' Party Member of Parliament Mátyás Matolcsy expressed his resentment that, during the colonisation of the Károlyi Estates in Szatmár County, Greek Catholic farm labourers also acquired land. In his opinion, in the vicinity of the Romanian border, it would have been desirable to enable only 'individuals purely of the Hungarian race, with a fully reliable and uncompromising Hungarian pedigree to acquire Hungarian land' (translated from the Hungarian original). Quoted in: Pirigyi, 1990, 129.

¹¹ Previously, requests were to be presented to Rome. The ordinance was revoked in 1940. Szlávik, Antal. *Sajátjogú egyháztagság: Normafejlődés és aktuális kérdések*, Budapest, 2006, 171–172.

¹² E.g. AAV, Arch. Nunz., Budapest, busta 54, 1937, fasc. 2/1–5, fol. 235–533.

¹³ The case of the parishes of Homrogd, Sajóvamos and Tarcal in the Vatican Apostolic Archive: AAV, Arch. Nunz., Budapest, busta 19, 36, 45 and 48.

(*Kolozsvár*) – as appropriate as proposed by the Government. During the session of the Eparchial Synod, he commented: ‘... other times and other people will come; we must not relinquish our rights’ (translated from the Hungarian original).¹⁴

However, Bishop Miklósy’s relations deteriorated not only with the Latin-rite bishops and the Government. Ever since the foundation of the Apostolic Exarchate of Miskolc, he had had numerous conflicts with Archbishop Antal Papp as well. One of the causes of their differences of opinion was the allocation of the parish of Miskolc. As has been mentioned above, in agreement with the Archbishop, the Consultory Body of the Exarchate endeavoured to ensure that Miskolc would be reassigned from the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog to the Exarchate. As Bishop Miklósy successfully prevented this, Archbishop Antal Papp could conduct services in the parish church of Miskolc as a guest. Another source of their conflicts was liturgical language use. After the World War, the use of Hungarian gained increasing currency in the parishes of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog. The leaders of the Eparchy sought to ensure that, in public parlance and official usage, the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog would be referred to as the ‘Hungarian’ Diocese. Such efforts would be aided by radio broadcasts of liturgies launched in the 1930s. Even though no-one questioned his Hungarian identity and loyalty to the Hungarian State, Archbishop Antal Papp was a proponent of the Old Slavonic liturgy. He was chagrined to find that the demand for the use of Hungarian had appeared in certain parishes of the Exarchate as well, and, some of his faithful even communicated their wish to Regent Miklós Horthy to urge the abandonment of Old Slavonic and the introduction of Hungarian. Relying on his prior experience, he developed a sense of conviction that the Czechoslovak Government would abolish the Eparchies of Prešov and Mukacheve by supporting the schismatic movement, thus leaving the Apostolic Exarchate of Miskolc as the only unit of ecclesiastical governance using Old Slavonic in the region. His sense of responsibility for the preservation of the liturgical tradition in Old Slavonic also contributed to his effort to prevent the Old Slavonic language from

being completely supplanted in the churches of the Exarchate as long as this was possible.¹⁵

As of 1921, a new organisation volunteered to represent the interests of the Greek Catholics.¹⁶ The Standing Executive Committee of Hajdúdorog pronounced its dissolution once Bishop Miklósy was consecrated. At the end of World War I, the National Committee, with its seat in Budapest, practically ceased to exist, too. The Association of Hungarian Greek Catholics formed in 1902, which even published a newspaper under the title *Görögkatolikus Hírlap* [Greek Catholic herald] had stopped its operations earlier. The creation of a new organisation with a nationwide scope seemed imperative. To this end, the first steps were taken by Atanáz Maxim, Prior of the Religious House of Máriapócs, Miklós Fedák, parish priest of Levelek, János Kozma, parish priest of Nyírcsászári, and Dániel Véghseő, parish priest of Nyírbakta. The new organisation, the National Federation of Hungarian Greek Catholics (*Magyar Görögkatolikusok Országos Szövetsége* –MAGOSZ for short) was formed in Máriapócs on 1 October 1921. The statutory congress chaired by Bishop Miklósy was attended by 300 representatives of 70 parishes and as many as 15-thousand members of the faithful. The Patron of MAGOSZ was the Bishop, and, as its Lay President, university professor and Member of Parliament József Illés (1871–1944) was elected. MAGOSZ operated four sections: devotional, cultural, economic and journalistic. It was the last of these that created MAGOSZ Press Company, publishing the Máriapócs Calendar and *Görögkatholikus Tudósító* [Greek Catholic post] under János Kozma’s supervision, as well as, subsequently, from 1929, *Görög Katolikus Szemle* [Greek Catholic review], which, edited by István Gróh, Rector of the Hungarian Royal National School of Arts and Crafts, was intended to function as a link between Greek Catholics living across the country. The Federation also made an attempt at establishing a financial institution of a Greek Catholic character, but Felső Tiszavidéki Bank was unable to fully develop due to the economic crisis. From the late 1920s, MAGOSZ would organise a congress as part of the Budapest Catholic Days every year, partly motivated by

¹⁴ Quoted in Pirigyi, 2001, 95.

¹⁵ For more detail, see: Véghseő, Tamás. A „Rakaca-affér”: Adalék az Apostoli Szék és a magyar görögkatolikusok kapcsolataihoz a két világháború között, in: Tusor, Péter – Szovák, Kornél – Fedeles, Tamás (Eds.). *Magyarország és a római Szentszék*, II: *Vatikáni magyar kutatások a 21. században*, Budapest–Róma, 2017, 377–394.

¹⁶ For more detail, see: Pirigyi, 1990, 152–161.

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strengthening relations between the Greek Catholics and Hungarian Catholic society.¹⁷

The task of uniting the Greek Catholic youth was assumed by the Vasvári Pál Circle, originally formed in 1904 but completely reorganised in 1921. Inspired by his commitment and youthful dynamism, members of the Circle wished to follow the example of Pál Vasvári, the Greek Catholic hero of the 1848/1849 Revolution and War of Independence, by advancing the Hungarian Greek Catholic cause and remaining steadfast to the Church. In 1923, the Association of Hungarian Greek Catholic School Masters was formed, and, in 1926, the Federation of Hungarian Greek Catholic Women, based in Miskolc, was established.

In furtherance of the Eparchy's liturgical life, several important publications emerged in the 1920s. The Episcopal Office published the new *Liturgikon*, with the Anaphora printed not only in Hungarian but in Greek as well. This way, Bishop Miklósy meant to signal to the Holy See that, at least, he made some effort to proceed in accordance with the provisions of the Bull of Foundation.

The latest edition of Danilovics's *Énekeskönyv* [Hymn book], revised in 1920 by Budapest chaplain Gábor Krajnyák, an outstanding scholar of the Eastern Rite, was significant primarily on account of the involvement of the faithful in the liturgy. At the end of the decade, *Gyűjteményes nagy énekesköny* [Great compilation of hymns], fairly common in parochial usage and playing a central role for a long time, was also published by him. 1925 saw the publication of the new *Evangéliumoskönyv* [Gospel book], while *Szerkönyv* (*Euchologion*) was published in 1927.

Among the initiatives of the Apostolic Exarchate of Miskolc, the academic journal *Keleti Egyház* [Eastern Church], established in January 1934 by István Szántay-Szémán as editor, with Archbishop Antal Papp's endorsement, was remarkable. János Kozma (1884–1958), a teacher of religious education in Miskolc, 'the all-rounder of the intellectual life of the Greek Catholic Hungarian community' (translated from the Hungarian original), made a tremendous contribution to the editorial work of the periodical published monthly to the end of World War II.¹⁸ It was a venue for highly valuable studies in theology,

ecclesiastical history, patrology, canon law, church art and church music. These papers were authored by the most erudite Greek Catholic priests of the Eparchy and of the Exarchate, such as Antal Papp, Miklós Dudás, Ferenc Rohály, György Papp, Gábor Krajnyák, József Legeza, Andor Bubnó, János Liki, Igor Konstantin Zapotoczky, the painter Emmanuel (Manó) Petrasovszky and many others. The journal also published précis of foreign essays on Eastern Christianity in Hungarian translation and reported on every significant event in the life of Greek Catholics in Hungary and abroad. The authors – canon law expert and church historian György Papp, István Szántay-Szémán and Gábor Krajnyák in particular – were conscious to present the presence of the Eastern Church in Hungary, the history of the Greek Catholics, as well as their canonical development in other academic journals and in standalone publications as well.

The editorial board of *Keleti Egyház* also made its mark in the area of liturgical publications. In 1934, it published the book of prayers and hymns *Dicséjétek az Úr nevét* [Praise the name of the Lord] in Miskolc. It contains the invariable parts of the Divine Office of the Church, along with the hymns of feasts and saints. The voluminous publication of over two-thousand pages including the *Menologion* adopted earlier liturgical translations; missing parts were translated by János Kozma and István Szántay-Szémán. It was proofread by Igor Konstantin Zapotoczky and Ferenc Rohály. In the following year, a concise version of the Breviary was also published under the title *Énekeljétek a mi Istenünknek!* [Sing to our God] for the benefit of the faithful.¹⁹

The formation of the St Nicholas Union League of Hungary (*Szent Miklós Magyarországi Unió*s *Szövetség* – *SZEMISZ* for short) was associated with the editorial board of *Keleti Egyház* as well. In 1939, with István Szántay-Szémán as their President, members of *SZEMISZ* volunteered to engage in an intensive prayer apostolate, as well as in academic and educational activities to promote the unity of Christian Churches.²⁰

In 1929, the Holy See resolved to create a code of canons exclusively for the Eastern Catholic Churches.

¹⁷ The cancellation of the 1931 congress sparked yet another feud between Bishop Miklósy and Archbishop Antal Papp, which was eventually reconciled by Prince-Primate Serédi: Klestenitz, Tibor. A görögkatolikusok Serédi Jusztinián és Mindszenty József egyházkezelésében, *Athanasiana*, 33–34(2012), 109–110.

¹⁸ Pirigyi, István. *Görög katolikus papi sorsok*, Debrecen, 1999, 76.

¹⁹ For more detail on liturgical publications, see: Ivancsó, 2006; also in the present volume: Cat. IV.44.

²⁰ Pirigyi, 1990, 161–162.

In the nearly sixty-year long process, Hungarian Greek Catholic canon law experts participated from the outset. The Eparchial Codification Commission, with Jenő Bányay, László Sereghy, Nicefor Melles, István Bihon and György Papp as its members, was formed as early as 1929. Latest research suggests that the recommendations of the Commission sent to the Holy See may be seen as representing substantial contribution to the whole of the codification process.²¹

Drawing the Trianon borders ushered in a new era in the life of the Basilian Order as well.²² In the territory of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog, only one monastery – that of Máriapócs – was left, whereas the Monastery of Mukacheve, active in the training of monastics, was transferred to Czechoslovakia. The similarly significant Monastery of Bixad (*Bikszád*) became part of Romania. Despite frontier changes, all three Monasteries would remain part of the Galician Province until 1932, when the Holy See created the Province of St Nicholas for the Basilians of the three countries, with a Hungarian, Romanian and Rusyn branch. The Hungarian Region came to be headed by Miklós Dudás, who extended the limits of the Order as early as 1933 by commencing the construction of the Religious House of Hajdúdorog. As a result of the First and Second Vienna Awards, the monasteries of the Province returned within Hungary's borders for a few years. After World War II, the Order established religious houses in Makó and, subsequently, in Kispest. Thus, in 1947, the Province of St Stephen could be formed for the three monasteries in Hungary.

Following the death of Bishop István Miklós on 29 October 1937, the Episcopal See of Hajdúdorog would remain vacant for almost a year and a half. Until the Holy See and the Hungarian Government found an eligible successor, the Eparchy was governed by Vicar Jenő Bányay.

The 34th International Eucharistic Congress, organised in Budapest from 24 to 28 May 1938, coincided with the period of *sede vacante*.²³ In preparation for this distinguished, even

internationally prominent Catholic event of the time – primarily thanks to the organising efforts of Prelate István Szántay-Szémán – the Greek Catholics did everything to 'enable the Eastern Church through this Congress to fulfil such a representative role that would convincingly demonstrate the equality of Eastern and Western Rites before the whole world' (translated from the Hungarian original).²⁴ The learned Vicar of the Apostolic Exarchate of Miskolc managed to ensure that the programme of the Congress would include a Greek Catholic Divine Liturgy and a Greek Catholic special session as well. The Divine Liturgy in Greek was celebrated in St Stephen's Basilica on 27 May; Titular Archbishop Georgios Kalavassi, Bishop of Athens, Greek Bishop Dionysios Varoukhas, Bulgarian Bishop Cyrill Kurtyff and István Szántay-Szémán officiated at the service (Picture 3). Papal Legate Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pius XII, was also in attendance and actively participated in the liturgy.

After Bishop Miklós's death, the Holy See immediately began negotiations with the Hungarian Government and solicited influential Hungarian church personages for their opinions and recommendations.²⁵ Ferenc Luttor, advisor of the Hungarian Embassy to the Holy See, backed the appointment of Antal Papp, but, citing the Archbishop's age, the Congregation for the Oriental Churches soon discarded the suggestion. Congruent with his renown, the Congregation required information on István Szántay-Szémán as well. The views relative to him reaching Rome were of necessity brief: As he was a priest with a family, his candidacy could not be considered. Of the Basilians, the names of Imre Liki and Miklós Dudás were suggested, with the remark that the latter was well known by the diocesan clergy, and they would willingly accept him. Imre Liki's virtues and knowledge were acknowledged by all, but he was lesser known as, authorised by his Order, he primarily worked in Czechoslovakia in those years. The candidate of the Holy See was Bishop Bazil Takách, Hierarch of the Greek Catholics in the United States. In line with the

²¹ Szabó, Péter. A hajdúdorogi kodifikációs bizottság létrejötte (1929) a levéltári adatok tükrében, *Athanasiana*, 48(2019), 227–244.

²² For more detail on the Basilian Order, see: Pirigy, István. A magyarországi bazilita kolostorok egyházi helyzetének alakulása a XX. században, *Posztbizánci Közlemények*, 2(1995), 1–9.

²³ For more detail, see: Véghseő, Tamás. Az 1938-as Eucharisztikus Világkongresszus és a magyar görögkatolikusok, in: Ivancsó, István (Ed.). *Az 1938-as Budapesti Nemzetközi Eucharisztikus Kongresszus 75. évfordulója alkalmából 2013. november 28-án rendezett szimpozion anyaga*, Nyíregyháza, 2013, 9–15.

²⁴ *Keleti Egyház*, 36(1938), 143.

²⁵ For more detail on the succession, see: Véghseő, Tamás. Miklós István hajdúdorogi püspök utódlása: Új adatok a budapesti nunciatura levéltárából, in: Tusor, Péter (Ed.). *Magyarország és a római Szentszék – Források és távlatok: Tanulmányok Erdő bíboros tiszteletére*, Budapest – Róma, 2012, 325–341.



(3)

established diplomatic practice, the selection of bishops would proceed in a way that, through its representative, the Government would send a list of names it regarded as acceptable to the Budapest Nunciature. Having examined this list, the Holy See would make its own proposal. On 17 December 1937, the Minister of Foreign Affairs dispatched a list featuring the names of Bazil Takách and Miklós Dudás to Nuncio Angelo Rotta. The next day, however, István Csáky, Chief of Staff of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited the Nuncio and notified him that they had by mistake specified the wrong order, and that the number one candidate of the Government was Miklós Dudás. In conjunction with Bazil Takách's nomination, several counterarguments had been supplied, the one most distressing for the Government being that, having moved from Uzhhorod to the United States, the Bishop was a Czechoslovak citizen. Further negotiations took over one more year. As, in January 1939, the Budapest Nunciature obtained information that was compromising for Bishop Bazil Takách, on 25 March 1939, Pius XII finally chose to appoint Miklós Dudás.

The Bishop Elect was born in Máriapócs in 1902 and joined the Basilian Order in 1920. He studied theology in Rome. He was ordained priest by Bishop István Miklósy in 1927. Initially, he taught in the Order's study house in Czechoslovakia and, later, became Prior of the Monastery of Máriapócs. From 1933, he was head of the Hungarian branch of the Province of St Nicholas. He was founder of the Order's Religious House in Hajdúdorog and planted Basilian sisters in Hungary. In 1937 and 1938, he led a compelling missionary tour in the United States. Miklós Dudás was ordained bishop in the pilgrimage church of Máriapócs on 14 May 1939 by Archbishop Antal Papp, with the participation of Endre Kriston, Auxiliary Bishop of Eger, and the subsequently martyred Zoltán Meszlényi, Auxiliary Bishop of Esztergom.

Aged only 37 at the time of his appointment, the new hierarch started work with youthful energy. 'It is my episcopal mission and goal, by deepening faith and rendering it self-confident in our Diocese, to prepare a perfect people for the Lord' (Luke 1:17) (translated from the Hungarian original) – he wrote to the priests

of the Eparchy.²⁶ He could not foresee what powerful forces he would be constrained by in fulfilling his mission during his 33-year long episcopacy. Twenty-seven years after the creation of the Eparchy, the most important task was still the establishment of the most essential institutions. In the autumn of 1939, Bishop Dudás already initiated talks on institutional development with the Hungarian Government. He envisaged creating a seminary in the Episcopal Residence and building an episcopal palace in a different location in the city. This idea of his was accepted by the Ministry, and Pál Szohor, Mayor of Nyíregyháza, indicated that he was ready to deliver on the city's earlier offer about the construction of an episcopal residence. The Ministry urged the creation of a diocesan boarding school, as well as the actual fulfilment of the promise from decades earlier concerning the education of Greek Catholic school masters and cantors at the state teacher training institute.²⁷

The implementation of the grandiose plans was thwarted by the eruption of World War II. Of the Nyíregyháza construction projects, only the building of the Episcopal Palace was commenced in Sóstói út. At the expense of enormous sacrifices, the edifice was complete by the end of the war, but, owing to the political changes, the Bishop could not take possession of it. Under modest circumstances, the *lyceum* (comprehensive secondary school) and the teacher training institute eventually began operating in Hajdúdorog in 1942. One year earlier, on the Bishop's initiative, a people's academy was started in the same place. In the town, in the Basilians' completed Religious House, a student home was created, while the sisters provided accommodation to schoolgirls in their own building. On the initiative of Gyula Kovács, teacher of religious education, St Josaphat's Student Hostel opened in similarly moderate conditions and with a small number of boarders in Nyíregyháza in 1943. The Bishop was also supportive of the development of diocese-level organisations for the National Body of Catholic Agrarian Young Men's Clubs (*Katolikus Agrárifjúsági Legényegyletek Országos Testülete* – KALOT for short) and for the Association of

Catholic Women and Girls (*Katolikus Asszonyok és Lányok Szövetsége* – KALÁSZ for short).

After the re-annexation of Northern Transylvania to Hungary (1940), for years, Bishop Dudás would attempt to persuade the Holy See into letting him exercise jurisdiction over the parishes previously assigned to the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog. In 1919, thus before the new state borders were designated, with reference to effective control by the Romanian Army, the Holy See ordered within weeks that the respective parishes be reassigned to the Romanian eparchies. As the same swiftness was uncharacteristic of the Holy See during the years of World War II, all attempts by Bishop Dudás failed.²⁸ This would have been the last chance to save the Greek Catholic Hungarian community of Transylvania from loss of identity and assimilation into the Roman Catholic or Calvinist Church.²⁹

Following the re-annexation of Transcarpathia, the Eparchy's ordinands would again be trained in the Seminary of Uzhorod, with Bishop Theodore Romzha, the future martyr, as their spiritual leader. However, this opportunity, also enabling more intensive contact with the Eparchy of Mukacheve, existed only until the autumn of 1944, and, afterwards, the seminarians would return to the Roman Catholic Central Seminary in Budapest. From January 1944, following the death of Diocesan Bishop Sándor Sztojka, Bishop Miklós Dudás would also head the Eparchy of Mukacheve as Apostolic Exarch. In September the same year, it was he who ordained Theodore Romzha (Tódor Romzsa) bishop, to whom he handed over effective governance of the Eparchy.

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²⁶ *A Hajdúdorogi Egyházmegye Körlevelei*, 1939/VI, NYEL, I–1–b.

²⁷ Pirigyí, 2001, 96–97.

²⁸ For more detail on Bishop Dudás's negotiations, see: Sárándi, Tamás. Adalékok a hajdúdorogi püspökség 1940 utáni északerdélyi jogkiterjesztéséről folytatott közvetlen tárgyalások történetéhez, in: Véghseő, Tamás (Ed.). *Hajdúdorog, 1868–2018: Tanulmányok és források a magyar görögkatolikusok történetéhez*, Nyíregyháza, 2019, 109–125.

²⁹ The alarming situation was reported by György Papp in 1942: Papp, György. *A görögkatolikus magyarság helyzete Erdélyben*, Nyíregyháza, 1942.