

Reflections on the Background to the Union of Uzhhorod/Ungvár (1646)¹

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In 17th century historic Hungary, the processes leading to the formation of the Greek Catholic Churches may be best interpreted against the backdrop of early-modern age denomination organisation.² Corresponding to European models, in the early-modern age, the Hungarian Catholic Church virtually underwent a modernisation process, a result of which, in terms of ecclesiastical life, was the fact that it reached the level of European Catholicism and was enabled to give appropriate responses to the challenges of the age. Even the sizeable Byzantine-rite Christian communities living in the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary only began to attract the attention of the Catholic Church in earnest when the latter, amid the adoption of the substantive elements of the Tridentine reform programme, reaffirmed its internal coherence and, what is more, developed a capability to make considerable advances against Protestantism. Strengthened in its self-awareness and human

1 The present enquiry was implemented as part of the K 108780 OTKA (Hungarian Scientific Research Fund) Project.

2 The main features of this process were discussed in: Véghseő, Tamás, „...*melio rem vivendi ordinem introducere...*”: *Le mansioni e le prospettive peculiari di un vescovo greco-cattolico in Ungheria all'epoca della confessionalizzazione: sei lettere inedite del vescovo Giovanni Giuseppe De Camillis*, 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, *Collectanea Athanasiana* 1/3, 167-193.

resources, as well as having enlisted the political support of the Viennese Court, Hungarian Catholicism, with serious intentions in mind, would turn its attention to the Orthodox in the north-eastern counties of the Kingdom as of the second half of the 1630s and, subsequently, to the Byzantine-rite communities of the Partium and Transylvania in the final decade and at the very end of the century.³

The present study is meant to be an attempt at outlining what intentions and major principles guided the renewed Hungarian Catholic Church in its endeavour to involve the Byzantine-rite communities in the process of modernisation, and what considerations, expectations, fears and reservations the latter had in responding to the advances of the Catholics. This question will be addressed with a marked focus on the Greek Catholic Church of the historic Eparchy of Mukacheve (*Munkács*).

First of all, it appears essential to clarify a central issue. Whenever the term ‘union’ is used in this discussion, it refers to the union or the unification of Eastern-rite Christians with Rome. In other words, it is synonymous with the event through which Eastern-rite communities, while retaining their own traditions, come to accept the supremacy of the Pope of Rome and the teaching of the Catholic Church. It is through the recognition of the Pope of Rome and the declaration of allegiance to the Catholic Creed that union is achieved and a particular Greek Catholic Church is born. This was precisely what happened at the time of the creation of the Greek Catholic Churches of historic Hungary as well. At the same time, it is important to point out that, although Rome and the Pope were in the centre of such developments, the Holy See was not amongst the initiators in instances of unification in Hungary. Moreover, it would even react to the events concerned mostly with some delay. This point is well illustrated by the Roman

3 The present paper is not intended to elaborate on the union-related initiatives in the Southern Territories of Hungary producing little success but chronologically preceding the processes taking place in the other three regions.

reception of the union of the Bishopric of Mukacheve. Archbishop of Esztergom György Lippay, in informing the Holy See about the union, with a view to accentuating the significance of the event, uses the rather infelicitous wording that he has ‘converted the Patriarch of the Ruthenians’ (a phrase employed in reference to the Bishop of Mukacheve).⁴ In the Roman Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*, a place from which the missionary activities of the worldwide church were already coordinated and controlled at that time, the news triggered a lot of enthusiasm as, to the best of the knowledge of those working there, only one patriarch existed in the respective region, namely the chief pastor of the Serbs in Peć (*Ipek*). His Catholicisation would indeed have been an enormous accomplishment since that would have altered the religious context in the Balkans fundamentally.⁵ Following a protracted correspondence, it was clarified that this instance was about the union of a bishop and of an ecclesiastical community the existence of which had been unknown to Rome previously. Even though, at that time, the Bishopric of Mukacheve was put on the map of the Congregation of Propaganda, it would be inappropriate to see the Holy See in the role of the initiator.⁶ All this, however, does nothing to change the

4 It may be noted that this wording was favoured by all taking part in the events at any level, such as Canon of Eger and parish priest of Uzhhorod (*Ungvár*) István Varró: Véghseő, Tamás, “...*patriarcham graecum convertit ad unionem...*” *A római Német-Magyar Kollégium három egykori növendéke és az ungvári unió*, in *Athanasiana* 23 (2006), 29–48.

5 On the attempts at unification among the Serbs: Molnár, Antal: *La Chiesa ortodossa serba e i tentativi d’unione nel XVII secolo*, in Véghseő, Tamás (Ed.), *Da Roma in Hungaria: Atti del convegno nel terzo centenario della morte di Giovanni Giuseppe De Camillis, vescovo di Munkács/Mukačevo (1689–1706) Nyíregyháza, 29–30 Settembre 2006*, Nyíregyháza 2009, (Collectanea Athanasiana I/2), 25–36.

6 It must be noted that the Holy See was rather passive in the renewal of the Hungarian Catholic Church as well. It did not offer any substantial support even despite some apparently urgent requests: cf. Tusor, Péter, *A pápai diplomácia javaslatai 1639-ben a Szentszék részvételére a magyarországi katolikus restaurációban*, in *A Ráday Gyűjtemény évkönyve*, 9 (1999) 19–38.

main point since local representatives of the Catholic Church, without any case-specific authorisation, had the right to initiate union, the recognition of the supremacy of the Pope and the acceptance of the teaching of the Catholic Church – even unbeknownst to the Pope or the Curia. Nevertheless, it is relevant to highlight this detail as it aptly underscores the fact that, behind the dynamics of the events, it is primarily the motives of the local Church, Hungarian society and Hungarian (ecclesiastical) policy making that one needs to take account of.

In dealing with the question why, after all, the attention of the Catholics was directed towards the Byzantine-rite community, basically two factors need to be considered:

1. Even contemporaries well perceived the fact that ecclesiastical life had undergone profound changes. The era marked by the name of Péter Pázmány saw a thorough transformation in the image of Hungarian Catholicism. Thanks to the adaption of the Jesuit education system already tried and tested in the western half of the European Continent, as well as thanks to its schooling abroad – primarily in Rome –, the general knowledge level of the Catholic clergy noticeably improved. The introduction and application of the norms of the Council of Trent (by national and provincial synods) brought about the betterment of ecclesiastical discipline. Thus, along with its peculiar frame of reference and repository of practical solutions, Tridentine Catholicism appeared to be a viable model to contemporaries, one that was undoubtedly capable of elevating a church mired in a deep crisis such as the one Hungarian Catholicism slumped into during the second half of the 16th century. This was a kind of experience shared not only by clerics but by those aristocratic families that returned to the Catholic Church precisely in the years or decades concerned. From this point on, it was only a matter of individual disposition and vision whether the subsequent step would be taken, i.e. exploring how this functional model could be applied to the context

of Eastern Christian communities marred by severe crises, and thereby set them on the path to progress. Senior clerics, priests and monks, as well as seculars (i.e. the representatives of aristocratic families) with the intent to modernise the Eastern-rite communities living in their dioceses or on their estates, respectively, were all present at the cradle of the evolving Greek Catholic Churches.

2. At the same time, the fact that this period was a time of denominational strife ought not to be lost sight of, either. Although, in the process of denomination formation, boundaries were firmly re-established, and units of ecclesiastical administration were retained (as in the case of Catholics) or would newly emerge (as in the case of Protestants), neither of the two major opposing camps would abandon its desire to increase its membership and sway to the detriment of its adversary. In the course of the 17th century, only the Catholics would make conspicuous accomplishments mostly by means of personal persuasion (as in the case of the Catholicisation of noble families), but the practice of resorting to violence would not be terminated, either. (In fact, the 1670s came to be referred to as the ‘Decade of Mourning’.) In the era of denominational strife, the virtually defenceless Eastern Christians wedged between the two camps could not remain unnoticed. The motivations of the Catholics no doubt included the need to eliminate the ‘Protestant threat’ or, in other words, to prevent the Calvinist Church from gaining access to the Eastern Christians through the influence of the Rákóczi, a Transylvanian princely dynasty with vast lands and estates. Given the fact that, on the estates of the Rákóczi Family, Byzantine-rite Christians were in fact present in large numbers (e.g. in the Mukacheve Demesne, with the Bishop of Mukacheve residing in its centre, in complete manorial dependence), the apprehension of the Catholics was not entirely unfounded. Even though the spirit of the Reformation was very distant from the ecclesiastical image and way of thinking of Eastern Christians, the possibility of implementing ‘intermediate’ arrangements wherein Eastern-rite communities would *de facto* be placed under close con-

trol by the Calvinist Church could not be ruled out. In his report dispatched to Rome, György Lippay, as Bishop of Eger (1637–1642), did make some allusions to the attempts of the Duke of Transylvania: *Although the Duke of Transylvania was intent on coercing him into adopting Calvinism through various intrigues and by appropriating his villages and estates, this Patriarch [i.e. the Bishop of Mukacheve] has remained steadfast in his religion. There are a handful of settlements that have been converted to heresy and have let the preachers enter their midst, though*.⁷ However, a case in point in this respect could be the action taken by Zsuzsanna Lórántffy, who, in Mukacheve, as a reaction to the election of the Greek Catholic monk Péter Parthén as bishop following the union, had Calvinist preachers elect an antibishop, who happened to be affiliated with Calvinist spirituality himself.⁸

Thus, (well-intentioned) modernisation efforts and the logic of denominational rivalry are equally discernible among the motivations of the representatives of the Hungarian Catholic Church. As sources dating from the respective period reveal, the necessity of modernisation and reform was not questioned by contemporaries. Catholics and Protestants acquainted with and reporting on the lives of Byzantine-rite Christians agreed that this Church was in a deep crisis, from which it could only be rescued with help from outside. At the same time, with a view to ensuring the renewal of their ecclesiastical life, the Eastern-rite Christians living in the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary could not expect any substantial impulses either from the south, i.e. from Balkan Orthodoxy suppressed by the Turks, or from the north, i.e. from the nascent Greek Catholic Church of the Polish Kingdom,⁹ or

7 Cited in: Tusor, Péter, *Lippay György egri püspök (1637–1642) jelentése Felső-Magyarország vallási helyzetéről (Archivio Santacroce)*, in *Levéltári közlemények* 73 (2002) 200–242.

8 Lacko, Michael, *Unio Užhorodensis Ruthenorum Carpaticorum cum ecclesia catholica*, Roma 1965, 142.

9 In his report, Lippay even points out that his predecessors on the Episcopal

even from Ruthenian and Russian Orthodoxy similarly hit by crises. In what follows, instead of a detailed account, some brief hints will be supplied to highlight the fact that embracing western models was by no means foreign to contemporary Orthodoxy. It was precisely in those years that Metropolitan of Kiev Peter Mohila launched his educational reform modelled on Jesuit antecedents, in the hope of promoting the renewal of his Church, as well as the improvement of the general knowledge level of his clergy in particular. Endorsing western models was not completely extraneous to Orthodoxy under Turkish rule, either. The Greek Orthodox would also be pleased to capitalise on the cultural wealth of Italian universities. Moreover, some Orthodox bishops on the Balkans would not even dismiss the idea of uniting with Rome. Conversely, there were not only examples of openness to the Catholic West. While the Orthodox of the Bishopric of Mukacheve were setting out on the path to unification with the Catholic Church, in Constantinople, the life of Patriarch Cyril Lucaris, who, partly guided by anti-unionist and anti-Rome emotions, had caused serious turmoil in his Church on account of his advances to Calvinist teachings, was ended by violent death. During the period in focus, the life of distant Russian Orthodoxy was not characterised by flourishing and development, but rather by an increase in the awareness of the demand for reforms and, subsequently, by the upheaval triggered by the reforms of Patriarch Nikon and the secession of the old believers.¹⁰

Having gained some insight into the life of the neighbouring Orthodox Churches, the Orthodox community living in the north-eastern region of the Kingdom of Hungary, on the one hand, must have

Throne of Eger previously tried to solicit help from the Greek Catholic bishops of Poland, but their requests would not be heeded: Tusor, *Lippay György egri püspök*, 205.

¹⁰ Although Nikon was enthroned as patriarch only in 1652, as G. Florovsky notes, the ground for the reforms associated with his name had been prepared by the Tsar's Court years before. Cf. G. Florovsky, *Vie della teologia russa*, Genova 1987, 53.

concluded that the former also struggled trying to combat severe internal problems, and, on the other hand, they could realise that, in those churches, opening to the west was not conceived as an alternative to be outright rejected at all.

Therefore, completely left to their own devices, the priests and the faithful of the Bishopric of Mukacheve, short of any hope for outside help from Orthodoxy, could not but witness that the standards of their ecclesiastical practice were incomparable with those of the surrounding denominations, and that they would only continue to fall further behind. Whereas the Catholics and Protestants could lean on a considerable institutional system in terms of priest- and minister-education, in the area of the Bishopric of Mukacheve, new generations of priests would be trained at parish level. Any particular parish priest would take his son, son-in-law or the son of a farmer from the village, and would impart the knowledge to him in a manner akin to that in which he had also acquired it. Later, in the vicinity of monasteries, it became customary for this type of training to be taken care of by monks. Education was confined to the acquisition of writing- and reading-skills, as well as to the teaching of how to conduct services. Prior to ordination, the bishop would examine the candidate, but, obviously, there was no room for any high expectations for the individual to be ordained given the limitations of that educational framework. The social status of Byzantine-rite Christians *per se* posed serious impediments for the renewal of ecclesiastical life. Orthodox priests lived as serfs and did not possess the privileges and exemptions that would have enabled them to raise their level of education. Even a particular landowner permitting a priest to redeem corvée financially would be seen as an exceptional privilege. It frequently happened that bailiffs literally ordered a priest conducting a service to leave the altar, go out and perform socage. The ecclesiastical leader of this community, the bishop of Mukacheve, also lived in a similar state of defencelessness. The contemporary owner of the Demesne of Mukacheve would, at his own will, exercise authority over the personal freedom of the bishop

residing in the Monastery of Mukacheve. The landowner was fully free to decide who to put on the episcopal throne and would imprison or expel any bishop whom he did not like, subsequently appointing someone else to replace him. All this was made possible by the fact that the Bishopric of Mukacheve did not exist *de jure* as it had not been established canonically. In accordance with customary law ensured by the safe-conduct document issued by the feudal authority, the senior monk of the Monastery of Mukacheve, who would be elevated to the rank of bishop some time later, had jurisdiction over Orthodox communities constantly growing in size. It also needs to be added that the social stratification of the Eastern Christians living in the region also appeared to be completely lopsided: they lacked both a nobility and citizenry, and, as recorded in György Lippay's aforementioned report, they were not particularly skilled in wielding weapons, either.¹¹

When the significance of denominational education, and more specifically of priest training, as well as of a stable ecclesiastical administration, status in terms of public law and social embedding is considered at the time of denomination organisation, it may be assessed how little chance of renewal Byzantine-rite communities had. This way, they were absolutely in need of external support, which they could receive in a manner acceptable for them only *from the Catholic Church* and *via the Catholic Church*. The Calvinist dukes of Transylvania were also cognisant that reforms were necessary but they would not go beyond the formulation of the demands for reform. In both the appointment document of Petronius (1623: '*...dignos eligendi, indignos rejicendi...*'),¹² and that of Gregori (1627: '*...ad pristinam integritatem reformandi...*')¹³, Gábor Bethlen explicitly indicated that the bishop

11 Tusor, *Lippay György egri püspök*, 205.

12 Hodinka, Antal, *A munkácsi görög szertartású püspökség okmánytára, 1458–1715*, Ungvár 1911., 54.

13 Hodinka, *Okmánytár*, 59.

was expected to introduce reforms, but he would fail to provide the necessary assistance.

By contrast, György Lippay appointed to be the bishop of Eger in 1637 could offer a considerably more attractive and more viable alternative. The Chief Pastor of Eger, a royal chancellor from 1635 and, as a result, well familiar with nation-level matters, as well as with administration, recognised that this ecclesiastical community and the corresponding social stratum had a chance for progress and development only through the acceptance of a radical change. In one of his reports sent to Rome in 1654, he reiterated the assertion previously made in the Royal Council back in 1642: Nobody took care of the ‘Ruthenian Cause’, and nobody was concerned about the Bishopric of Mukacheve as they were schismatics; the excessive measures of the Mukacheve landowners were also regarded as issues among heretics and schismatics.¹⁴ Thus, what was happening to the Orthodox living in the north-eastern counties would go unnoticed by those in charge in Vienna and in the centres of Catholic senior clergy for a long time. Being schismatics, they were not deemed to be a social group worthy of attention. György Lippay, however, was endowed with a sense of personal benevolence and broad scope of vision that impelled him to take action. He gathered that the social future of a social stratum of a non-negligible size was at stake. According to his estimates, the figures were in the region of a hundred thousand for ordinary people and 400-600 for priests, representing a community that happened to live under his jurisdiction. Furthermore, he also knew that the political, social and ‘ecclesiastical’ indifference towards them would only be eliminated if this community was put on the social map of the Kingdom. The only possible way of achieving that goal seemed to be their integration into the Catholic Church. Provided that the Orthodox of Hungary became Catholics, those institutions of the Catho-

14 Hodinka, Antal: *A munkácsi görög-katholikus püspökség története*, Budapest 1909, 178.

lic Church that could warrant the modernisation of the Eastern-rite communities would be made accessible to them. In this vein, it was speculated that substantial help may come *from the Catholic Church*. On the other hand, there was also a potential for appreciable support in terms of social issues and public law to be received *via the Catholic Church* on account of the fact that, having joined the Catholic Church, their bishop and priests would also be granted the privileges and exemptions that the Catholic clergy was entitled to according to national legislation, a benefit representing the main condition for upward movement within society.

Lippay must have been aware that altering the denominational attributes and social/legal status of a social group of such a significant size would be a radical change of immense proportions, not only from the point of view of those affected but from the perspective of the rest of society as well. Nonetheless, two factors probably prompted him to act as the initiator of the processes leading to integration.

1. The Union of Brest, concluded in the nearby Polish Kingdom at the end of the 16th century, helped transmit such experience to Hungary that, despite some apparent difficulties, proved to function as a set of incentives. Even though the Union of Brest had not delivered on the expectations, and only part of the Ruthenian Church had accepted union with Rome (on top of this, as of the 1620s, even parallel, Orthodox and Greek Catholic, hierarchies had evolved), one important circumstance seemed to justify the Hungarian efforts. Whereas, in the Polish Kingdom, the consensus of as many as ten bishops should have been secured, in the north-eastern region of Hungary, only a single bishop needed to be convinced, the latter, based on Lippay's experience, having such influence on his priests that getting them to subscribe to the union could not pose a major hurdle.¹⁵ Bishop Lippay

15 *'...ha pátriárkájuk skizmából az egyházzal alkotott unióra visszavezethető lenne. Ő a maradék tömeget könnyen, s szinte észrevétlenül egyesíthetné az egyházzal és az igaz vallásra téríthetné.'* ('... should it be possible to guide their Patriarch back

would primarily put a premium on persuading the Bishop of Mukacheve, obviously recalling the failure in Krasny Brod in 1613 and 1614, when Bishop Atanáz Krupeckij, summoned from Poland by the Homonnai-Drugeth Family, wished to proclaim union after winning over a mere fifty priests: the attempt nearly ended in a tragedy.¹⁶ Lippay's words also reveal that he assessed the conditions in the Greek Catholic eparchies of neighbouring Poland as fit to lend their support to the Hungarians. Moreover, their position was so solid domestically that they could envisage expanding their area of jurisdiction to include Hungarian territories as well.¹⁷ Thus, the antecedents in Poland must have made Lippay feel reassured.

2. On the other hand, Bishop Lippay could count on the support of the central government, a circumstance he was in a position to ascertain of as a chancellor. In fact, the Byzantine-rite communities concerned lived in a region which was regarded as a buffer zone not only in denominational but in a political sense, too. With respect to the opposition between the Hapsburg Government and the Dukedom of Transylvania, the jurisdictional area of the Bishopric of

to union from schism. He could easily and almost unnoticeably unite the rest of the populace with the Church, converting them to the true religion..) Tusor, *Lippay György egri püspök*, 206.

¹⁶ Lacko, *Unio*, 46–51.

¹⁷ *Végül pedig a kínálkozó alkalmat megragadva maguknak kezdték követelni a rutének területeit és arra törekedtek, hogy az őket egri püspök és az ország kárára lelkiekben joghatóságuk alá vessék.* ('In the end, taking advantage of the arising opportunity, they began to claim the lands of the Ruthenians for themselves and strove to subject them spiritually to their own jurisdiction, inflicting damage upon the Bishop of Eger and the country'.) Tusor, *Lippay György egri püspök*, 205. This is also corroborated by the words of János Balling, Commander of the Castle of Mukacheve, suggesting that the Homonnai Family had conceded too much influence to the Greek Catholic Bishop of Przemysl in the territories of the Demesnes of Humenné (*Homonna*) and Uzhhorod, despite the fact that those were also under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Mukacheve. Cf. Hodinka, *Okmánytár*, 96.

Mukacheve, comprising thirteen counties extending from Szepesség to Máramaros, was of great geopolitical significance. It is well-worth remembering that there were a large number of Eastern-rite Christians living in the seven counties (the comitatuses Szabolcs, Szatmár, Ugocsa, Bereg, Zemplén, Borsod, Abaúj, along with the castles of Tokaj, Munkács and Ecsed) ceded to Gábor Bethlen in the Peace of Nikolsburg (1621), as well as to György Rákóczi I in the Peace of Linz (1645), respectively. The potential integration of these into the Catholic Church would result in the central government finding important allies at a local level, in a social stratum heavily indebted to it, chief among them the priests granted privileges and exemptions.

As reassuring this latter aspect must have been not only for Lippay but also for the potentates of the Viennese Court, it probably had just as strong an impact on all who did not view the increasing power of the central authority in the region as particularly desirable. Only in reference to the initial period may the latter group be seen as confined to the Protestant Dukedom of Transylvania and the local landowners and city magistrates, all sharing the same interest. Contemporaneously with the decline of the Dukedom of Transylvania and the ordeal unleashed by the liberation wars, in the last decade of the century, it seems that even the Catholic landowners did not deem the emancipation of the Byzantine-rite priests converted to the Catholic faith to be unequivocally beneficial. In cooperation with the Protestants, in the county-level general assemblies, they would endeavour to prevent the proclamation of patents and the guaranteeing of the rights of the Greek Catholic priests.¹⁸ The social and legal change occasioned by the union would be perceived by them to be of such weight that they would not consider the Sovereign's sphere of authority to be sufficient to effect it. Furthermore, they would object to the Sovereign's having made a decision fundamentally affecting social and economic rela-

18 Véghseő, „*meliozem ordinem introducere*”, 210–211.

tions, without consulting Parliament and without seeking the express approval of the estates of the realm. The action taken by the Monarch fits the logic of Hapsburg Absolutism, just as the reaction of the local nobility transcending denominational boundaries does in relation to the context of resistance by the estates of the realm.

The events connected to the union initiative associated with the name of Bishop Lippay appear to confirm the points discussed above. Following his appointment to Eger, Lippay initiated talks with Bazil Taraszovics, Bishop of Mukacheve, who received his appointment from György Rákóczi I in 1633. Lacko Michael demonstrated that, after his ordination as bishop, Traszovics immediately contacted Atanáz Krupeckyj, who, as Bishop of Przemyśl, had been the main figure in the failed Union of Krasny Brod and continued to be touch with the Byzantine-rite communities living on the estates of the Homonnai-Drugeth Family. Based on this fact, it is safe to conclude that the idea of accepting the union must have occurred to him already at the beginning of his episcopal service.¹⁹ His appointment document issued by Rákóczi contains the same exhortations that were formulated upon the appointment of former bishops: let him visit parishes, give examinations to the priests, correct mistakes, end abusive practices, restore pristine conditions, etc.²⁰ Although these would rather be felt as obligatory turns of phrase in an appointment document, Taraszovics took them seriously, albeit not exactly with reference to the framework foreseen by György Rákóczi. Taraszovics set out on his journey, but, as it looks, he was primarily engaged in rendering his person acceptable and consolidating the positions of his most confidential men.²¹ This orientation is indicative of the fact that he was

19 Lacko, *Unio*, 64.

20 Hodinka, *Okmánytár*, 63–65.

21 The appointments of certain individuals decided upon at the Synod of Király-

intent on ensuring his future decisions would be quickly endorsed at lower levels. As stated in his reports, Bishop Lippay started negotiations with Bishop Taraszovics about the union in 1638/39. These talks were secret as it was reasonable to expect a response from János Balling, Commander of the Castle of Mukacheve, in the service of the rival Rákóczi Family. The vigilant castellan must have had a sense of suspicion quite soon since, in November 1640, he advised his lord to dispose of Bishop Taraszovics. All this was supposed to be done as before: by expelling him. What made Balling feel suspicious was the fact that Taraszovics would communicate with Poles excessively. At first, he would point out some of the economic disadvantages of these exchanges to his lord (by saying that the Bishop was transferring the monastery's revenue to Poland).²² Subsequently, however, he would go as far as to denounce Taraszovics alleging that '*he agreed with that bishop from Przemysł*',²³ i.e. with the Greek Catholic Atanáz Krupeckij. In the appropriate moment, Balling would launch a brutal strike against Bishop Taraszovics. On 13 December 1640, Taraszovics was preparing to travel to the seat of Lippay, Bishop of Eger, in Jasov (*Jászó*), in order to declare his allegiance to the Catholic Creed. Prior to his departure, while the Bishop was celebrating the Divine Liturgy, Balling violently stormed in with his men and dragged him from the altar. Obviously, the castellan could have waited till the end of the service, but, through this act of his, he had a way to expose the utter defencelessness of the Bishop of Mukacheve. Despite his rudeness, Balling was shrewd: He was well aware that it would be advisable to camouflage the actual cause of this apprehension with fabricated charges. Since it was clear for him that the Bishop of Mukacheve, intending to Catholicise, had enlisted the support of noteworthy allies,

telek (1638), as well as the Declaration of Máramaros County (1639) serve to illustrate this point: Hodinka, *Okmánytár*, 72–74.

22 Hodinka, *Történet*, 266.

23 Hodinka, *Történet*, 267.

he chose to accuse him of economic abusive practices and, by doing so, he could at least buy some time. He sensed that the ‘old system’ (*‘he who recruited him could also take possession of him’*)²⁴ could only be maintained in its entirety with all of its advantages (i.e. from the perspective of manorial power) as long as Bishop Taraszovics was under his control even physically. It was for a relatively long time, for as long as 8–9 months that he managed to keep Bishop Taraszovics in captivity; a substantial series of attacks were started to secure his release. As soon as it became straightforward that, as opposed to Balling’s statement, the Bishop of Mukacheve was being held in captivity on account of his intention to Catholicise, a series of powerful figures would hasten to act. Remonstrations were made by the neighbouring landowner, Lord Chief Justice János Homonnai Drugeth, a supporter of the cause of the Greek Catholic Church, the Bishop of Eger, the Chapter of Eger and the priests loyal to Taraszovics. Later the Monarch also undertook measures *vis-à-vis* the Duke of Transylvania, and, in the same vein, the Holy See would order the missionaries working in Transylvania to engage in intercessory activities.²⁵ Finally, Taraszovics was set free in the summer of 1641 and was able to travel to Vienna so as to declare his allegiance to the Catholic Creed in the presence of the Monarch. The Catholicisation of the Bishop of Mukacheve would be at once interpreted by the Viennese Court in a manner serving its interest, and Ferdinand III, citing his right of patronage, would demand from the Duke of Transylvania that Taraszovics be readmitted into the Monastery of Mukacheve. At that point, it was already patent that the issue of the Catholicisation of the Bishop of Mukacheve transcended ecclesiastical/denominational bounds in no small measure and was being transformed into a palpably political and/or power-relations-related question. Whereas, in his

24 Hodinka, *Történet*, 266.

25 Hodinka, *Okmánytár*, 76–131.

state, the Duke of Transylvania would not tolerate the Roman Catholic bishop of Transylvania appointed by the Monarch, attempts were made to coerce him into acknowledging the King's right to make appointments on his private feudal estate. In addition, that was in relation to a bishopric that had previously pertained to private manorial advowson. Therefore, this change was unambiguously reflective of gaining and losing ground in terms of power structure. The Monarch would also make use of the opportunity arising at the wedding of the Duke's son and heir, György Rákóczi II, and would try to get the Duke to accept the new situation via his envoy sent to the wedding, György Jakusich, (Lippay's successor on the episcopal throne of Eger). The envoy did not succeed in ensuring that the lately Catholic-turned Taraszovics could return to Mukacheve and receive the revenue of the monastery back. Furthermore, in May 1643, the Duke declared the episcopal throne of Mukacheve vacant and appointed a new bishop in the person of János Juszkó, a priest from Dorobratovo (*Drágabártfalva*).²⁶ The Monarch would grant Taraszovics residence in Kálló and a 200-Forint annuity.

This brought the first phase of the union initiative associated with Lippay to a close, leading to an outcome akin to that in Poland, albeit with different causes in the background. Union did not encompass the entirety of the church concerned, and a parallel hierarchical structure began to evolve. Even though only a single bishop needed to be persuaded in Hungary, a factor unknown in Poland emerged: a Protestant counter-pole, represented by the Duke of Transylvania, successfully confronting the Catholic central authority in favour of the union. The former was able to defend not only his private manorial rights but also his political interests. It must be noted that, whereas,

26 Hodinka, *Okmánytár*, 146–148. Lackó surmises that the selection of the candidate, who happened to have some Protestant leanings himself, was managed by Calvinist preachers in this instance, too. Lackó, *Unio*, 81

in addition to political interests, the Catholic side was also marked by the endeavour for modernisation and enablement, the Rákóczi Family would only display signs of political clout.

Manorial will thus proved to be a decisive element regarding the fate of the union. In this respect, however, the supporters of the union had a lot ‘in reserve’ since the Rákóczi Family was the greatest but not the only landowner of the region. As the owner of the Demesnes of Uzhhorod and Humenné (*Homonna*), the Homonnai-Drugeth Family, mentioned earlier in this paper, controlled large expanses of land. In these areas nothing would impede the spread of the notion of the union. In March 1641, Balling would inform the Duke in writing in a rather disapproving tone that Lord Chief Justice János Homonnai-Drugeth allowed the Bishop of Przemyśl to assume authority in areas of the Demesnes of Uzhhorod and Humenné.²⁷ Thus, when the cause of the union stalled owing to Taraszovics’s expulsion in the Demesne of Mukacheve, a crucial location on account of its episcopal seat, the neighbouring demesne would rise to prominence. Simultaneously, an important personal change was also taking place. The throne of the Archbishop of Esztergom, becoming vacant due to the death of Archbishop Imre Lósy, was occupied by György Lippay, who would thereafter be able to undertake measures with respect to the union as well with an expanded sphere of authority. At that time, the Bishopric of Eger would come to be led by a rising star of the age, György Jakusich, a person with promising future prospects. His appointment to Eger could be seen as particularly significant in light of the fact that he was the brother of János Homonnai Drugeth’s wife, Anna Jakusich, who was a committed supporter of the union of the Eastern-rite communities living on their family estates.

As the modernisation-related intentions originating with the representatives of the Catholic Church came to be backed by the land-

27 Hodinka, *Okmánytár*, 96. Taraszovics is criticised for not protesting at this, despite the fact that his jurisdiction was curtailed.

owner this time, the chances of success were also raised. Anna Jakusich settled two Basilian monks in Uzhhorod: Gábor Kossovics, coming from and schooled in Poland, and Péter Parthén, a simple monk having left the Monastery of Mukacheve after Taraszovics's expulsion. Starting out from the town, the two monks would for years visit the Byzantine-rite villages. Unfortunately, no reports on the details of their activities have survived. Events would accelerate from December 1645. Following the death of János Homonnai Drugeth, Bishop György Jakusich sojourned at his sister's place in Uzhhorod for an extended period of time. During that time, he could be more intimately acquainted with the results of the work of the two Basilian monks and could also join the negotiations in person. The union was solemnly proclaimed in the spring of the following year. On 24 April 1646, on the feast-day of Saint George,²⁸ the Bishop and the two Basilian monks called the Byzantine-rite priests of the area to the Castle Church of Uzhhorod maintained by the Jesuits in order for them to endorse the union. The invitation was accepted by sixty-three priests from the surrounding areas, declaring their allegiance to the Catholic Creed, approving of unity with the Catholic Church, claiming that they believed everything that the Catholic Church taught, as well as recognising the Pope of Rome as their Chief Pastor. The conditions for the union were the following: 1. The rite of the Greek Church would remain totally intact; 2. The bishop would be elected by the Synod of Priests and would be reaffirmed by the Apostolic See; 3. The priests united with Rome would be granted all the ecclesiastical rights and privileges that Roman Catholic priests were entitled to in Hungary. As approximately six-hundred Eastern-rite priests worked in the region at that time, and the Union of Uzhhorod was accepted only by sixty-three priests, it was more the beginning rather than the end of the unification processes that the special event itself marked.

²⁸ In Hungary, the feast-day of Saint George was displaced by the feast-day of Saint Adalbert of Prague and thus postponed by one day.

In the decades to come, the issue of getting the union accepted was constantly on the agenda. It seems undeniable that, in the years following the Union of Uzhhorod, the number of priests endorsing the union would conspicuously rise, reaching as many as four-hundred in 1654, as noted in Lippay's accounts.²⁹

Although Bishop Jakusich died unexpectedly in 1647, his successor, Benedek Kisdý, joined by Jesuit Prior Tamás Jászberényi, reaffirmed the union during his visit to Uzhhorod. At the National Synod of Trnava (*Nagyszombat*), held in September 1648, Uniate priests headed by Parthén and Kossovics also made an appearance. The National Synod officially acknowledged the creation of the Greek Catholic Church. In 1651, on behalf of the Archbishop of Esztergom, Mátyás Tarnóczy, Bishop of Vác and Vicar of Esztergom, also approved of the union with reference to the Eastern-rite communities living in the territory of the Provostship of Szepes, i.e. under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Esztergom. It is important to point out that, following the Union of Uzhhorod, there was no delegation departing for Rome as it had happened after the Union of Brest and as it could have been expected in the context of 'Unity with Rome' for the Hungarian union as well. The Hungarian Catholic National Synod came to be identified as the highest authority for admittance into the Catholic Church.

In conjunction with the cooperation between Benedek Kisdý, Bishop of Eger, and Gábor Kossovics, an archival material,³⁰ upon closer inspection, offering two further aspects for a better understanding of the background of the union, has been preserved. Kossovics's involvement was marked by a particular feature: He would for a long time conduct services according to both rites, depending on what was called for by pastoral necessity at any given moment – in

29 Lacko, *Unio*, 120.

30 Lacko, *Unio*, 209–215.

Roman Catholic churches according to the Latin Rite and in Greek Catholic churches according to the Byzantine Rite. The 'Kossovics Case', as well as the stance of the Holy See taken by the Holy See in that regard highlight one of the most sensitive problems of the union(s). Conversely, the conduct of Bishop Benedek Kisdy *vis-à-vis* this matter may allow for some inferences about yet another motivation of the Latin-rite senior clergy.

Kossovics's practice would become a widely known problem when Methodius Terlitsky, Bishop of Chelm, reported him to the Holy See at the turn of 1648/49. The Congregation of Propaganda ordered the Nuncio of Vienna to launch an inquest into the matter, and he would request information from Bishop Benedek Kisdy. The Bishop of Eger willingly complied with the Nuncio's demand and wrote that the Basilian monk was indeed wont to conduct services according to both rites, painstakingly avoiding mixing the rites. In other words, in Roman Catholic churches, he conducted Latin-rite ceremonies in a Latin chasuble and, in Greek Catholic churches, he officiated at Byzantine-rite divine services in Eastern-rite liturgical vestments. In Kisdy's view, Kossovics did not commit a violation by doing so since he had permission for that; he even enclosed the permit issued by the Rector of the Jesuit College of Vienna. Of course, a prohibitive response would soon arrive from Rome. The Cardinals in the Congregation of Propaganda would cite the Bull *Providentia Romani Pontificis* issued by Pope Pius V in 1566, expressly forbidding bi-ritualism,³¹ with provisions which could by no means be countermanded by a Jesuit rector. Lacko remarks that, in spite of the ban, Kossovics continued to conduct services according to both rites, a circumstance

31 L. Tomassetti et collegii adlecti Romae virorum s. theologiae et ss. canonum peritorum, Bullarium Romanum (Tomi XXIV), Augustae Taurinorum, Seb. Franco, H. Fory et Henrico Dalmazzo editoribus, A. Vecco et sociis, 1857–1872: tomo VII, 1862; da Pius IV (papa CCXXVI, anno 1559) a Pius V (papa CCXXVII, anno 1566), 473–475.

illustrated by the fact that Jakob Susa would file a complaint to the Holy See against him as late as 1665.³²

Firstly, the reaction of Benedek Kisdý will be scrutinised. Kisdý received his appointment to lead the Bishopric of Eger in 1648. Prior to that, he had been Bishop of Oradea (*Nagyvárad*) for two years, as well as Bishop of Syrmia (*Szerém*) for another two years. As these dioceses proved to be inaccessible by Catholic bishops during the Turkish rule, the episcopal titles for Oradea and Syrmia virtually referred to titular bishoprics. In actual fact, Kisdý was confronted with the practical difficulties of church governance and the organisation of pastoral care for the first time when he took office as Bishop of Eger. Similarly to his fellow bishops, his main problem was the still severe shortage of priests, which could not be substantially offset by the Franciscans (mostly Italians barely speaking any Hungarian), Jesuits or Paulines working in the area of his diocese, either.³³ All the while he saw that 500–600 *real* Byzantine-rite priests were living and performing their duties in the very same geographical region, i.e. in his diocese. In reference to the Kossovics Case, Kisdý recorded that the Basilian monk performed exemplary pastoral service in Humenné for the benefit of the souls of the faithful and for his consolation (*'...meaque consolatione...'*).³⁴ What else could have provided solace to the Bishop of Eger feeling anxious about the shortage of priests other than the perspective proffered by Kossovics? He must have been justified to imagine that bi-ritualism could represent a kind of solution to the personnel problems of pastoral work in the denominationally mixed settlements such as Humenné. Kossovics performed truly outstanding pastoral work in Humenné:

32 Lacko, *Unio*, 177. The significance of continuing this practice will be further expounded upon below.

33 In his report, György Lippay gives a long, detailed description of the dire pastoral conditions caused by the shortage of priests: Tusor, *Lippay György egri püspök*, 209–213.

34 Lacko, *Unio*, 211.

He opened a school, catered for the pastoral care of the Catholics of Humenné (obviously from both rites) and reinforced the union in the surrounding villages as well.³⁵ There seems to have been no reason as to why Bishop Kisdy could not have thought of the possibility that the integration of the Byzantine clergy into the Catholic Church might thus also produce a positive outcome (for the Latin-rite diocesan bishops). With the employment of licentiate, i.e. the involvement of seculars, with Catholicised former Protestant preachers very often among them, in pastoral work (e.g. funerals, liturgies of the Word, etc.), becoming a recognised practice in the Hungarian Catholic Church, it must have been rather obvious to ask why Byzantine-rite priests could not be given permission to conduct services according to the Latin Rite as well, under the supervision of the Latin diocesan bishops.

Attractive as this alternative may have been from the vantage point of the Roman Catholic senior clergy, the practice introduced by Kossovics did in fact pose serious threats for the union itself. The protest by the neighbouring Ruthenian bishop and the swift ban from Rome were not a matter of coincidence, even though Kisdy attributed the former to his successful defeat of Terlitsky's attempt to extend his jurisdiction to include the Ruthenians of Hungary). The dominant tone of the Bull of Pius V was set not exclusively and primarily by the endeavour to assert and protect the superiority of the Latin Rite (despite the fact that the text also says that married priests in particular ought not to conduct services according the Latin Rite..), but more by that the realisation that blurring the boundaries between the rites and even the potential danger of doing so would literally deter Eastern-rite

35 Lacko speculates that the founding of the school remained only a plan (Lacko, *Unio*, 174.), but a recently discovered letter written by Kossovics in 1675 proves that the school did operate. EPL Archivum saeculare, Acta radicalia, Classis X 35a. 3–4. For the text of the letter, see: Véghseő, Tamás, *Unió, integráció, modernizáció: A Rómával való egység háttere a munkácsi püspökségben (17. század közepe)*, in *Athanasiana* 32 (2010), 9–36.

communities from uniting with Rome. In any union-related process, the opponents of the union would argue that the Catholic Church would sooner or later encourage or force the Eastern-rite communities united with Rome to relinquish the Byzantine Rite. In nearby Poland, where Latinisation combined with Polishisation had considerable centrally supported traditions, such fears were very strong. This circumstance could well account for the vehement objections of the Ruthenian bishop. Upon subjecting the issue to general examination, it is fair to suggest that the spread of bi-ritualism could theoretically amplify apprehensions of Latinisation in Hungary as well. Since the Greek Catholic clergy by far outnumbered the Roman Catholics, the Eastern-rite faithful could expect to see significantly more Greek Catholic priests serving according to the Latin Rite than the other way around.³⁶ At the same time, the fact that community-level rite changing already had some precedents in Hungary, too, should not be lost sight of. Even György Lippay himself recorded in his report referred to earlier several times that not long before (i.e. in the late 1630s) as many as seven or eight villages had volunteered to adopt the Catholic Faith and the Latin Rite, and the process had even been completed in a number of villages.³⁷ This phenomenon may be imputed to the excessive measures undertaken by the Latin-rite missionaries working in the region. At the time of the conclusion and reconfirmation of the union, Lippay unequivocally expressed his support for the intangibility of the Byzantine Rite, and, in his missive written in Slavic and addressed to the Greek Catholic clergy, he also pledged to uphold it.³⁸

36 The issue of reactions triggered by bi-ritualism in practice will be revisited below.

37 Tusor, *Lippay György egri püspök*, 206.

38 A version of the letter in Latin is available in the Primate's Archive: '*Quod attinet ritus vestri graeci laudabiles ceremonias, eas liberi exercentis sicut ante ita et in posterum. Cum nos modo, et praeterlapsis temporibus nihil in eis mutare intendimus.*' EPL AEV 2116/1, Published in: Véghseő, "...*patriarcham graecum convertit ad unionem...*", 47–48.

However, the question of his long-term plans would remain unanswered. It may well be the case that he and his fellow senior clergymen started union-related processes without establishing a finalised concept about the position of the evolving Greek Catholic Church within Catholicism. This possibility appears to be absolutely plausible. However, as striving for uniformity was one of the prominent characteristics of the age of denomination organisation, it cannot be ruled out at all that the Catholic initiators would not discard the possibility of rite changing in an upcoming phase of the union-related processes.³⁹ After all, the idea itself cannot have been alien to them. On the other hand, it may be inferred from the deeds of both Lippay, as well as his contemporaries and their successors that the situation was nearly always assessed realistically, and the question of union would also be approached in a highly pragmatic fashion. On the part of 17th century senior Catholic clergymen, there appears to have been no sign of any tendencies to Latinise the Eastern-rite communities or completely assimilate them into the Catholic Church. On the contrary, their actions and thoughts seem to have been informed by a strong intention to modernise.

Upon seeking answers to the question what could restrain Eastern-rite communities from endorsing the union, the fear of losing their rite and hence identity may be identified as only one factor. Moreover, giving the union a legal framework and circumspectly laying down the conditions (i.e. that the rite of the Eastern-rite communities concerned would remain intact) would render such

39 For instance, as early as 1687, regulations facilitating conversion to the Latin Rite were advocated by the Jesuit Ferenc Ravasz to Cardinal Lipót Kollonich. This proposal, however, was not supported even by his fellow monk from the same order, Gábor Hevenesi: cf. Nilles, Nikolaus, *Symbolae ad illustrandam historiam ecclesiae orientalis in terris coronae S. Stephani*, Oeniponte 1885, 780–786.

dangers easily avoidable. In addition, even the union itself may be interpreted as a defence mechanism: The gradual application of the ‘salami-slice strategy’, i.e. Catholicisation and rite changing village after village, could be countered by a community-level declaration of unity with the Catholic Church, guaranteeing immutability of rite as a proviso. Distrustfulness was a deterrent to the union, matching worries about liturgical tradition in force. Contemporary sources clearly describe the Byzantine-rite population, including their priests, as simple, uneducated and down-to-earth, a community generally held in contempt by the majority of society. It was their century-long entrenched view and experience transferred from generation to generation that they were at the very bottom of contemporary society. For them, the union opened such a window of opportunity that they may not have regarded as real, attainable or implementable. A sense of reality common to simple people guided all those who would take a cautious approach to the union. In all probability, they understood the magnitude of the opportunities warranted by the promise that the priests would be granted the same legal status as the Catholic clergy. However, they also perceived that, whereas that promise was coming from the distant Vienna, the interests of local manorial power defining their everyday existence were mostly converse. Their lack of trust was justified as it would take almost a century for the first tangible signs of the emancipation of the Greek Catholic clergy to manifest themselves. In the decades following the Union of Uzhhorod, in most places, the Greek-Catholic-turned priests would experience that their exposure to manorial power would continue thereafter as well. It seems self-explanatory that the Protestant landowners refused to recognise the rights of the Greek Catholic priests. Nevertheless, as late as the 1690s, De Camillis, Bishop of Mukacheve, complained about the fact that the bailiffs from treasury estates and some Catholic

landowners would not abide by the provisions of the Monarch's letters patent.⁴⁰

Naturally, eliminating distrust primarily became the responsibility of those members of the Eastern-rite community who had aligned themselves with the cause of the union. In this regard, the two Basilian monks mentioned above were assigned a key role. Out of the two, it was chiefly Péter Parthén, elected as bishop after the death of Taraszovics, who turned out to be more influential. Several contemporaries note that, albeit less educated than Kossovics, he was more widely accepted by the people and the clergy thanks to his meekness and devoutness. First and foremost, he needed to have the clergy understand and acknowledge that the only way to ensure progress and modernisation was through the union since only the Catholic Church was able and willing to help the Eastern-rite community to the social position indispensable for progress and development. The job of Parthén, who had a way to communicate with ordinary people with considerable finesse, must have been greatly facilitated by the fact that Archbishop Lippay treated him as a partner in negotiations. A few years earlier, the Eastern-rite clergy helplessly watched as the Commander of the Castle of Mukacheve would incarcerate their bishop as he pleased. By contrast, this time they witnessed their bishop holding talks with one of the highest dignitaries of the country, who, as a testament to his personal commitment, was striving to remove any obstacles hampering the fulfilment of the conditions of the union.

Creating a sense of partnership in this manner was just as important as a gesture in overcoming distrust and repugnance as the content of the negotiations. Some insights into the latter are afforded by

40 The complaint of Bishop De Camillis from 1693: Végheő, „*meliozem ordinem vivendi introducere*”, 188.

one of the letters of Bishop Parhén addressed to Archbishop Lippay. This previously unknown letter (having remained undetected in the Primate's Archive in Esztergom for a long time) is particularly worth examining as it is the earliest of the few surviving letters written by Parhén.⁴¹

In essence, the letter is a 'wish-list' consisting of six points compiled by Parhén's priests by his order. The list features requests the granting of which was vital for those endorsing the union, as well as with a view to convincing the distrustful. Parhén and his priests would turn to Lippay with trust because, as it is disclosed in the first sentence of the letter, a few days earlier, the Bishop had paid the Archbishop a visit in Bratislava (*Pozsony*), he had delivered him the letter of complaint describing the grievances of the Greek Catholic priests inflicted upon them by the landowners, and the Archbishop had given the 'desired response' (the details of which are not known). Spurred by this episode, they would draft their wishes in six points, reflecting the fact that the Eastern-rite communities having united with Rome had some clear-cut ideas as to how they could commence the modernisation process of their ecclesiastical life as soon as possible.

1. Naturally, the first point concerns the ensuring of the clergy's rights and privileges. They would list the taxes and corvées that they wished to be freed from not only on account of the related financial burdens but also because those hindered them in performing their priestly duties in full. They would ascribe a similar degree of significance to the obtaining of '*privilegium fori*' since this provided them with legal security against excessive measures and manorial bailiffs

41 EPL Archivum saeculare, Acta radicalia, Classis X 38. 185–186. The letter itself contains no date, but it may be established from its contents that it must have been composed in the summer of 1652, more specifically, prior to 22 August. Text of the letter is published in Véghseő, Tamás, *Unió, integráció, modernizáció: A Rómával való egység háttere a munkácsi püspökségben (17. század közepe)*, in *Athanasiana* 32 (2010), 9–36.

prone to deliver summary judgments. The privileges and exemptions would come to be interpreted as the *conditio sine qua non* of the existential improvement and legal emancipation of the Greek Catholic clergy.

2. The second point is about another prerequisite of progress and development: education. The Greek Catholic priests requested that the Basilians, capable of understanding Latin, receive assistance (i.e. suitable locations and some funds necessary for covering operation costs) from the landowners so that they could open schools for the youth. They had some firsthand experience about the extent to which education played a central role in the ecclesiastical life of the Catholics and the Protestants. The Jesuit College moved from Humenné to Uzhhorod not long before must have been seen by the Greek Catholics as an example to follow. In education, they would prefer their own monks, the Basilians, to take a prominent part, but they would envisage the operation of the system through manorial financing, akin to the Jesuit model. It was reasonable to expect that, in constructing the Greek Catholic school system, a leading role would be assigned to Gábor Kossovics, who had studied at the Viennese Jesuit College and, as has been indicated above, had even begun organising a school in Humenné. Details in this respect have not survived, but it is easily conceivable that he inherited the infrastructure of the Jesuits moving from Humenné to Uzhhorod.

3. The third point is aimed at alleviating the disturbances caused by a parallel hierarchy. In compliance with last will of the deceased bishop, after Taraszovics's death, the overwhelming majority of the clergy elected Parthén as his successor. This election would not be recognised by Zsuzsanna Lórántffy on account of the bishop-elect's Catholic faith, and she would get an antibishop elected in the person of a widowed priest, János Zejkán, by (or under their supervision of) twelve Calvinist preachers. In his report from 1665, Lippay remarked that Zsuzsanna Lórántffy and other Protestant landowners, 'imitating us', i.e. acting on the basis of the model of the union initiated by

the Catholics, assembled those Ruthenians who could not be persuaded into abandoning their rite into a kind of Calvinist church.⁴² In his informative note sent to the Holy See in 1654, he observed about Zejkán that he had not been ordained as bishop but had only taken an oath of fealty to the Calvinists and the Duchess. Therefore, he was not only a schismatic but also a heretic, and thus the priestly ordinations conducted by him ought not to be accepted as valid by the church.⁴³ This way, a parallel hierarchy came into existence: The Greek Catholic Church would burgeon on the estates of Catholic landowners, yet ecclesiastical life could not continue in the old mould among those rejecting the union either, but another Byzantine-rite community under Calvinist influence would evolve. The Protestants could obviously not watch the success of the Catholics idly because that could have led to the further diminution of their influence. The effectiveness of the response was acknowledged by Lippay as well, and the Greek Catholic priests were expecting him to back Parthén by utilising his authoritativeness and to counter Zejkán, who had created severe disruption. The Archbishop would do so and, on 22 August 1652, in his circular written in Slavic, he would call on the Ruthenian clergy to recognise only Parthén as bishop.⁴⁴

4. The Protestant fear also emerges in the fourth point. With aim of ensuring the undisrupted development of their church in mind, the Greek Catholic priests requested that, in the Diocese of Eger, as well as everywhere in the territories subject to the Monarch's authority wherever pastoral requirements could justify it, they build churches and establish parishes freely, and the priests of these be not dependent on Lutheran and Calvinist superintendents. Before the major wave of

42 Lacko, *Unio*, 248.

43 Hodinka, *Okmánytár*, 169.

44 This document helps to determine the date of the composition of the present letter. EPL AEV 2116/1, Published in: Véghseő, „...*patriarcham graecum convertit ad unionem...*”, 47–48.

re-Catholicisation in the 1670s, Protestant elders obviously had more power and influence on a local level. In the 18th century, regarding same issue (i.e. the building of churches and the establishment of parishes), Bishops of Eger, whose names will not even be mentioned here, would introduce restrictive measures impacting the Greek Catholics detrimentally.

5. The fifth point of the letter revisits the theme of legal emancipation. The Greek Catholic priests requested the right to bring ecclesiastical or secular noblemen committing offences against their persons or their properties to justice in ecclesiastical courts.

6. Finally, the sixth point focuses on the question of the centre of ecclesiastical governance. As the Monastery of Mukacheve, functioning as an episcopal seat, had been taken possession of by Parthén's opponent, the Greek Catholic bishop was obliged to create another centre. He chose the Monastery of Krasny Brod, a place considered to be a pilgrimage site, situated north of Humenné. In 1652 Parthén could not know yet how long the Rákóczi Family would be able to successfully prevent his return to the seat in the Monastery of Mukacheve. At that time, Zsuzsanna Lórántffy, widow of György Rákóczi I, was still holding firmly onto power. Before her death and the death of her son, György Rákóczi II, in 1660, there would be no chance for the Greek Catholic bishop's return to Mukacheve. Moreover, several years would pass even after the Catholicisation of the widow of György Rákóczi II, Zsófia Báthory, in 1660 before Parthén could move his seat to Mukacheve. Therefore, the creation of a new episcopal seat was especially justified. It was for this purpose and for the operation of the Bishopric in general that Parthén sought Lippay's support.

Thus, the points of the letter lucidly and unambiguously provide evidence of the fact that the Greek Catholics were totally aware of the gains they could derive from the union, as well as of the circumstances that could hinder the attainment of their goals and would, therefore, necessitate action. As a guarantee, and with a view to convincing the undecided, a single path was available to them: demanding repeated

undertakings recorded in writing and announced publicly from the representative of the Roman Catholic Church (as well as of the state authority behind him and supporting his policies). Such an arrangement, i.e. publishing open letters, safe-conduct documents and letters-patents by particular authority figures, was a completely well-established and time-honoured 'institution' in early-modern age society.⁴⁵

Apart from the contents of the letter, whatever was omitted from it is also noteworthy. Essentially, it touches upon two of the three provisos of the union: primarily, on the point concerning the rights of the clergy, as well as, indirectly, on the right of free episcopal election through the confirmation and defence of Bishop Parthén, the recognition of the results of the election and support for the elected chief pastor against the antibishop. However, there is no mention of the third condition, the intangibility of the Eastern Rite. It appears to be evident that the Greek Catholics did not feel this point to be problematic or, to put it differently, they had not experienced anything in this regard that would have prompted them to raise their voice. This circumstance is interesting because, as has been pointed out above, it was precisely at this time that one of the key figures of the events, Gábor Kossovics, Bishop Parthén's closest associate, was introducing a practice that would pose dangers from the point of view of the future of the Byzantine Rite. Even though the Holy See banned bi-ritualism in 1650, the fact that Jakob Susa, Bishop of Chelm, would complain about Kossovics on this account even fifteen years later⁴⁶ suggests that the practice continued to exist. The Greek Catholic clergy, headed by

45 Hodinka's *Okmánytár* (Collection of Documents) contains a large number of such documents. In open letters and safe-conduct documents, Monarchs, Dukes of Transylvania, Commanders-in-Chief and Lord Lieutenants would publicly announce episcopal appointments or the recognition thereof, ensure episcopal jurisdiction (and demand the recognition thereof), and guarantee the right of free movement (e.g. in terms of conducting episcopal ordination), etc.

46 Lacko, *Unio*, 177.

the bishop, did not deem this to be either reprehensible or disadvantageous for the Byzantine Rite. Moreover, it may be ascertained from the entries of the Jesuit Annals of Uzhhorod from the year 1652 that Bishop Parthén, acting upon the advice of the Jesuit fathers, taught his priests about the proper and permitted order of the administration of sacraments in the Catholic Church. Furthermore, on every major holiday, the Bishop himself would make an appearance along with his priests in the Jesuit church of Uzhhorod, where, after confessing to the Jesuit fathers, they would receive Holy Communion according to the Latin Rite.⁴⁷ Had this practice evoked any negative sentiments in the Greek Catholic clergy, they would certainly have evinced that in the letter presented above, possibly by adding a seventh point. Finally, the following concluding remarks may be made on the basis of the discussion above. It may be stated with certainty that, at the conclusion of the union, the Byzantine-rite clergy knowingly accepted the fact that joining the Catholic Church would affect all areas of their ecclesiastical life. While they intended to preserve their rite, they were also cognisant that accepting the doctrinal system of the Catholic Church in full would entail consequences for liturgical practice as well. It must also be considered that the union, in this particular instance, did not mean the encounter of two equal parties. The currently popular idea that Catholic-turned Eastern-rite communities could enrich the Catholic Church by contributing their own traditions was completely absent on the part of the Catholic Church. At the time of the Union of Uzhhorod, just as with any other unions conceived in a post-Tridentine spirit in the early-modern age,⁴⁸ the Latin Rite, which

47 Hodinka, *Okmánytár*, 167–168.

48 For a treatment of this question, see: Szabó, Péter, *A keleti közösségek katolikus egyházba tagozásának ekkleziológiai elvei és jogi struktúrái az uniók korában (15–17. század)*, in Véghseő, Tamás (szerk.), *Rómából Hungáriába. A De Camillus János József munkácsi püspök halálának 300. évfordulóján rendezett konferencia tanulmányai*, Nyíregyháza 2008, Collectanea Athanasiana I/1, 15–33.

was thought to be superior, met the Byzantine Rite, which was held to be inferior. Well-educated western theologians with their ‘full-blown’ sacramentology faced eastern priests with no or superficial knowledge of even their own theological tradition. The encounter of ‘*patres*’ and ‘*batikos*’ could produce no other result than the former moulding the views and practice of the latter. This was clearly understood by both sides. At the same time, it is also important to bear in mind that this story is about processes: in fact, the process of the formation of a new ecclesiastical community within the Catholic Church. The present enquiry is meant to target the initial phase of this process. Once, as it has been proposed above, the Roman Catholic participants cannot have had a finalised concept regarding the final outcome, it seems justifiable to suggest that the same must have been true about the Greek Catholics as well. They could not predict how the life of their church and, more specifically, their liturgical practice would be impacted by the encounter with the Catholic Church. It appears to be certain that they viewed this encounter as an opportunity for modernisation affecting all aspects of their life, inevitably also including their liturgical practice displaying a high degree of variety and diversity. To what extent these Latin influences concomitant with the union, yet by all means seen as novelties becoming manifest in practice would prove to be permanent and definitive for the image of the Greek Catholic Church in the long term could not be foreseen by Bishop Parthén and his priests in the years preceding and following the union. However, it is likely that, at that time, at the initial stage of the process, they felt this phenomenon and practice, as a natural ingredient of modernisation, to be acceptable and did not perceive any threat in it.⁴⁹

49 For the Eastern-rite communities participating in the union, it was also evident that, from the moment of the conclusion of the union, the fact that two rites were part of a single church would present occasions when Latin- and Byzantine-rite priests would attend the same liturgical event jointly. There is no source available suggesting whether this caused any concerns for the Greek

Union, integration and modernisation: in other words, unity with the Catholic Church, integration into her structure and sharing in all the benefits that could be conducive to the renewal and modernisation of Byzantine-rite communities through her. I think the creation of the Greek Catholic Church in the historic Bishopric of Mukacheve (as well) may be described with this formula. The formula itself might appear to be simple but, in reality, it is considerably more complex. The union itself, i.e. the construction of unity, was an event that happened at a relatively fast pace and is easy to capture. However, the manner in which integration progressed (ultimately defining the position of the Greek Catholic Church within Catholicism), as well as the practical (temporally rather protracted)⁵⁰ implementation, 'price' and final outcome of modernisation raise questions that, from time to time, may have come to rest, but still remain largely unanswered even today.

Catholics at that time or even later. Véghseő, Tamás, "...mint igaz egyházi ember..." *A történelmi Munkácsi Egyházmegye görög katolikus egyházának létrejötte és 17. századi fejlődése*, Nyíregyháza 2011, Collectanea Athanasiana I/4.

⁵⁰ The completion of the process of modernisation may be linked to the canonical establishment of the Eparchy of Mukacheve in 1771, as well as to the ensuing Bacsinszky-era. Cf. Véghseő, Tamás (szerk.), *Bacsinszky András munkácsi püspök: A Bacsinszky András munkácsi püspök halálának 200. évfordulóján rendezett konferencia tanulmányai*, Nyíregyháza 2014, Collectanea Athanasiana I/6.