

Summary

THE RELATION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC AND GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCHES BETWEEN 1867–1948 IN TRANSYLVANIA

Key words: Rite, Changing the Rite, Roman Catholic rite, Greek Catholic rite, Catholic Church, bishop, Canon Law, rite-controversy, Romanians, Széklersz, Transylvania, *Orientalium ecclesiarum*, particular Church (*Ecclesia particularis*), national Church, the Union, diocese of Alba Iulia, archdiocese of Făgăras-Alba Iulia, diocese of Hajdúdorog, Northern-Transylvania, Eastern-Transylvania.

In the 19th century changes of huge proportions were taking place in the world including our Church as well. Anticlericalism became especially pronounced with antireligious overtones. Due to the spreading of bourgeois mentality radical transformations have happened in the tradition and cultures of nations as well as in the mentality and in the behavior of the people belonging to different Churches.

The awakening of nations who wanted to establish a nation-state turned the people against each other who have been living up to now as neighbors' in a relative peace.

In this changing world the people got to know of each other especially about the political and religious intentions with the help of the media especially through the press. Mihály Fogarasy a Transylvanian bishop said it rightly: "The daily press has grown into a powerful spiritual authority." It preached erroneous believes, principles, causing moral depravity, proclaimed materialism and also brought tension among the people. In Transylvania the media gravid with such new ideas threw roots in the time when the rite-controversy between the Roman catholic's and the Greek catholic's was beginning to take on a national character. In the newspapers published in mother tongue the people of our regions became acquainted with their history, also their church history, and their religious legacy but in the same time they found themselves face to face with each other's culture and religious tradition as well.

In the 19th century all around through our regions the difference between the Byzantine and the Roman spirituality and their cultures manifested itself quite strongly. The religious and cultural disparities have become noticeable among the people who were praying not in the same tongue and rites. The social problems, the tension in the society accumulated during centuries mingled now quite often with the religious dissimilarities. The consciousness of belonging to the Pope influenced the Transylvanian people in the Latin rite differently than the ones in the Greek rite who had strong affiliation to the national Church. Because of the aforementioned reasons the people became occasionally hostile to each other because they held on vigorously to their ancient traditions. In our region the questions are still unsolved which had originated from national or religious antagonism and discussed in the period of my doctoral thesis.

In the connection of the Transylvanian Roman catholic and Greek Catholic Churches there were frequent disputes and misunderstandings during their three hundred years history. External circumstances, social positions and situations as well kindled differences and discord. In the same time, however, they realized that they have to continue to live together and adjust their life to new requirements. Thus the constant challenges have formed not only the Christian population of Transylvania but also their Churches.

The Transylvanian rite-controversy in its particular manifestation and in its historical development is quite unique. It has taken shape during the centuries in a way unparalleled in most of the other nations' history. It has taken on such a strong national character and has given rise to so much religious differences than nowhere else. The differences and disputes originating from changing rites, however, proved to be not unfruitful. In spite of the fact that the individuals in question experienced the rite-controversy closely, risking their dignity and personal liberty, the Transylvanian rite-controversy improved the legislation regarding changes of the rite within the Catholic Church with such assets which had originated from these bitter experiences. We might say that the Transylvanian solution serves an example for the universal Church.

It is worthy for us to be occupied with the question of the rites even today especially for the Roman catholic's and Greek catholic's living side by side. I am convinced based on my research that it would have been hopeless to find a reasonable

solution for the technique of changing rites in the age of the rite-controversy that is in the period (1867–1948) I am discussing in my thesis. Today however, when we live in times of ecumenism, I think it is possible to look at the theme more objectively. We should face our past more sincerely and share our history and religious values between us. It is important both to heal the wound received in the serious discussions of religion and to esteem each other in a Christian manner. We should be doing all these in spite of our differences. I see both timeliness and the benefit of my thesis in the above.

We can understand the practice of changing rites in the laws of the Catholic Church. It is true that laws, the canonical laws as well, are drafted by men. In order to have good laws in the society and also in the Church the legislators must know how the people live, what are their living conditions, their culture. Then the laws to be born will serve the people and the community in general. A good law, an objective law, can be drafted only by somebody who lives honestly and put his past and presence in order. Occasional shaping of the canonical laws affecting changes in the rites were not always successful, because it happened that they hampered the liberties and the dignity of the individuals who wanted to implement them. Sometimes the competent authorities had to find solutions for changes in the rites at the local level before the appearance of the universal law. I would like to emphasize that encyclical letter of Pope Leo the XII *Orientalium Dignitas* (1894) – before the appearance 1917 Code of Canon Law – made the most timely laws regarding the rite. In Transylvania however, even 20 years before the encyclical letter, Bishop Mihály Fogarasy and Bishop Ioan Vancea thought to be important to sign an agreement consisting of 32 paragraphs in order to make changes of the rites more effectively and with less tension. That agreement served as guidance for the Latin and Greek clergymen.

Most of the problems in Transylvania were not solved by changes in the rites and the difficulties got even more serious during the period discussed in my doctor thesis by four political and social changes (1918, 1940, 1945, 1948) which brought forth corrupt practices and affected nationalism.

I am convinced that knowing the laws enacted by our leaders in the Church regarding changes of rites and their practical applications, is necessary and useful above all to bring our Churches closer to each other. There used to be esteemed individuals,

priests and laymen in the past and hopefully there will be some among us in the future as well who don't focus on small details but look at the overall picture in order to arrive at the best possible decision.

My thesis covers changes of the rites in Transylvania during different periods. I feel it important to mention right at the beginning that the Hungarian government maintained a different relation to these changes before 1918 than the Romanian government after 1918. The Hungarian Ministry of Cult didn't intervene in changes of the rights as it also stayed away from getting involved with the spiritual matters of the Churches. The dualistic Hungarian state as well as Rome looked at Greek and the Roman Catholic Churches as one, different only in their rites. As far as the state authorities were concerned the canonical laws were accepted in practice without any restrictions. Dealing with changes in the rites was considered as a venue of leaders of the Church. Thus both the bishop of Alba Iulia and the bishop of Blaj arrived at an understanding: the consent of both bishops was required in the matter of rite-changes. The practice, however, was different. While the Latin bishop gave his permission in the majority of cases the Greek Catholic archbishop raised difficulties almost in every case depriving the people practically of the possibilities provided by the law. Several Magyarized Greek Catholic's believers therefore turned to the Protestantism. In order to keep the people from abjuring their faith Bishop Mailáth Gusztáv Károly on consideration of conscience appealed to Pope Pius X, in 1905. He received absolute permission from the Pope – given in writing on the 18th of February and via voce on the 24th of December during an audience – to admit Greek catholic's to the Latin Church even in non-cooperation of the Greek catholic bishop if the later didn't want to give assent to somebody who was in particular erring to convert. Bishop Mailáth has made use of that permission of the Holy See until 1928 when it was withdrawn.

After the political changes in the 1920's the Romanian State–Laws regarded catholic's in the Latin and Greek rites as two separate Churches. The Greek Catholic Church is the privileged one while the Latin Catholic Church becomes as one in the line of the historical Churches. This only increased the chaos in the case of the rite-changes, especially if you look at the growing numbers of apostasies. It is obvious therefore that Bishop Adolf Vorbuchner in 1937 turns to the Congregation for the Oriental Churches to

be granted the permission of the Holy See for him as well which had been given to his predecessor since the circumstances were quite similar.

The Congregation wanted to act in a way which was supposed to be politically correct and in its ordinance – 2910/1938 – refused the Bishop’s request. The ordinance of the Congregation formulated its assertions to Bishop Vorbuchner based on false historical allegations.

- I. Especially in the “Székler” regions many Romanians became Magyarized in the past, mainly for political and economic reasons.
- II. The Széklers with respect to their origin are not Hungarians.
- III. When did it happen that the Széklers became parts of the Latin Church?

It is not possible to ascertain unanimously from the documents of Rome the base of both the standpoint of the Eastern Congregation and of their allegations hurting the Széklers. Without getting into long explanations I see it necessary to answer these statements and also the question since in my answers there are one or two thoughts which still influence of the connection off the Latin and Greek Churches through their rites even today. The answers are also timely to the raised questions because a few historians today are still prisoners of the affected nationalistic past.

For the first statement of the Congregation – “many Romanians became Magyarized in the past, especially in the Székler regions mainly for political and economic reasons” – answers should be formulated only on the basis of actual data and the results of careful investigation. It can be stated on the basis of documents to be found in the Archiepiscopal Archives in Alba Iulia that between 1905 and 1928 in 41 localities 513 persons converted to the Latin rite following the permission from the Holy See granted to Bishop Mailáth. We can be sure there was no question of a mass movement as it has been assumed by the Congregation, since the permission has been valid for a quarter of a century only, and the number of Greek catholic’s amounted to more than a million. The 513 rite changes permitted by the Bishop of Alba Iulia are insignificantly small compared to the almost 3 million Romanians according to the Census of 1910 and the 1,133,512 Greek Catholic’s. It is a far-fetched conclusion that all these who convert to the Latin rite loose their nationality, that is to say become Magyarized. That is the reason why I pay more attention to the religious references in my thesis. Since the question of Magyarization

raised by the Romanians is rather political in nature and less relevant to ecclesiastical history I will not enter into details. Even if the Hungarian authorities had engaged in such activities success has passed them by since the number of Romanians slowly but surely increased.

It is acknowledged by the historians that in the Székler villages Greek catholic's settled down through the centuries especially in the counties of Csík, Háromszék, Maros-Torda and Udvarhely. While living together the Greek Catholic's have adopted the language, culture and customs of the receptive population. It can be demonstrated statistically that in 1910–14,481 Greek Catholic's and 8,181 orthodox, whose mother tongue was Hungarian, lived in Székely-land. In South-Transylvania on the other hand 13,351 orthodox and 79,090 Greek Catholic's declared themselves Hungarian and in the same time 5,818 Roman catholic's declared themselves Romanian. The fact that in 1927 there were 15,445 orthodox and 84,951 Greek Catholic's who declared themselves Hungarian says enough of the real reason of the rite-changes.

Hungarian, Széklers and Romanians have been living beside each other for centuries in peace therefore it is understandable that languages and religions made their influence felt mutually. It is evident from documents at our disposal that lesser or greater assimilations changes on the linguistic and religious levels were obvious occurrences. When these changes, however, – either national or religious in nature – were forced by coercion from the outside to happen faster there appeared a backlash from the people and they became ineffective. In Transylvania during the period when nationalism was still a negligible factor, changes in languages and in rites evolved according to the laws of nature and peaceful coexistence.

The most provocative statement of the Eastern Congregation refers to the Széklers nationality. I feel it necessary to remark upon it briefly. According to Bálint Homan “the Széklers had settled in Transylvania as a people or as a tribe in a closed entity. They were the sole conquerors of Transylvania as opposed to the Hungarian nobility with estates received as grants from the kings, Saxon settlers and Romanian shepherds under the jurisdiction of the landlords”. The Hungarian speaking Széklers settled continuously from the XI. century onwards in their historical region. The time when they settled in the various counties is still a subject of discussion among historians. It is very likely that the

larger Székler groups established themselves in these regions definitely by the end of the XIII. century.

The Széklers are not Magyarized Romanians as it says in the ordinance of the Eastern Congregation but Hungarians who maintained their ancient social structure. In various letters in the Middle Ages there is a distinction between Széklers and Romanians. They are always mentioned as two separate ethnic groups. Based on the detailed references above one can affirm that they are two different and independent people. In the documents the Széklers always appear as a distinct entity.

There is another question put forward by the Congregation. “When did the Széklers take over the Latin rite?” It is supposed by the question that the Széklers at the beginning had the Byzantine rite. Based on the documents we can state that the Széklers became Christians in such a way as the Hungarians. As early as in the XIII–XIV, centuries they have Latin names (e.g. István, Domokos, Miklós, Jakab, János, György). Places bearing names of saints are characteristic for Transdanubia, Slavonia and regions of Transylvania where the majority of the population is Hungarian like Székely-land.

When we want to find answers for the origin of the Széklers and for the time when they became Christians there are data in the pontifical register (1332-1337) on collecting tithes in the parishes showing that in Székely-land numerous catholic churches and parishes have already been in existence in the 14th century.

The “birth” of the Greek Catholic Church in Transylvania may be put at the end of the 17th century when the principality of Transylvania ceased to exist and the Hapsburgs came into power. Thus the Jesuits became more active. Some of the originally Greek orthodox Romanians were admitted to the Catholic Church with the collaboration of Roman catholic noblemen István Apor and the Jesuits. The Jesuits were, Pál Baranyi, Gábor Hevenesi, Péter Vizkeleti, István Baranyi. Religious, social and political reasons contributed to the establishment of the Union. The Romanian clergy together with the people who have switched over tried to improve its own social condition while the Imperial Court in Vienna wanted to realize its own political plans. The authorities representing the Hapsburgs in Transylvania called upon the catholic clergy in Székely-land to take part in uniting the Romanians. The Székler catholic priests held an assembly in Șumuleu Ciuc on the 23rd of October in 1699 and declared themselves unfitted for the

task and not willing to interfere in that matter. The small Székler clergy unanimously kept themselves away from the religious Union. They wanted to look after their congregations and live only for their vocation.

We can state on the basis of authentic documents that the Széklers have always belonged to the Roman Catholic Latin Church, have not changed their rite and never wanted to take up anybody in their church in spite of their will or conviction. The people of Székler-land went through a great transaction but they stayed always catholic, loyal to their faith and rite, and respecting others conviction. The Széklers rode out the Mongol invasions, survived 150 years without a bishop and having only a few priests in those difficult years. Sándor Rudnay Transylvanian Bishop wrote in his report “*ad limina*” dated November the 20th 1819: “While the Protestantism was spreading and the number of parishes decreased the catholic congregations in the regions of Gyergyó, Csík, Kászón, Kézdi and Orbai miraculously remained”.

I can affirm on the basis of my research that the theme of Transylvanian rite-controversy has been on the agenda between the Roman and Greek Catholic Churches since the Greek Catholic Union was brought into existence. The Greek Catholic’s were striving for liberty as well as freedom of religion and later to safeguard their religious independence and autonomy. The Roman Catholic’s on the other hand wanted to defend their rite and faith which happened to be endangered during the political changes. In that struggle nobody or only a few noticed that not only the unpleasantness multiplied but also something nice was beginning to take shape. In spite of all the quarrels the connection between the two rites was going to advance towards the right direction. Many things contributed to that progress, improved it or cleansed it.

The Transylvanian rite-controversy should be viewed only in its complex reality if we really want to appreciate that magical but also painful evolution.

The events bringing about the rite-controversy which I am discussing in my doctoral thesis prove that the legislation pertaining to rites was realized by the universal Church and by particular churches in Transylvania during that relatively short time. We can safely state that in our region the laws relating to every rite have become crystallized during the dualistic era and in the period of the two important political changes of 1867 and 1948. The legislation of the universal Church was also very occupied in that inflamed

period with problems of the Transylvanian rite-controversy and laws relating to it. That is the time when the domain of the Transylvanian Greek Catholic Church was organized and the laws regulating the connection among the Churches formed. It is my firm believe, that the Transylvanian rite-controversy and the shaping of the connection between the two Churches with different rites helped in a large extent that the legislative procedure of the universal Church became clearer and laws relating to the rites changed for the better.

At the beginning of my thesis after due consideration I am discussing first Church-laws which are in force because I want to refer to them later and also avoiding any repetition. In the development of laws relating to the rites I deal with the teachings of the Pope and of earlier Councils which serve as a solid base of the theme discussed.

The period discussed in my thesis does not include the II. Vatican Council but its decisions and rules presented in the two Codes relating to the rites are dealt with and they render perceptible the “usefulness” of the Transylvanian rite-controversy. Without knowing the recent teachings of the Catholic Church and the laws relating to the subject the result of the struggle in the Transylvanian rite-controversy would not reveal itself.

In the same time when introducing the theme with the teaching of the II. Vatican Council as well as the Church’s legislations (1983-1990) I would like to demonstrate, that with the Council and the ruling laws we have not yet reached our goal.

We have to know them all in order to be renewed in their spirit and had a chance to discuss the events of the unconverted past. It has become evident during the period introduced in the thesis that the inner life always suffered when the mutual acceptance and esteem of the rites sank into oblivion. The Transylvanian Roman Catholics and Greek Catholic’s could also learn from the rite-controversy that their Churches always sustained a loss when they trusted excessively in power and politics. It is worthwhile to draw conclusions from these bitter experiences.

We can look at the schism in 1054 as the prototype of the rite-controversy. There are the same reasons behind the separation of the Eastern and Western Churches than the ones noticeable in the Transylvanian rite-controversy: explicit rejection of the dissimilarity. One can also notice selfish individual and political interests trusted into prominence as opposed to the noble and universal good. After the schism the connection between Roma and Byzantium grew acrimonious to such an extent that only the centuries

old efforts in the Union and god-fearing work made possible that we can talk about healing the wounds.

During the course of history great number of rites has emerged. In their diversity they had to live together in the past and in the present as well. Objective elements make up their diversity, like nature, psychology, culture and the history as well as the mentality of the people. That diversity should not be the cause of the division as it was not that at the beginning. Saint Augustin (354–430) who took a firm stand against any interference which might have endangered the unity of the faith acknowledged the diversity of the rites and accepted it. “Obligatory only what the Lord commanded and what is the custom everywhere. In the questions of the liturgy everybody should adapt oneself to the local custom where he happens to be.”

The rite meant at the beginning “order” and only later referred to religious “regulations”. At the Council of Florence the concept of “*consuetudo*” is in use. According to that concept the rite is nothing else but the manner of the religious ceremony. Primary meaning of the rite referred to the liturgy, later it meant the independent personality and then still later the custom in its fullness. We find the more complete meaning of the rite in the decree of the II. Vatican Council, in the *Orientalium ecclesiarum*. We find here three characteristics of the rite’s meaning: 1.) The rites are equal in the universal Church; 2.) They are personal without any territorial definition; 3.) and they are autonomous. The II Vatican Council examined the rite with a view to both Church history and liturgy. According to the teachings of the Council the rite is the versatile and coherent expression of the Church’s faith. It includes first of all the liturgy based on dogmatic facts, monastic view of life and the sound coordination of the Churches. The word “rite” has never been used in the Church with a coherent or well-defined meaning. That is why it is difficult to give an unambiguous definition of the rite especially if we take into account all the opinions which have developed around the concept of the rite.

The II. Vatican Council in its decree, *Orientalium ecclesiarum* 3. talks of the rite as the Church’s inheritance which is embedded in the nature and the history of the people. That opinion includes goods, teaching, culture, history, discipline, the community and the tradition which have an inseparable effect on the individuals and the institutions.

The Church adopts the cultural, psychological, religions, social and lawful inheritance of the nations if they fit in with the catholic faith.

The 3rd point of the decree emphasizes also the liturgical character of the rite which is one of the central element of the ecclesiastical life. The saint liturgy is nothing else but praising of the divine power. Generally speaking, when we talk about the Church we are thinking of the rite and when we remark upon the liturgy then we are thinking of the Church. According to the decree of the *Orientalium ecclesiarum* rite means the liturgical laws, marked as *ritus liturgicos*. That is the reason why the Council urges the Eastern Churches to safeguard their own lawful liturgy and way of life.

The Eastern Churches have their own rights (*sui iuris*), they are in the same rank, neither of them is superior than the other. They have rights and duties equally. The Council emphasizes further that Churches of both the West and the East are equal in dignity, rights and duties. The different Churches united in the same faith and in the same rule under the Pope's authority constitute together the Catholic Church.

The thinking and the terminology of the Council also manifested themselves in the 1983 Latin as well as in the 1990 Eastern Codes. The concept of the rite becomes clearer and separates itself from the particular Church (*Ecclesia particularis*) and in the same time their legislation which is closely connected, complements each other in the very nicely.

Conversion from one rite to the other is understandable the best in the teachings of the Popes and that of the Councils as well as in the light of the historical and political struggles between Rome and Constantinople. A few Popes in the 12th and the 13th centuries took up a position on having the rites completely in Latin but there were others who wanted to safeguard them separately. In the manifestations of the Popes and the Councils there was not a settled and unambiguous terminology yet regarding the rites.

Many significant manifestations about the rites have taken place during the time between Pope Benedict the XIV. (1740–1758) and Pope Pius IX. when serious efforts were made to regulate that subject. One has to accentuate the role of the aforementioned two Holy Fathers because the date when their documents were issued coincide with the appropriate time of both the Transylvanian Union and of the beginning of the rite-controversy.

There was no time during the short-lived first Vatican Council for discussing the draft dealing with the rites. Therefore it became important for the Holy See by the end of the 19th century to issue a uniform and mature legislation for the rites. Pope Leo XIII. answered the requirements with his encyclical letter *Orientalium dignitas* in 1894.

The manifestations of the Eastern Congregation during the 19th century refer to the connections of the Transylvanian Roman Catholic's and the Greek Catholic's too. The Congregation played a role in trying to put the connections between the rites in order and to make the laws regulating them more effective.

In the second half of my doctoral thesis, which is more comprehensive, I am discussing the connection of the Transylvanian Roman and Greek Catholic's through concrete cases and individuals.

Looking back in the past I state, together with my guiding professor, that the connection between the Latin and Greek Churches has improved although it has never been cloudless. It was occasionally overshadowed by debates originating from the canonical differences. The sharpening national antagonism in Transylvania was even more damaging. That has been going on for 300 years and we should not sweep it under the carpet. If we draw up a balance of the Churches' coexistence it will lean on the side of the suffering together for the faith as opposed to the happening full of national sentiments. Both standpoints however, one of faith character the other of national, have always been present in the past as it is today. The examination of the Transylvanian Latin and Greek Churches' relation should be viewed and judged only in their historical context. It doesn't matter what period we scrutinize, we are going to see that in the leaders and in the congregation of both Churches the attitude based on faith prevailed, that is the "Catholicism". The positive, the true "catholic" attitude was the more frequent, the more characteristic than the national manifestations. In Transylvania, the very negative sectarian repugnance has never characterized the relation between the two rites. There were rather local occurrences, acts committed by a few narrow-minded priests and laymen or bullying by unbalanced individuals and small inflamed communities. The wounds inflicted in the course of events without forethought have not been healed yet and the injuries still remembered by priests and the congregations of both Churches are waiting to be restored to health.

The national Church played an important role in the course of history when the Romanians living in Transylvania and especially the Greek Catholic's having been a minority became a nation. The Church was also the creative force primarily in the development of the national language, the national consciousness and culture. The Transylvanians have always lived in mixed communities, never in a pure national state and it became even more pronounced when the authorities changed in 1920, 1941 and 1944.

The secession from Hungary after Trianon was not a harrowing experience for the Transylvanian Greek Catholic's. State boundaries didn't cut through the confines of their dioceses. Their national character, however became even stronger because they had to prove their patriotism more than anybody else towards the state church. The second Vienna decision on the other hand touched the Greek Catholic's the most keenly. Their Church wanted to preserve its independence, autonomy, just like before Trianon and refused all attempts which would have reinstated it in the Hungarian Church.

Before we jump into the deep water of our theme, we are going to approach through a short historical background the evolution and the organization of the Greek Catholic Church. In the meantime we are going to take a look at its connection to the Churches with Latin rites.

The Romanians in Transylvania in their denomination belonged to the Greek oriental Church until the 18th century. Their religious alliance begins in 1690 in Alba Iulia. The Jesuit Pál Baranyi who was the parish priest in the city took part more than one union meetings on behalf of cardinal, Lipot Kollonich. He laid stress upon the liberation from serfhood and the importance of obtaining different privileges. The Union has finally came into being in 1698 with the collaboration of orthodox archbishop Anghel Atanasie. Emperor I. Leopold assented to the Union with his diploma in 1699. The first independent Romanian Greek catholic diocese had been set up in 1721. III. Charles suggested its name to be Făgăraș-Alba Iulia and Pope XIII. Innocent assented to it. The Greek Catholic bishops worked hard to strengthen the Church and to improve the school-system. They also wanted to have as many young people as possible to study abroad. In 1738 the seat of the bishopric of Făgăraș was transferred to Blaj. Pope IX. Pius in 1853 promoted the seat to be that of the archbishop.

When the Union has come into being it was thought that the Romanian orthodox Church would cease to exist in Transylvania. But it did not happen because after 1744 a portion of the Transylvanian Romanians returned to the orthodox Church as part of the Serbian orthodox archdiocese at Karloca.

The revolution in 1848 increased the tension among the nations living in Transylvania instead of bringing in peace for the people. The Transylvanian Greek Catholics received a reward from Emperor Francis Joseph for their attitude during the revolution: he set up two new dioceses (Gherla and Lugoj) and raised Blaj to the rank of metropolitan (1853). The Transylvanian Greek Catholics were free to organize their provincial council without any obstacles of the authorities. Here the metropolitan province became independent from the jurisdiction of any other ecclesiastical province and submitted itself directly to the Holy See. From 1900 they have ceased to be submitted to the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Esztergom. The Transylvanian Greek Catholic Church led by excellent pontiffs became the spokesman of the Romanian culture. Two metropolitans, Ioan Vancea de Buteasa from 1868 and Victor Mihali de Apşa from 1898 have done a lot for the independence of their Church and schools and for their development. They kept away from the Hungarian autonomy movement expressing that way their wish to be independent and acknowledging no other hierarchical authority than the Holy See.

As I had said it above, in order to regularize the connections among the different rites in Transylvania, the Roman Catholic bishop Mihály Fogarasy and Ioan Vancea Greek Catholic bishop signed an agreement on August 17th 1873. In that arrangement they gave guidance in 32 paragraphs to the Latin and Greek Catholic priests. We must understand the rite-changes in Transylvania show periodically different characteristics. At the end of the 19th century we can take notice mainly of the tension around administering of the Sacraments and the unsettled questions surfacing between the Greek and Latin catholic priests.

During the time of bishops Ferenc Lönhárt and Victor Mihali de Apşa an executive decree came out about the baptism of the children and the free exercise of one's religion. In reality, the state laws protected the right of the people belonging to different rites against the encroachments of the priests. That demonstrates the tension

unfolding in certain localities within the Church with two rites. In the petitions sent to the bishops we can see the motivations based on linguistic considerations. In the same time it also becomes clear that the petitioners are ready to change religion if their requests are refused. Károly Gusztáv Mailáth (1897-1918) has already encountered these challenges at the beginning of his office. It took him quite a struggle that the Hungarian Greek Catholics observe the canonical laws and the Transylvanian arrangements before they change their rites. He has done everything in his power that the petitioners who wanted to change their rites should not become undenominational or members of another religion. That occurrence was especially significant in Székely-land where changing one's rite has practically become a mass movement. The Greek catholic's who lived there have declared themselves Széklers through generations whose mother tongue was Hungarian and not practiced their religion according to the ancient rites of their ancestors (some of them were not even Greek catholic) and went to Roman catholic churches. Thus it becomes understandable that the Transylvanian bishop tries to save the catholic's from not to become apostates and turns to the Holy See. Pope X. Pius gave absolute permission to Bishop Mailáth – in writing on the 18th of February 1905 and viva voce on the 24th of December during an audience – to admit Greek catholic's to the Latin Church, even in defiance of the Greek catholic metropolitan if they seemed to be in “bad ways” because of changes in the rites since their bishops didn't want to give assent to convert. Bishop Mailáth had that permission from the Holy See until 1928.

It is a meaningful event for the Hungarian Greek catholic's living in Transylvania when the dioceses at Hajdúdorog come into existence. They didn't have an independent diocese, but belonged to one or the other Romanian Greek catholic archdioceses. However, nationalist aspirations were quite strong in these metropolitan provinces and therefore many people rather abjured their faith than to remain members of the Romanian Greek catholic archdioceses. The Greek Catholic priests (with one or two exceptions) in Székler areas were not celebrating mass in Hungarian to the Hungarian speaking communities.

The Greek Catholic aspirations towards independence in Hungary met with success in 1912. Pope X. Pius with his bull dated June the 8th 1912 assented to the establishment of a Hungarian catholic diocese of Hajdúdorog. The Holy See annexed 162

parishes to that diocese from the regions of Transylvania: 4 parishes from the diocese of Gherla, 41 parishes from Oradea and 35 parishes from Făgăraș. The intention was to prevent the loss of the Hungarian characteristics and stop the exodus of the Hungarian Greek catholic's from their rite. As far as the Greek parishes, priests and communities are concerned in Székler-land belonging to the diocese of Hajdúdorog was not a successful solution. In one respect outside of the diocese were still a great number of Hungarian Greek catholic's who belonged to the archbishopric at Făgăraș and on the other hand the mass conversion was not stopped. The determination of the Greek Catholic's to connect to the Latin rite was so strong that even the Hungarian hierarchy couldn't help.

In the reorganization after the First World War the 75 parishes of the diocese at Hajdúdorog were annexed to Romania and returned to the Romanian diocese. The Transylvanian Greek catholic metropolitan preserved his autonomy in Great-Romania as well, he was not subordinated to the Roman catholic diocese in Bucharest.

The Romanian state-laws regulated the position of the Churches differently than the Hungarians. The 137 paragraph of the constitution of 1923 assured the Churches' freedom of worship and the 22 paragraph declared the Orthodox and the Greek Catholic Churches as Romanian. The religious law of 1928 divided the denominations in Romania into five groups: 1. the reigning (predominant) Church (Orthodox); 2. Church with privileges (Greek Catholic); 3. historical Churches (Latin, Ruthenian, Greek and Armenian with catholic rites, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Unitarian, Armenian, Jewish, etc. 4. acknowledged Church (Baptist); 5. not acknowledged Churches (Nazarene, Adventist, etc.). The Ministry of Cult qualified a change in rites as a change of religion. Changes in rites were right now happening under the guidance of the state power and with its support. The people who belonged to the Latin Church begin to turn slowly towards the Greek Catholic Church, sometimes against their will. It happened quite often with children that they were baptized unlawfully according to the rites of another Church and many of them only learned later during their marriage preparation that they had been registered by the state as Greek Catholic.

In the new political situation the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic Churches wanted to regularize their connection officially as well with the Holy See. The concordat was concluded on May the 10th 1927 and codified on June the 12th 1929.

In the light of the archives' documents the Transylvanian rite-controversy culminated in the period between the two World Wars. The demands of the Hungarian catholic's vis-à-vis the rite-changes have become so intense that they did not decrease even after Trianon but continued. If we look at the new social and political situation we might think that if one wanted to make one's way of life it was not worth to be Roman Catholic or Hungarian. Materials in the archives however, prove that the petitioners putting aside human considerations insisted on the rite-change.

At the time when the 1917 Code was promulgated, confusion existed among the Transylvanian Catholic's about the political situation and religious issues that it was impossible to assert the laws in their fullness. The Codex managed to substantiate clearly and explicitly the rules relating to modifications in the rites. The c. 98 held out protection and assistance to the faithful in the Eastern rites. It forbade the clergy, however, to propose the changes in the rites. That canon was ignored in Romania at the time, especially among the Romanian Greek Catholic's.

The political pressure during the 1930's embittered the life of the Transylvanian Roman Catholic's and the Hungarian Greek Catholic's. In the same time the local Romanian authorities began to carry out their program called "back-Romanization" of the Székler-land. The chief promoters of the program were representatives of the authorities organized from the centre. We can talk here about a period of brute force and centrally organized persecution while the rite-controversy gained only secondary importance. For those who were willing to convert and become orthodox or Greek Catholic's employment was offered while for those who refused to convert the prospect was held out to lose their job. In that forceful conversion even the Greek Catholic priests took part in a few places. The forced modifications in the rites however, did not produce the expected results. In spite of offered advantages or intimidation, the faithful – with a few exception – were holding out by their Church.

After the Second Viennese Decision (August the 30th 1940) the rite-changes took place from September to December in Northern-Transylvania, especially in those villages, where forceful political conversions had happened before. According to sources at our disposal everybody – with a few exception – returned to his or her original rite especially in places where no other denominational were living. The contributing factor

was that many Greek Catholic's and Orthodox priests had fled from Northern-Transylvania. Imre Sándor Roman catholic vicar general who resided in Cluj Napoca wanted to avoid any abuse and therefore warned the priests in the Latin rite not to take an unfair advantage of the new political opportunities. Returning to the Latin rite was done according to the canonical regulations but not a masse and with a simple modification, but with a separate declaration filled by each person who wanted to convert. The superiors of the Roman Catholic Church had to act very fast because the Protestant denominations, taking advantage of the occasion, induced the impatient people who wanted to change rites to their own Church. They were bluffing when they explained that was the only way to free from the Greek Catholic religion and to become true Hungarian.

The Second Viennese Decision touched also the religious organizations very keenly. Larger sections of the dioceses of Oradea, Satu Mare and Alba Iulia became part of Hungary. Parishes in the Southern part of the diocese of Alba Iulia were annexed to Romania. The Romanian Greek catholic metropolitan with Blaj as its seat stayed in Romania but several parishes were transferred to Hungary. In Southern-Transylvania the political character of the religious affiliation has become more pronounced. Bishop Áron Márton would have expected more understanding and a brotherly attitude from the Greek Catholic's especially when his congregation lived in a threatened situation.

Because of the modifications in the rites in Northern-Transylvania, the Congregation for the Oriental Churches in the fall of 1940 withdrew the concession to give permission for changing rites from the jurisdiction of the Budapest nuncio. Thus whatever was possible to do up to now became even more complicated. The Hungarian jurisdiction for the religion of the children and for changing rites in Northern-Transylvania came into force only in 1942. In the meantime the Romanian relevant laws of 1928 stayed in effect. One had to follow the same formality whether it was change of rite or change of religion.

The relation between the Roman catholic's and Greek catholic's in Southern-Transylvania between 1940–1944 was relatively the same with that in Northern-Transylvania with the exception that in the South the Greek catholic Church supported by the Romanian authorities could demand much more in a given situation than the Roman catholic's. Differences of opinions at the local level, offending remarks by state

authorities or by unbalanced individuals cannot be the generally held view and it would be wrong to draw far-reaching conclusions from them. In their attitude both Churches' hierarchs tried to preserve the character of a "brother-Church" even if it became impossible to prevail over national interests.

The new world having been born after 1945 put the Roman Catholic Church in Romania to a difficult task. Especially the year 1948 should be regarded as a critical date in ecclesiastical history. A law issued by the Ministry of Cult on August the 4th ordained that every denomination should handle in the draft for its statute. The catholic bishops didn't want to have the Catholic Church in an "*ex lex*" state in Romania and therefore on October the 28th 1948 Áron Márton Roman catholic and Juliu Hossu Greek catholic bishops submitted a statute-plan with 46 paragraphs to the government which has never received assent. Furthermore, on December the 1st 1948 the Communist government with its decision 354/1948 eliminated the Greek Catholic Church. The Transylvanian Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic rite-controversy terminated by that date. It became the Calvary of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church. Bishop Áron Márton in his pastoral letter on October the 11th 1948 declared his solidarity with the Greek Catholics. Priests with Latin rites were doing the cure of souls of Greek Catholic faithful through four decades accepting occasionally even persecution for it.

Choosing the theme of my doctoral thesis I was influenced by being a diocesan priest in Alba Iulia and the parish priest of Roşia-Montana and Abrud where I have been very often in contact with Greek Catholic communities. At the beginning of the years 2000 when they had no church or priest of their own, the Greek Catholics frequented the Roman Catholic Church regularly and received there the sacraments. During that time opportunities have arisen often that I could talk to Greek Catholics with Hungarian surname about the turn of events in their rites. The archive of the parish and the notes of my predecessors contributed significantly to the understanding of these conversations. Beside the above source there was the archiepiscopal archive in Alba Iulia, a real "gold-mine", where the Transylvanian rite-controversy opened up before me in its fullness.

I noticed in the parish that the people don't like to talk about events, which had taken place in the past. The peaceful coexistence has obliterated the earlier disagreements and problems. I felt, however, that if things are buried in oblivion there is still no

guarantee to reach absolute happiness and will not inspire our Churches to move closer to each other.

Large portion of my thesis (78%) which scrutinizes the connection of the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic Churches (1867–1948) is based on archival researches. I have been successful to read very thoroughly and to study intensively in its integrity the material of the archiepiscopal archive in Alba Iulia. I encountered many difficulties in my research work. Reading the many hand-written letters, finding the essentials of the documents proved to be one of the most difficult tests. The individual drafting of the letters, the different ways that the parish priests were looking at history and also the occasionally subjective interpretation of the canonical laws made it felt in their letters. I had to pay attention to the right interpretation of both the history as well as the laws in order to make sure that mistakes were not getting into the thesis. Another difficult task was to systemize all the documents especially those, which had been created in the heat of the debate. Beside the archiepiscopal archive I found materials also in the collective archives of Târgu Mureș, Gheorgheni, Sfântu Gheorghe, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Gherla. I couldn't use the Greek Catholic metropolitan archive in Balázsfalva because all the documents were taken away when the Greek Catholic Church was dissolved. From the correspondents among the dioceses, however, a lot was possible to learn about the Greek Catholic bishops' attitude in the rite-controversy. Archives in certain parishes were of great help to me as well as the volumes of the *Dommus Historia* in which notes written down in the parishes threw light on the local rite-controversy in the course of time.

The investigational method during the completion of the thesis looks rather simple but in reality it is quite time consuming since the work demands persistent collection of materials. Furthermore there is also translation involved since part of the materials had been written in Romanian.

Beside the archives I had access as an ex-student to the library of the University St. Paul in Canada (Ottawa) where I had found plenty of literature. Thanks to my former professors who had given me valuable advise which I was able to find ecclesiastical manifestations and juristic literature relative to the rite-controversy and worked them consequently into my thesis.

It was not only the English language literature I had to translate but also writings and records in Romanian, which were also relevant to the theme. Books and archival documents at my disposal helped me to realize my goal. I could reveal the past of the Transylvanian Roman and Greek Catholics between 1867 and 1948 where the rites and related issues were discussed, their connections to each other during the centuries and the events, which helped somehow, or other forming the canonical laws dealing with rites. Both parts of my thesis – the introduction of the rites based on the laws still in existence and the elaboration of the rite-controversy in the past between the Transylvanian Roman and Greek Catholics – shows very well the task which we have to realize living today. In the same time our obligation to the Church and our catholic Christianity compel us to learn the history, religion, culture and the rites of each other and to hold them in respect. That will result in still better development of the Church with two rites.

I am grateful to many helping me to have my thesis coming into existence. I want to thank to my leading professor, my former professors, archivists, librarians, parish priests who have been doing not only their work but in many instances they treated my thesis as their own and thought it important that it should be written and completed.