

*‘Gravis quaestio exsurrexit’*  
**An Unsuccessful Attempt at Establishing a Hungarian  
Greek Catholic Bishopric in 1881<sup>1</sup>**

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The establishment of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog in 1912 represented a sense of closure in the several-decade long process labelled ‘struggle’<sup>2</sup> and ‘the Road to Calvary’ in the Hungarian Greek Catholic narrative.<sup>3</sup> Although the decision made at the dawn of the First World War, which would have catastrophic repercussions for Hungary, made an old dream of Greek Catholics with a Hungarian first language and identity background come true,<sup>4</sup> it may nonetheless be regarded as a belated step from the point of view of this community’s further history and development opportunities. From 1912 to 1914, the consolidation of the newly founded unit of ecclesiastical governance was hindered by ethnic antagonisms, the tragic denouement of which

- 1 The research reported on in the present paper was conducted as part of the Grant Programme of the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) No. K108780.
- 2 *Farkas, Lajos*: Egy nemzeti küzdelem története. Atheneum rt. Nyomdája, Budapest, 1896.
- 3 *Szabó, Jenő*: A görög-katholikus magyarság utolsó kálvária-útja, 1896–1912. A szerző dolgozataiból és beszédeiből egybeállította, bevezetővel és jegyzetekkel kíséri (Compiled from the author’s essays and speeches, prefixed with introduction and annotated by): Dr. Sztripszky Hiador. Fritz Ármin Sajtója, Budapest, 1913.
- 4 *Véghseő, Tamás*: A Hajdúdorogi Egyházmegye megalapításának közvetlen előzményei. *Athanasiana* 35 (2013) 109–121.

was exposed in the bomb plot against Bishop Miklósy.<sup>5</sup> Afterwards, the long years of the war would prevent the creation of even the most fundamental institutional infrastructure. Finally, sharing in the grave consequences of the Peace Treaty of Trianon, the Hungarian Greek Catholic community could not but acquiesce to the loss of half of the parishes of the merely eight year old Eparchy of Hajdúdorog and the exclusion of as many as a hundred thousand Hungarian Greek Catholic faithful outside the country's borders. The loss suffered in 1920 stunted the development of the Hungarian Greek Catholics for decades to come. Following the decades of communist oppression, it could gather momentum only after the political regime change of 1989/90.

It is no exaggeration to describe the establishment of the Eparchy in 1912 as belated if one considers the fact that it could as well have been done as early as 1881. On the initiative of the Hungarian Greek Catholic Movement, the Monarch and the Hungarian Government were ready to develop the External Vicariate of Hajdúdorog created in 1873<sup>6</sup> into an eparchy, but the vehement and concerted objection of the Latin-rite Catholic bishops forestalled that decision. Commenting on the action triggering considerable negative sentiments in contemporaries, István Pirigyí, the first historiographer of the Hungarian Greek Catholics, was absolutely justified in remarking the following in 1991: *'This event was one of the most tragic episodes in the history*

- 5 On the bomb plot in Debrecen: *Katkó, Márton Áron*: Az 1914-es debreceni merénylet. in *Symbolae: A görög katolikus örökségkutatás útjai. A Nikolaus Nilles SJ halálának 100. évfordulóján rendezett konferencia tanulmányai*. Ed.: Véghseő, Tamás. St Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological College, Nyíregyháza, 2010. (Collectanea Athanasiana I/3.) 289-321.
- 6 On the External Vicariate: *Janka, György*: A hajdúdorogi külhelynökség története. in *Az első magyar nyomtatott Liturgikon megjelenésének 120. évfordulójára 2002. április 18-án rendezett szimpozion anyaga*. Ed.: Ivancsó, István. St Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological College, Nyíregyháza, 2002. (Liturgikus örökségünk I.) 7-16.

of the Hungarian Greek Catholics, for, at that time, an eparchy could have been established not yet in the toxic atmosphere of nationalism taking extremist proportions but under more placid political circumstances, with 33 peaceful years ahead for fully developing it' (translated from the Hungarian original).<sup>7</sup> Whereas, drawing on the sources<sup>8</sup> and historical literature<sup>9</sup> at his disposal, István Pirigyí could reconstruct the events of that period only with relatively limited detail, currently, historical sources permitting more extensive inquiries into the outcomes of what happened in 1881 are readily available.

The issue of the establishment of a Greek Catholic eparchy with a Hungarian character was raised in the context of the liturgical usage of the Hungarian language. Translations of the liturgy disseminated in manuscripts from the late 18th century were increasingly used by the Hungarian speaking Greek Catholic communities. This practice was encouraged by the spirit and enthusiasm of the Hungarian Reform Era, without provoking remonstrance from the bishops of Mukacheve (*Munkács*). However, the opposition and intervention of the Latin-rite bishops and archbishops<sup>10</sup> compelled the Hungarian Greek Catholics to realise that, concerning the question of language usage, they should move beyond eparchial confines. The more liberal polit-

7 *Pirigyí, István: A magyarországi görög katolikusok története. II. kötet*, Greek Catholic Theological College, Nyíregyháza, 1991, 94.

8 Pirigyí mostly relied on Jenő Szabó's recollections and collected writings and speeches.

9 *Hermann, Eged: A katolikus egyház története Magyarországon 1914-ig*. Aurora Könyvek, Munich, 1973. (*Dissertationes Hungaricae ex historia Ecclesiae I.*) and *Salacz, Gábor: Egyház és állam Magyarországon a dualizmus korában, 1867-1918*. Aurora Könyvek, Munich, 1974. (*Dissertationes Hungaricae ex historia Ecclesiae II.*)

10 Upon the intervention of Prince-Primate Scitovszky, Vazul Popovics, Bishop of Mukacheve, was even forced to restrict the liturgical use of the Hungarian language by issuing a circular on 11 November 1863: *Munkács Egyházmegyei körlevelek, 1863/4*125.

ical climate following the Compromise of 1867 also spurred them to advance their claims publicly nationwide again after their attempts in 1843 and 1848.<sup>11</sup> In 1866 they presented petitions to the Monarch,<sup>12</sup> the Prince-Primate,<sup>13</sup> the Lord Chancellor's Office<sup>14</sup> and to Parliament.<sup>15</sup> In these petitions they declare their national identity (*'Being true-born Hungarians, we ...' '... we are Hungarians and wish to remain so for eternity' '... we solemnly proclaim that we know of no Hungarians more true-born than ourselves in our Homeland and we will let no-one emulate us in our unflinching love for our nationality'* (translated from the Hungarian original) and request that this fact be acknowledged. It is with deep regret that they observe that despite living in their own country as Hungarians, they are mocked as *Muszkas* (Hungarian folk expression for Russians) or *Oláhs* (Hungarian folk expression for Romanians) on account of the language of their services. They cite the

- 11 At the Parliament of 1843/44, Zemplén County and the Hajdú District urged the publication of Greek Catholic liturgical books through their delegates: Az 1843/44-ik évi magyar országgyűlési alsó tábla kerületi üléseinek naplója. Vol. I. Ed.: Kovács, Ferencz, Franklin Társulat, Budapest, 1894. 261., 264. and 617. At the time of the 1848/49 War of Independence, Minister of Religious Affairs and Public Education József Eötvös stated in his letter addressed to Vazul Popovics, Bishop of Mukacheve (1837-1864), on 19 June 1848 that he was willing to provide all assistance in furthering the cause of the publication of liturgical books translated into Hungarian. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, Budapest (=MNL OL) X 9112 51742. tekercs (scroll) 983-984 fol. 8489 Cath. Egyh. I. 138. Published in: *Véghseő, Tamás – Katkó, Márton Áron: Források a magyar görögkatolikusok történetéhez*. Vol. 1.: 1778-1905. St Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological College, Nyíregyháza, 2014. (Collectanea Athanasiana II. Textus/Fontes 4/1.), document no. 17.
- 12 The Archives of the Primate of Esztergom, Esztergom (=EPL) Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, 11. Box 15. *Véghseő – Katkó*. op. cit. document no. 27.
- 13 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, 11. Box 15. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*. op. cit. document no. 28.
- 14 *Farkas*, op. cit. 30-36. *Véghseő – Katkó*. op. cit. document no. 29.
- 15 *Farkas*, op. cit. 36-41. *Véghseő – Katkó*. op. cit. document no. 30.

example of the Romanian Greek Catholics, who had also been granted the privilege of ecclesiastical organisation development not so long before. They feel justified to formulate the following question: Once the Romanian Greek Catholics may use their native language in the liturgy and have their own ecclesiastical organisation in Hungary, why could the Hungarian Greek Catholics not demand the same? At the same time, they also allude to the fact that the intensifying nationality movements pose serious danger to the Hungarian Greek Catholics. They repeatedly request that Byzantine-rite liturgical books be translated and published at public expense, as well as they voice their demand for the creation of a separate eparchy for the Hungarian Greek Catholics, or, should it not be possible for financial reasons, a vicariate with its seat in Hajdúdorog.

The afterlife of these petitions had a sobering effect on the people of Hajdúdorog in the vanguard of the movement:<sup>16</sup> they would never receive a reply from anywhere. Notwithstanding their references to national interests, the 200-thousand-strong Hungarian Greek Catholic population and its rightful claims, even with the support of the Eparchy of Mukacheve in establishing an independent bishopric behind them,<sup>17</sup> they could not overcome the stereotypes ingrained in the public mind. Public opinion would closely associate the Eastern Rite with the world of ethnic groups and would be unable to abandon the idea that 'Hungarian identity' and 'Byzantine Rite' were two mutually exclusive concepts.

16 Hajdúdorog had the largest Hungarian Greek Catholic community. Besides, this town was also the largest parish of the Eparchy of Mukacheve extending over an enormous expanse of land.

17 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, 11. Box 15. Published in: *Végheő – Katkó*. op. cit. document no. 32. Antal Csopely (a translator of liturgical books himself), signing the statement of support as vicar capitular (owing to the vacancy of the see), omits to elaborate on the question of the liturgical use of the Hungarian language only on account of lack of jurisdiction.

Whereas the liturgical use of the Hungarian language in practice was mostly ensured by the town government in Hajdúdorog,<sup>18</sup> in other places, church authorities would enact restrictive measures. It happened to coincide with the petitions of 1866 that incidents underscoring the gravity of the conflicts stemming from the employment of Hungarian as a liturgical language took place in Makó. The nearly 2000-member Greek Catholic community of the town had been using Hungarian as a church language for several decades at that time. In 1866 a Romanian speaking minority of fifty intended to terminate this custom, and they were supported in their effort by Iosif Papp-Szilágyi, Bishop of Oradea (*Nagyvárad*) (1863–1873). In the antagonistic situation disrupting the internal peace of the community for years, the Bishop adopted the position that services were not to be conducted in Hungarian under any circumstances. He was determined to force the residents of Makó to hire a Romanian school master and cantor, who would also be responsible for leading the singing in the church.<sup>19</sup> The actions of Bishop Papp-Szilágyi demonstrated that the fears cited by the people of Hajdúdorog in their petitions in the year 1866 were real: An alien liturgical language was a threat to Hungarian identity and would lead to the assimilation of Hungarian communities.

The people of Hajdúdorog recognised that it did not suffice to make references to the Hungarian Greek Catholic faithful of other towns and villages, but they ought to join forces and make their cause public on a national level. Even in their petition addressed to the House of Representatives in 1866, they already asked for permission to organise a national conference of Hungarian Greek Catholics. This national assembly was convened for 16 April 1868 in Hajdúdorog. The assembly was attended by as many as 220 representatives delegated

18 *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 24.

19 *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. documents no. 26, 31 and 33-35. Cf. *Janka, György*: A magyar liturgikus nyelv és a makói görög katolikusok. *Athanasiana* 9 (1999) 51-70.

from 33 parishes, as well as by twenty priests. In addition, 19 parishes and 11 priests expressed their approval of the decrees in writing. As a result of the discussions, the goals to be attained were defined: 1. the creation of a Hungarian bishopric with its seat in Hajdúdorog; 2. the translation and publication of liturgical books at public expense; 3. the affirmation of Hungarian as a liturgical language. The assembly established a Standing Executive Committee with Lajos Farkas, Lieutenant of Hajdúdorog, a person with outstanding merits in the organisation process, elected as its head.<sup>20</sup> As the first major manifestation and indisputable success of the self-organising ability of the Hungarian Greek Catholics, the assembly proved to be a serious indication for the church authorities. One of the participants of the assembly, György Szabó, parish priest of Hajdúdorog and a sympathiser of the movement, attempts to convey the seriousness of the situation in a confidential report written for Bishop Pankovics in the following terms: *'As I see it, we are confronted with a magnificent current. Standing in its way would be tantamount to being drifted away thereby [...] or, enraging the passionate deluge through resistance, being ravished to extremes from which adorable divine Providence deliver us!'* (translated from the Hungarian original)<sup>21</sup>

The Standing Executive Committee dispatched petitions<sup>22</sup> and delegations to Uzhhorod (*Ungvár*), Pest and Esztergom. Despite the favourable reception, the petitions were not responded to this time, either. Amid all the urging and repeated enquiries it became obvious again that the question of the liturgical use of the Hungarian language aroused considerable fears in the Roman Catholic bishops and archbishops. Such sentiments were unequivocally communicat-

20 *Farkas*, op. cit. 44-56. Including the complete proceedings of the assembly.

21 Derzhavnyy Arkhiv Zakarpats'koi Oblasti, Berehove (*Beregszász*) (=DAZO) fond 151. opis 12. nr. 1754. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 38.

22 *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. documents no. 37 and 39.

ed by Titular Bishop István Lipovniczky, Advisor to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education, to Lajos Farkas, who recalls the Advisor's words thus: '*For who can guarantee that, once today they allow us to conduct services in the Hungarian language, tomorrow the Hungarian speaking Latin-rite faithful in Komárom will not demand the same? This is, after all, impossible*' (translated from the Hungarian original).<sup>23</sup> On this matter, Lipovniczky, *ex officio*, sought<sup>24</sup> the view of Prince-Primate Simor, who was not in favour of either the establishment of a Hungarian Greek Catholic bishopric or the affirmation of the liturgical use of the Hungarian language. Among his arguments, the thought that gathering the Hungarian Greek Catholics into a new eparchy would not promote the cause of Magyarisation as the Ruthenian and Romanian eparchies with a purely ethnic character would this way be even further isolated from the Hungarian population and Hungarian culture is particularly noteworthy. Regarding the issue of the liturgical language, he emphasises that any changes in this respect are within the jurisdiction of the Apostolic See and, at the same time, testifies to the fact that he is not cognisant of the relevance of the language-related handicaps of Hungarian-speaking Greek Catholics. Providing evidence of his not inconsiderable degree of naivety, he assumes that none of the Greek Catholic bishops would send a priest to a Hungarian parish who would not adapt to the linguistic background of the Hungarian faithful.<sup>25</sup>

Simultaneously with the process of self-organisation, the consideration of and debate about the crucial question of what the 'Hungarian liturgy' was in fact supposed to mean' also commenced. This involved the resolution of dilemmas such as whether it referred to the word-

23 *Farkas*, op. cit. 72.

24 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, 11. Box 15, 3844/1868. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 42.

25 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, 11. Box 15, 3844/1868. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 43.



by-word translation of every single service into Hungarian and their performance in Hungarian, or whether it was meant to apply only to those parts that were audible for and sung by the congregation. One of the most prominent translators of liturgical texts, Ignác Roskovics, in his proposal addressed to Prince-Primate Simor in 1868, advocated the idea that only the publicly audible sections should be translated into Hungarian, while the so-called 'quiet prayers' said by the priest ought to be conducted in Old Slavonic, Romanian or Greek. He also recommended that a five-language Liturgikon written in Greek, Hungarian, Old Slavonic, Romanian and Latin be compiled, with a view to promoting the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups, amongst others things, according to his reasoning.<sup>26</sup>

The Assembly of Hajdúdorog connected the cause of the Hungarian liturgy to the demand for the creation of a separate bishopric for the Hungarian Greek Catholics. During his canonical visitation in Hajdúdorog in September 1871, István Pankovics, Bishop of Mukacheve (1866–1874), displayed signs in his conduct that would confirm a sense of conviction in the community of Hajdúdorog that, in spite of all the towering hurdles and obstacles, their objectives were not far from being fulfilled. He did not raise any objections to the Divine Liturgy being conducted in the Hungarian language in his presence. Moreover, in one of the moments of solemnity, he even declared that he considered it to be the greatest mission of his life to become the first Hungarian Greek Catholic bishop.<sup>27</sup>

26 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, II. 15. Published in: *Végheő – Katkó*, op. cit. documents no. 40 and 40a.

27 *Farkas*, op. cit. 80-82. His report written to the Prince-Primate after the canonical visitation: EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, II. Box 15. 1789/1872. Published in: *Végheő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 44. In the course of his visit, Bishop Pankovics had the opportunity to marvel at the new fresco of the church of Hajdúdorog, the painting of which was commissioned by the parish after the 1868 assembly, and which was intended, amongst other things, to serve the

Following such antecedents, the Monarch's decision to found an external vicariate on 17 September 1873, within the Eparchy of Mukacheve, for 33 Hungarian speaking parishes, with its seat to be located in Hajdúdorog, caused immense disappointment.<sup>28</sup> The state authority overseeing the preparations for the establishment of the external vicariate fully took the concerns of the Roman Catholic bishops and archbishops about the use of Hungarian as a liturgical language into account. Furthermore, since the Greek Catholics openly admitted that one of the chief purposes of a bishopric of their own would be 'to raise the Hungarian language to the altars', they unintentionally supplied a substantive counter argument against the establishment of the eparchy. Although the idea of founding an external vicariate was initiated by none other than the Hajdúdorog community in case the creation of the eparchy was impeded by major financial difficulties, they envisaged that its jurisdiction would cover all the Hungarian speaking congregations. As opposed to the previous proposal, the Congress of Hajdúdorog held in 1868 made an unambiguous request for the establishment of an independent eparchy. The central government realised that it had to provide some kind of response to the demands of the Hungarian Greek Catholics, which in turn needed to

purpose of highlighting the ideological background of the movement. Révész, György. In the painting entitled 'Saint Stephen Destroys Idols', there are Byzantine-rite bishops standing next to the holy king, proclaiming the historical fact, permanently impugned at that time, that the priests of the Byzantine Church were the first to perform conversion activities among the Hungarians. The fresco is no longer visible these days. Cf. *Terdik, Szilveszter: Szent István király tisztelete a görögkatolikus egyházban.* in *István, a szent király. Tanulmánykötet és kiállítási katalógus Szent István király tiszteletéről halálának 975. évfordulóján.* Eds.: Kerny, Teréz & Smohay, András, The Museum of the Diocese of Székesfehérvár, Székesfehérvár, 2013, 188-204., 189-190.

28 MNL OL K 26 1915-XXV-2855. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 48.

be harmonised with the other interests of the Church.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, the founding of the external vicariate may be seen rather as an intermediate solution. In 1875 Bishop Pásztyei appointed Cathedral Canon János Danilovics as the first external vicar,<sup>30</sup> whose, by any standards, rather limited jurisdiction<sup>31</sup> encompassed only the parishes of the Deaneries of Hajdúdorog, Karász, Máriapócs, Nagykálló, Nyírbéltek and Timár within the Arch-Deanery of Szabolcs. Although this would be expanded by the addition of the Precinct of Nyír from the Arch-Deanery of Szatmár, it would continue to comprise only a fragment of the Hungarian speaking Greek Catholic parishes.

Vicar Danilovics scored substantial success in the production of translations of liturgical books though. In May 1879, he proposed the creation of a translation commission, the thirteen-year-long work of which he would supervise himself. The outcome of these operations was the translation and publication of four liturgical books.<sup>32</sup>

29 Cf. The correspondence between Minister Trefort and Prince-Primate Simor: EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, II. Box 15. 987/1873. and 287/1873. *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. documents no. 46-47.

30 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, II. Box 15. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 49.

31 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, II. Box 15. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 50.

32 The published liturgical books: 1. Aranyszájú Szent János atya szent és isteni Liturgiája (The Holy and Divine Liturgy of Father Saint John Chrysostom), Debrecen, 1882. 2. Görög katolikus egyházi szerkönyv (Greek Catholic Euchologion), Debrecen, 1883. 3. Szent Nagy Bazil atya szent és isteni Liturgiája, továbbá az előszenteltek liturgiája s egyéb egyházi szolgálatok papi imádságai (The Holy and Divine Liturgy of Father Saint Basil the Great, as well as the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts and the Priestly Prayers of Other Church Services) Debrecen, 1890. 4. Görögszertartású általános egyházi énekkönyv a hozzávaló imákkal (A General Byzantine-Rite Ecclesiastical Chant Book with Related Prayers). Translated by: János Danilovics. Debrecen, 1892. On the Commission: *Ivancsó, István*: Az 1879-es hajdúdorogi liturgikus fordító bizottság és tevékenysége, St Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological College, Nyíregyháza, 1999. (Athanasiana füzetek 1).

Hardly had the Translation Commission been established and news of its activities spread than, after listening to the assessment of Cardinal Lajos Haynald, Archbishop of Kalocsa,<sup>33</sup> a prohibitive ordinance on the liturgical use of the Hungarian language was dispatched from Rome. The Holy See obliged the Bishop of Mukacheve to restore the use of the Old Slavonic language completely. Bishop Pásztelyi advised the priests of the ban on the use of the Hungarian language, but this would fail to fundamentally alter established practices.<sup>34</sup> The Standing Executive Committee, however, holding a meeting in Hajdúdorog on 23 January 1881, was all the more prompted by this circumstance to take action. As a result of the consultations, members of the Committee presented petitions to the King,<sup>35</sup> the House of Representatives<sup>36</sup> and Ágoston Trefort, Minister of Culture.<sup>37</sup> In the

33 Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Archivio degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Città del Vaticano (=ASV AES) pos. 882. fasc. 350. fol. 55-91v. *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 179.

34 Archival sources on the prohibition have so far not been recovered. In the Disciplinary Rules and Regulations of the Eparchy of Mukacheve: 'In the parishes composed of our non-Slavic speaking faithful, situated in the territory of our Eparchy and found under our jurisdiction, only as much deviation from the canonised altar-language (*lyurgicus*) during the sacred celebration of the divine services both in and outside the church will be tolerated as that common in the practice of our a Latin-rite brethren in the priesthood in conducting parts of the divine services according their own rite, both in and outside the church, in the tongue of the faithful. Priests daring to depart from or violate this rule at their own peril without the supreme permission of His Holiness the Pope incur strict disciplinary proceedings' (Translated from the Hungarian original). (5-10 March 1883, VII/25/b.). Published in: Petrus, Jenő. A magyarság önvédelme a keleti egyház idegen nyelveinek beolvasztó hatása ellen. Csokonai Nyomda és Kiadó-Részvénytársaság, Debrecen, 1897. 82.

35 Görögkatolikus Püspöki Levéltár (Greek Catholic Episcopal Archives), Nyíregyháza (=GKPL) IV-2a. 8/1881. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 53.

36 GKPL IV-2a. 8/1881. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 54.

37 GKPL IV-2a. 8/1881. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 55.

submitted documents, it was pointed out that the external vicariate had not solved the problems of the Hungarian Greek Catholics, and thus the request for the creation of an independent eparchy was reiterated. In the petition presented to Parliament, allusions were made to the fact that the new eparchy would be conducive to the spread of Hungarian as a state language in the parishes inhabited by ethnic groups. Although this reference was primarily designed to enlist the support of representatives sensitive to political messages, it did prove to be fatal for domestic and international views on the Hajdúdorog Movement. From that point on, the initiative launched mainly with a view to fulfilling spiritual needs would be seen and interpreted by society at large and, more importantly, by part of the press as a nationalistic movement, aimed at Magyarising ethnic minorities. This stigma was virtually irrevocably attached to the movement by those opposing the Hungarian liturgy and the creation of a Hungarian Greek Catholic bishopric.

The petitions submitted in the year 1881 were favourably received by the House of Representatives and the Government. On 12 February, the Government already authorised Minister Ágoston Trefort *'to present this supplication to His Majesty and, at the same time, request His Majesty's supreme permission so that he may begin preliminary negotiations on this matter with the approval of the respective bishop and Archbishop-Primate and, following the completion thereof, present a proposal as to how the desire that Hungarian speaking Greek Catholics be not obliged to practice the Russian liturgy could be granted'* (translated from the Hungarian original)<sup>38</sup>. A week later, the House of Representatives also discussed the petition and forwarded it to the Minister of Culture, instructing him to do the necessary steps as soon as

38 MNL OL K 27 1881. VI/3. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 56.

possible.<sup>39</sup> After the Standing Executive Committee learnt about the positive reception, on 26 February it notified Prince-Primate János Simor of the submission of the requests and asked him to support the creation of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog at the Holy See.<sup>40</sup> On 4 of March, Minister Trefort presented the petition of the Hungarian Greek Catholics to the Monarch, who would give his consent to the commencement of the negotiations. Trefort let Prince-Primate Simor know about all this on 10 March and simultaneously sought his stance on the issue.<sup>41</sup> On the same day, the Minister would inform Cardinal Lajos Haynald, Archbishop of Kalocsa,<sup>42</sup> as well as the other members of the Episcopacy, who were also invited to express their views. Subsequently, on 15 March, even Serafino Vanutelli, Nuncio of Vienna, contacted Prince-Primate Simor in writing in an effort to enquire about the rumours circulated in the press about the establishment of a new Greek Catholic bishopric.<sup>43</sup> The Prince-Primate would send his reply to the Nuncio extraordinarily swiftly, within a week. According to the information furnished by him, there were about 130-thousand Greek Catholics living in the country who could not understand Old Slavonic or Romanian at all. Their aim was to be gathered in an independent eparchy, the bishop of which would secure the permission of the Holy See allowing them to use the Hungarian language in the liturgy exclusively. Therefore, the moot point,

39 Kalocsai Főegyházmegyei Levéltár (The Archives of the Arch-Diocese of Kalocsa), Kalocsa (=KFL) I.I.c. Haynald Lajos – Politika, 474. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 56.

40 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, II. Box 15. 3297/1881. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 57.

41 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, II. Box 15. 3297/1881. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 58.

42 KFL.I.I.c. Haynald Lajos – Politika, 474. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 59.

43 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, II. Box 15. 1648/1881. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 60.

as stressed by the Prince-Primate, was not the establishment of a new bishopric but changing the liturgical language, which could entail serious consequences as it might motivate the Roman Catholic faithful to request that Hungarian, German or Slovakian be used instead of Latin.<sup>44</sup>

Whereas the Nuncio received a response within a week, Minister Trefort was made to wait for four months. Even though the other members of the Episcopacy whose views were sought would be quick to send their judgements,<sup>45</sup> the two most important ones, the positions of Simor and Cardinal Haynald, would be pronounced only in mid-July. The responses, which were, in all probability, closely coordinated, were dispatched to the Ministry from Haynald's court on 14 July<sup>46</sup> and from Simor's seat one day later, on 15 July.<sup>47</sup>

44 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, 11. Box 15. 1648/1881/a. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 61.

45 E.g.: János Zalka, Bishop of Győr, posted his position as early as 21 March, dispatching a copy to Haynald as well: KFL.I.I.c. Haynald Lajos – Politika, 974. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 62.

46 KFL.I.I.c. Haynald Lajos – Politika, 706. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 64.

47 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, 11. Box 15. 3297/1881. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 65. On 5 July, Minister Trefort urged Cardinal Haynald to respond, but the latter would feel resentful about the former's insistence. In his reply, he elucidates that, amid his numerous engagements, he has not forgotten about the cause of the Bishopric of Hajdúdorog, and a final version of his response is being prepared by the draftsmen. He notes that the Minister must also have some first-hand experience about the fact official matters are frequently susceptible to becoming accumulated, and the related arrangements may therefore be delayed. The Cardinal hints at the fact that he has been expecting a response to a petition on an foundation-related subject from Trefort's Ministry for two years already but, as he quotes Trefort's letter verbatim, *'I have not been fortunate to obtain a reply thereto as yet'* (translated from the Hungarian original). KFL.I.I.c. Haynald Lajos – Politika, 474. Trefort's letter written on 5 July 1881 and the draft of Haynald's response.

Before the Minister could receive a reply, Cardinal Haynald informed Cardinal Secretary of State Ludovico Jacobini as early as 30 June as to what statement he and his fellow bishops would issue.<sup>48</sup> *Gravis quaestio exsurrexit* are the initial words of the missive of the Archbishop of Kalocsa, accentuating the significance of the matter. In the remainder of his letter, he reported that, in response to the petition of the Hungarian Greek Catholics, the establishment of a new Greek Catholic bishopric for the faithful who had formerly been Ruthenians but had by then become Hungarian-speakers, requesting the Hungarian liturgy, was on the agenda at the highest government levels. The Minister of Religious Affairs and Public Education even officially adjured several bishops, including the author of the letter, to provide their positions, but they would all express refusal in their responses. The greatest danger according to Haynald was that, invigorated by the example of the Hungarian Greek Catholics, Latin-rite Catholics would also demand the use of the Hungarian language in church. He predicted that the Germans, Slovaks, and Croats could also advance similar claims, ultimately threatening the internal peace of the country. He also remarked that the individual ambitions of certain people, who would be pleased to head this new eparchy as a bishop or would be glad to receive appointments for canonry, could also be detected in the background.

Cardinal Hayland divides his response to Minister Trefort<sup>49</sup> into two sections. As, in his opinion, the question of the Bishopric of Hajdúdorog is primarily about the liturgical use of the Hungarian language, in describing his perspectives, first he expounds on this subject, discussing the matter in more depth. In the second part of his letter, rather sparingly in contrast with the first section, he addresses the issue of the Hungarian Greek Catholic bishopric itself.

48 KFL.I.I.c. Haynald Lajos – Politika, 1547. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 63.

49 KFL.I.I.c. Haynald Lajos – Politika, 706. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 64.



On the question of the liturgical language, the Archbishop of Kalocsa bases his arguments on the relevant experience of his own diocese. Although he explicates these aspects at the end of the first part of his letter, it is patently obvious that this markedly negative experience fundamentally informs his refusal. The Cardinal goes into great detail about the complications that may arise from the time consuming process of precisely determining at what point during particular liturgical celebrations the prayers and songs are to be conducted in one or another ethnic language in ethnically mixed parishes. He argues that it is a source of countless conflicts if, in individual places, the changes in ethnic ratios that take place over time are not matched by subsequent modifications in the order of language usage prescribed and approved by church authorities. Thus, the Cardinal evidently demurs at the prospect of the problem of nationality entering churches via the question of liturgical language use. It is precisely for this reason that the endeavour of the Hungarian – or as Haynald puts it – the Hungarian-turned Russian Greek Catholics to use the Hungarian language in their services and especially in the Holy Mass exclusively is not desirable from the point of view of either the church or the state. The Cardinal seems to be certain that the example of the Greek Catholics will be imitated by other ethnic groups, and this will lead to splits in congregations at a parish level. Such developments will entail grave consequences not only from an ecclesiastical perspective but also in terms of the notion of a Hungarian state, since, in congregations segregated on an ethnic basis, there can be no more sermons or catechesis delivered in the Hungarian state language, which, as per contemporary practices, has been an important instrument in the process of nearly unnoticeable assimilation to the Hungarian community. In the Cardinal's opinion, the Greek Catholics cannot wish for more in the area of language usage than Latin-rite Catholics, in whose liturgical practice the Hungarian language is integrated to the necessary extent. According to Haynald, there are no such major differences between the Latin and the Byzantine liturgy that would not

make it possible for the people to sing in Hungarian and listen to sermons and catechesis in the Hungarian language. In his view, this would be completely sufficient for the confirmation of one's faith and spiritual enrichment, whereas a fully Hungarian liturgy, the approval of which by the Holy See is in any case unrealistic, would be totally needless.

It follows from his position on the issue of language use that he deems the creation of the Bishopric of Hajdúdorog to be useless, too. He feels assured that the existing Greek Catholic system of ecclesiastical governance will guarantee that the justified language-use-related demands of the Hungarian faithful will be considered by the bishops. Should they fail to do so, higher-level church authorities or the Government itself could take appropriate action.

The Fund for Religious Affairs is faced with severe problems otherwise, so it is not to be burdened further with the expenditures of an unneeded bishopric.

Cardinal Haynald makes repeated hints at personal ambitions and incidental interests in his letter.

Prince-Primate Simor's expression of refusal<sup>50</sup> worded more concisely than that of his fellow cardinal from Kalocsa is also centred around the issue of liturgical language use. He is convinced that the Holy See will not permit the liturgical use of the Hungarian language. In case this should happen thanks to some miracle, that would still not warrant the establishment of a Hungarian bishopric as the current – utterly illegal and unacceptable – practice (if the sources from which such information is obtained are to be trusted at all) also verifies that, even in eparchies with Old Slavonic as the liturgical language, there are opportunities for the Hungarian language to be used. In his letter, the Prince-Primate also alludes to the dangers

50 EPL Simor Cat. D. Hajdúdorog, 11. Box 15. 3297/1881. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 65.

inherent in precedents and does not omit to mention the individual ambitions behind the movement, either.

Besides the expression of refusal by the two cardinals, out of the other members of the Episcopacy whose views had been sought, János Zalka, Bishop of Győr, and Pavel Mihai, the Greek Catholic Bishop of Oradea, rejected the idea of the establishment of a Hungarian Greek Catholic bishopric with its seat in Hajdúdorog while Bishop János Pásztélyi Kovács of Mukacheve and Miklós Tóth of Prešov (*Eperjes*) were supportive. The professors of the Theological College also responded in the negative.<sup>51</sup> From the opinions collected from the bishops, only the letter of János Zalka, Bishop of Győr, has been discovered to date.<sup>52</sup> Bishop Zalka starts his letter with the assertion that Parliament had no competence in matters such as establishing new bishoprics. Hungarian public law recognised only the Monarch's right of patronage, who could make decisions on matters of this kind in cooperation with Holy See. Bishop Zalka approaches the question of creating a new Greek Catholic eparchy in a pragmatic way. He considers it to be a substantial source of tension if the Ruthenian and Romanian Greek Catholic bishops are forced to make a choice and have to declare which parishes they regard as Hungarian and, as a consequence, eligible to be included in the new eparchy. Should they renounce their parishes, they could expect attacks from the ranks of their own nationality. In addition, the respective communities are not internally homogenous, either: There may be members who will wish to join the new eparchy while others would prefer to stay in the old one. *'There is bound to be a split here as well. Each party would demand the church, and each party would demand the school'* as the Bishop of Győr evinces his fears (translated from the Hungarian original). From

51 *Salacz*, op. cit. 150-151.

52 A copy is kept at the Archives of the Arch-Diocese of Kalocsa: KFL.I.1.c. Haynald Lajos – Politika, 974. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 62.

the point of view of the notion of the Hungarian state, he also deems it to be disconcerting that, following the establishment of a Hungarian Greek Catholic bishopric, the Ruthenian and Romanian eparchies would be even further isolated and distanced from the Hungarian community. The schism is only a short step away from this point since *'experience has on many an occasion shown how tenuous the strand tying to the union is for some if their bonds are not strengthened by the Fund for Religious Affairs'* as he phrases his by no means flattering view. In the second part of his letter, Bishop Zalka argues against the liturgical use of the Hungarian language in a thorough and lengthy analysis and concludes by citing two arguments adduced by the two cardinals, too: He suspects individual ambitions in the background and rules out that the Fund for Religious Affairs could be burdened with the costs of a new bishopric.

Upon seeing the opposition of the bishops, the Government removed the question of the establishment of the eparchy for one decade, and, from that point on, those in government circles would adopt the position that the founding of a new Greek Catholic eparchy was not to be considered as long as the Holy See did not permit the use of the Hungarian language.

Twelve years later, János Ivánkovichs (later to become Bishop of Rožňava (*Rozsnyó*)) reopened the files of the case at the time of his appointment as ministerial advisor. The topicality of this act was provided by a measure introduced by Pavel Mihai, the Greek Catholic Bishop of Oradea, ordering that the Romanian language be taught in the Hungarian schools of the Eparchy. This measure triggering nationwide uproar<sup>53</sup> renewed government interest in the establishment of a Hungarian Greek Catholic eparchy. Having examined the documents produced in 1881, Ivánkovichs compiled a detailed analysis

53 E.g.: A kormány és a nemzetiségek. Budapesti Hírlap, XIII. évfolyam, (no.) 217. szám, 8 August 1893. (p.) 1. oldal.

and made a circumspectly devised proposal on the subject of the establishment of the Bishopric of Hajdúdorog.<sup>54</sup> From the noteworthy proposal, only the analysis of the views submitted in 1881 will be discussed here because Advisor Ivánkovichs also formulates the objection that contemporary Greek Catholics would voice in conjunction with the Latin-rite bishops and archbishops' main fear, albeit to no avail.

Out of the five statements of refusal (Cardinals Haynald and Simor, Bishops Zalka and Pavel, as well as the Theological College), Advisor Ivánkovichs appears to have a rather deprecating view about the writings of the Archbishop of Esztergom and the Bishop of Oradea. *'The former only proves that, when there are no arguments left, insinuation ensues. The latter, in turn, demonstrates that the Bishop was completely uninformed about the matter in hand ...'* However, he provides a well-detailed analysis of the assessments of Bishop Zalka, the Theological College and Cardinal Haynald, describing them as thorough and well-thought-out, yet debatable with regard to their conclusions. Concerning Cardinal Haynald's supposition that the Greek Catholics bishops would send the Hungarian faithful priests attentive to their linguistic needs, Advisor Ivánkovichs attaches the following commentary: *'A blessed belief wherewith the great man's soul flew to a better abode!'* *If he looks back from heaven to this earth, today he would hardly write or say this'* (translated from the Hungarian original).

In response to the Latin bishops and archbishop's fear articulated and stressed time and time again, suggesting that, in case the Hungarian Greek Catholics were permitted to use the Hungarian language, the Latin-rite population would demand the same, Ivánkovichs rejoins: *'And even though Greek-rite Catholic priests would conduct services in the Hungarian language in several places already at that time, and as*

54 MNL OL K 721 I/a-1881. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 67. At that time, Prince-Primate Vaszary had the question removed from the agenda. EPL Vaszary Cat Dc. Hajdúdorog, 4315/1894. Published in: *Véghseő – Katkó*, op. cit. document no. 68.

*far as I know they still do so in several places today too, I have not heard so far that the Roman Catholics in that area have launched initiatives of the nature about which the late Archbishop of Kalocsa expressed his concerns. A case in point, mingled with the 7315 Greek Catholic souls, there are 429 Roman Catholics living in Hajdú-Dorogh (sic), and no report has been made by the local Roman Catholic parish about any movement indicating that their faithful also long for the introduction of Hungarian church services. The accuracy of my assertion is somewhat also borne out by the fact that, in a number of places in the country, the faithful of the reformed churches constitute the majority and conduct their church services in their mother tongue, yet the Roman Catholics have not taken any steps to have the Hungarian liturgy (sic) introduced (translated from the Hungarian original).*

It is undoubtedly true that allowing the liturgical use of the Hungarian language in Greek Catholic communities would have meant the sanctioning of a practice that had been relatively widespread for decades. This circumstance was not taken into account by the Latin-rite bishops and archbishops, and they failed to consider prior experience which was indeed indicative of the fact that the Greek Catholic practice had no ‘subversive’ effect on the Roman Catholic communities living in the same region. It may be inferred from Cardinal Simor’s letter that information about the contemporary practice had reached him, but he refused to receive such reports without scepticism (*‘if the things that have been divulged to me through private channels are true’* (translated from the Hungarian original))<sup>55</sup> and he did not deem it to be necessary to subject previous experience to closer scrutiny. As arousing alarm about potential ethnic unrests and hostilities, as well as emphasising individual ambitions appeared to be a more convenient strategy, the bishops and archbishops whose opinions were sought rather chose to take this path.

55 Cf. Fn. 50.

However, history did not vindicate their decision. Three decades later, the persistent struggle of the Hungarian Greek Catholics bore its first fruit: an independent eparchy. It must be noted, though that the three-decade delay would entail severe consequences impacting the later development of the community in largely negative ways.