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Integrating Minorities: Traditional Communities and Modernization

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Contents

Introduction

The present volume is dedicated to those ethnic groups and traditional communities of Eastern and Central Europe which have not been integrated by modern civil and national movements, and which have not actively participated in the nation-building or state-building processes that shaped modern Europe. We discuss on the same level of interpretation both the national/religious minorities who were not part of modern national movements due to their traditional lifestyle, and such minority communities living within nation-state borders, whose endeavor to manifest themselves as independent communities takes mostly forms of symbolic gestures and practices.

We have tried to collect studies that display the situation of traditional ethnic communities, conservative in character, as confronted with modernization processes which sooner or later influence every individual and every social group in a country. Under the term, "modernization processes," we understand basically the progress of globalization and its consequences for tradition and customs, *e.g.* the gradual disappearance of traditional lifestyles, which, however, does not necessarily result in community dissolution. On the contrary, paradoxically as it may sound, sometimes it prompts an even more pronounced phenomenon of exclusion, and thus we should rather speak of globalization's integrative power within the borders of an ethnic group (Barth 1969).

Within the conditions of modernity, the integrating institutions of traditional communities, which provided most of the functions of communal life (*i.e.* organized access to resources, reproduction of the community, institutionalized forms of conflict solving etc.), have radically changed. In the context of modernizing, globalizing influences, and with the radical changes of community lifestyle and the disappearance of traditional integrating institutions, ways of life and forms of social organization are increasingly less tied to one particular community. It seems like modernity offers less and less chances for the differentiation of certain groups to be manifested in specific ways of life and significantly different forms of social organization; namely, ethnicity is increasingly less able to fulfill the function of a "total institution" (see Horváth 2006: 47).

Instead of the natural media of living ethnicity, which entails a specific way of life, system of values, and traditional culture, in modernity, the different systems of values are present all together. Conditions of globalization give place

to ways of life that enable the changing one's cultural medium, and instead of local communities belonging to one certain location (Appadurai 1996), we might face new cultural patterns of translocal communities. The question rises, that within the conditions of modernity, when the ways of life of these communities are changing extremely rapidly, amidst the disintegration of the institutional system running the community's social relations, the transformation of central values, and the mixture of different systems of values and mentalities – in one phrase, amidst the processes of *massive acculturation* – what happens with the ethnicities that formerly were functioning well in the traditional context? What new constructions of ethnicity are taking over from the locality-rooted forms that were related to one given socio-cultural medium?

We know that the fast changes of modernization and acculturation themselves do not determine the chances of survival of a minority community. In fact, processes of modernization can create new ethno-political possibilities and techniques of sustaining interest for the subsistence of minority communities. There is no necessary contradiction between modernization and retention of ethnic identity. On the contrary, it can be argued that, in many cases, certain aspects of modernization are required for identity maintenance to be successful (Eriksen 1993: 127). The validation of new technologies requires the recognition of cultural differentiation and cultural self-consciousness, which, at the same time, leads to the formation of ethnic identities, namely the accentuated activation of an ethnicity's social practices. Thus while cultural, institutional, linguistic, and other specifics factors within traditional communities often lead to the stigma of underdevelopment and 'being a minority,' a stigma which the members of these communities try to remove (see the examples of the "huțuls" of Maramureș and of the Moldavian Csángós), modernity paradoxically does not exclusively create the possibility of cultural homogenization, as it might also contribute to the revaluation and revitalization of cultural differences, duly the political, ethnic and nationalistic use of ethnicity[1] (see Antonnen 2003: 54).

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Most of the articles included in the present volume are case studies that refer either to the historical context of a particular group or to the changes a given group has undergone most recently. Several articles present minorities that, due to their traditional ways of life, for a long time have been organizing

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1   Based on Barth's theory (see Barth 1969) we consider ethnicity a social practice, according to which communities produce relations of social differentiation and social boundaries as conclusions of inner cultural affections and practices (language, religion), everyday life coduct and lifestyle, the specificity of institutions, influeces of identity policies etc., or they are differentiated by objective delimitations.

themselves as communities differentiated along specific cultural manifestations, practices and institutions.

The studies touch questions of symbolic memory representation or specific community forms and their integrative role for a traditional community (Wojciech Bedyński, Melinda Marinka), the role of propaganda and political instrumentalization in shaping a collective identity of a community at present (Corina Iosif, Lehel Peti) or in the past (Judit Pál, Gerhard Seewann). Other articles present the most current problems against which traditional communities are struggling (Tomasz Kosiek, Lehel Peti, Vilmos Tánczos). Since religion is one of the most evident factors in delimiting the collective identity of many traditional ethnic communities, some space in the volume has also been devoted to the research of this problem in more recent times (Agnieszka Barszczewska, Tatiana Podolinska) as well as those more ancient (Kornél Nagy, Ferenc Pozsony).

Processes of ethnicity, emphasizing the symbolic affection of a community to its own tradition, materialized in casual gestures and social practices, are analyzed regarding the Swabians of the Satu Mare region by Marinka Melinda and the case of two Slovak communities in Hungary by Orsolya Szabó. The main course of Melinda Marinka's research is given by the definition of personal, local and collective identity, respectively by the role taken in the individual's community. The author reflects first of all on the manifestations through which the Swabians of the Satu Mare region express their changing and occasionally reconstructed ethnic identity through the last decades. She carries on the interpretation of nuances and representations of identity, which sketch the marks of local and territorial affection; respectively they define and mark the symbolic spaces of memory nowadays.

Orsolya Szabó undertakes research of the change in language command among the Slovaks in Hungary, particularly researching their bilingualism and language change. She also presents the influences of the economic and social transformational processes on identity, and draws important conclusions about the character of the Slovaks' double identity in Hungary.

After the 1989 system change, the Moldavian Csángós living in Romania came to the centre of public, political and scientific attention due to their traditional culture and specific ethnicity. The study of Lehel Peti describes the "structure" of outer interference oriented towards the life of local communities, respectively the influence that comes back into these communities along the growing interest in the Csángós.

Ferenc Pozsony analyzes the role of religion within ethnicity, through the story of the Transylvanian Sabbatarian communities, which were formed during the period of religious renewal under the influence of Hebrew (Jewish)

tendencies. The author gives special attention to the case of the Sabbatarian Szeklers of Bezidu Nou (Bözödújfalu), presenting ethnographically the problems of integration for a community who consciously converted to Sabbatarianism along the Hebrew traditions and Old Testament system of values.

The study of Judit Pál undertakes the presentation of the Transylvanian Armenians' integration endeavor and assimilation processes, making important remarks regarding the image of the Armenians and the formation of Armenian identity. The author presents how, after arriving in the last third of the seventeenth century, the Armenians integrated relatively quickly into the Transylvanian society. The most important role in this integration was their affiliation to the Catholic Church. We also find out how the successful integration of the Transylvanian Armenians emptied into a state of final assimilation by the end of the nineteenth century, and, as a result, cultural and structural assimilation was followed by identity assimilation, as the Transylvanian Armenians undertook a Hungarian identity.

Mapping all the settlements in question, Vilmos Tánczos carried out a detailed, complex research on the language command of the Roman Catholic Moldavian Csángós, a religious minority reaching the last phase of linguistic assimilation. The author puts into numbers such linguistic assimilation processes that cannot be educed from official statistics, and also the repartition of levels of linguistic competency among different generations, all based on his own fieldwork. As a result of his linguistic research, he concluded that, regarding the scale of assimilation, there is a collective language shift occuring in Moldavia. He argues that, as a result of the assimilation processes, the larger part of a Csángó population numbering 250,000 who lives in Moldavia has already undergone Romanianization, and only a small part, about 20%, can be considered bilingual.

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Judit PÁL

Armenian Image – Armenian Identity – Assimilation of the Transylvanian Armenians in the 18th and 19th Centuries[*]

In the last decades historical research, similarly to social psychology and cultural anthropology,[1] has displayed growing interest towards both the self-image of particular groups of peoples and the image they have of others. While researching the presence of anti-Semitism, the so called "middleman minorities theory" was developed. This theory sought for an answer to the question, how one or another minority fills in strategic gaps in the economical life of certain states, and why those minorities evoke hostile feelings of the majority population. A classical example of an embodiment of such type of minority are Jews, but I could enumerate similar examples from every part of the World. Characteristic of all these minorities is that they play a major role in the money circulation within the respective space, that is in the field of trade, while in the social plane they are positioned between the elites and the lower social strata. However, the economic role alone is not to be considered the due explanation of the prejudice and hostile attitude that has been developed towards them (Zenner 1987).

Subsequently, I will briefly outline the process of integration and assimilation of Armenians in Transylvania. In regard to this, I will also examine the development (and change) of their image, and I will shortly present the question of the Armenian self-image and identity. The reason why I sketch only the

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[*] The study is a modified version of a conference paper. See: Pál 2007b.
[1] Researchers have been facing the theoretical problems and paradoxes of anthropological and ethnological embracing of foreignness already since the 1990s. See: Waldenfels 2004; Schiffauer 2004.

Hungarian image of Armenians (for more see: Pál 1998; Pál 2000) is partly due to scarcity of the sources, and partly because the reference group for Armenians were Hungarians. It was Hungarians to whom Armenians compared themselves and with whom they integrated; thus, also the Armenian self-image has developed to certain extent as an answer to the Hungarian picture of this group.

Although the Transylvanian Armenians first appeared in the area as a middleman minority, they followed a slightly different path than their fellow sufferers. After their mass settling-down in Transylvania during the last three decades of the 17th century (Pál 1997), integration evolved as a long process (for details see: Pál 2005; briefly in Hungarian: Pál 2007a) conducting the assimilation of Armenians in the second half of the 19th century. Enjoying the support of the central power, they took efforts to integrate with the dominating group, and at the same time they preserved their cultural identity. Seeking aid of the central power is usually a characteristic trace of middleman minorities. Since the integration of Transylvania into the Habsburg Imperium, the privileges the Transylvanian Armenians had already received from the Transylvanian prince were not only preserved, but even broadened by the newly implemented Habsburg-power. The results from the roles played in economic importance of Armenians is shown by the fact that they had obtained several important privileges, thus acquiring administrative and juridical autonomy. Finally, by the end of the 18th century two significant Armenian towns – Szamosújvár and Erzsébetváros[2] – were granted the rank of free royal towns.[3]

The Armenians very quickly adapted to the Transylvanian society and their integration was enhanced by multiple factors. A price that was paid for a successful assimilation was religious union. The Habsburgs supported the expansion of Catholicism which was of particular importance in the

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2 Rom. respective Gherla and Dumbrăveni. In the 18th century, larger numbers of Transylvanian Armenians inhabited four settlements – besides the mentioned towns also the located in Szeklerland Gyergyószentmiklós (Rom. Gheorgheni) and Csíkszépviz (Rom. Frumoasa). The town of Szamosújvár was founded by the Armenians nearby the village of Gerla, next to the castle built in the 16th century by Fráter György. The area was rented from the treasury. Similarly, on land belonging to the treasury, nearby the one-time Apafi estate called Ebesfalu Erzsébetváros was built. Both these settlements evolved into towns, and, what was a peculiarity in Transylvania, by the end of the 18th century both were granted the rank of free royal town. See: Pál 2005.
3 This, however, was recognized in Transylvania much later; therefore, the free royal towns could benefit from one of their privileges, namely from being represented at National Assembly sessions, only from 1841 on.

multiconfessional Transylvania where, beside that, the so called Diploma Leopoldinum[4] theoretically forced them to accept the persistence of religious variegation. In practice, however, since there was no hope for a mass conversion of the Transylvanian political elites, the Habsburgs tried every possible means to increse the number of Catholics. An already tested method was to create fixed religious unions; while in the case of Romanians it was achieved only partially and with much difficulty. Transylvanian Armenians, whose religious leader, Oxendie Verzerescu, had been convinced to the religious union idea, recognized to a greater extent the opportunities it could bring them, but the process of unification was not completely smooth in the Armenian case (Kovács 2007). Shortly after settling down in Transylvania, the Armenians joined the Catholic Church. Similarly to the Greek Catholic Romanians or Rusyns, the Armenians were allowed to keep their ancient rites, and Armenian remained in use as liturgical language. Therefore, for a long time the Church remained the guard of the integrity and of ethnic identity persistence in the Transylvanian Armenian society, with an important role imposed on it as far as identity development was concerned. At the same time, the union with Catholics helped Armenians to acquire new privileges and to integrate with the Transylvanian class society. By taking advantage of the Union, Verzerescu tried to win the official recognition of Armenians as the fourth political nation of Transylvania,[5] but this attempt failed due to the resistance of the ruling classes (Trócsányi 1988: 264).

In Transylvania, Armenians, similarly to other alike national groups (Greeks, Macedoromanians or later Jews) filled an economical gap. The political elite, i.e. the Hungarian nobility regarded trade as a humiliating profession,[6] while living circumstances hindered a large-scale participation of peasants in this economical branch. The Armenians made use of this so called "status gap"

4   The issued in 1691 by Leopold I *Diploma Leopoldinum* regulated the Transylvanian public law until 1848.

5   In Transylvania, the so called system of "three political nations and four accepted religions" evolved in the times of principality and was confirmed by *Diploma Leopoldinum*. The system persisted until 1848: as it stated, the representatives of the three political nations (Hungarian, Szekler and Saxon elites), as well as of the four accepted religions (Catholicism, Calvinism, Lutheranism and Unitarianism) shared the power, held offices etc. according to some complicated regulations. Those were, however, not "nations" in the modern sense of the word – they constituted privileged groups, the so called class nations.

6   The Armenians dealt mostly with commerce (in the 18th century it was them who monopolized the most profit-generating commerce branch, i.e. the cattle commerce) and certain sectors of handicraft industry (very many of them were tanners, furriers, butchers). See: Pál 2006.

as means of their integration with the Transylvanian society, thus complementing a space by fitting in between the nobility and the peasantry. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Armenians constituted concurrency to one of the local elites, i.e. to the Saxon merchants, and soon found themselves in conflict with the latter who became the principal opponents of granting Armenians further privileges; similarly, the Armenians meant concurrency also to the artisans and merchants of all ethnicities who lived in towns.

Thus, before they would be accepted, they had to overcome a considerable number of obstacles. In the predominantly agricultural Transylvanian society, the Armenians as merchants and artisans constituted a somewhat alien body. Therefore, at the beginning they were strangers both literally and symbolically. Not only were they alien by ethnicity, language[7] and tradition: also their profession and mentality were considered outlandish. Their foreignness was suspect and evoked fear. Literature of the subject shows examples of hostility of traditional societies towards merchants who were seen as a non-working, non-producing, and generally not-doing-anything-useful group that just "made use of" the work of others. It can be said that the professional prestige of merchants was equally low in the eyes of both the nobility and the peasantry.

Were the merchants additionally allogeneous, like the Transylvanian Armenians, the tensions and conflicts might have been moved from the personal level to another dimension, and could therefore evolve into an interethnic conflict. Seen as an ethno-professional group Armenians remained in a complex relation with other peoples: not seldom was this relation burdened with conflict, and the picture of Armenians changed depending on the condition of the mentioned relation.

Although "living together" can generally be called peaceful,[8] at the beginning the Armenians were received with little trust. In the Transylvanian class society, the Armenians were considered strangers also because of their specific lifestyle. Moreover, because of their profession requiring a permanent movement, the Armenians were initially engaged in espionage, which, in turn, caused the labeling of Armenians as "suspects" by the "Aborigines" who hired them for providing useful information. In the list of expenses of the county (Lat. *sedes*, Hun. *szék*) of Csík from 1697/98, there is a significant sum that was

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7   Since their principal activity was trade, very quickly did they learn the languages of Transylvania. Besides, since the majority of them came from Moldavia, at least the first generations already spoke Romanian.

8   Here, a methodological question is raised: the 18th century sources contain very little information on co-existence, and point mostly at one or another concrete conflict. Thus, since a "normal" weekly situation rarely appears in source text, on this basis we cannot build a definitely negative picture.

paid for travelling to Moldova "post carriages and *Armenian spies* who came and went non-stop" (Kölönte 1910: 130).

Conflicts resulting from concurrency fights, and thus also the picture of Armenians are mentioned above all by sources from the first half of the 18th century. Both the description of Armenians as strangers and as merchants was just as negative as possible. The most decribed profession was that of a furrier: since the end of the 17th century the Transylvanian union of furrier guilds had protested almost all the time against the Armenian activity. The most active guild members, i.e. the Saxon towns, feared the Armenian concurrency. At the 1736 session of the National Assembly, the Saxon deputies said that both external and internal trade which previously had been in the hand of the Saxons was now taken over by Greeks, Armenians, Serbs, "and other external nations" (Trócsányi 1988: 440). Besides, the Armenians, Hungarian and Saxon artisans, similarly to Jews, were displayed as grabber, greedy folk who only sponged off the country, but who, as stateless, did not feel any responsibility in this respect and looked exclusively after their own benefits. In 1711, the Union Of Transylvanian Furrier Guilds "as true patriots in this country" asked for protection "from the Armenians, as from an alien *natio*" for "these Armenians are trying just as they can to consume us and to steal our bread, whereas, though, they belong to an alien *natio* and love Transylvania only when presuming their own benefits"; however, should there be a war, or "they become rich enough, they will go to another country."[9]

This is not a local specifics but one of the basic negative stereotypes that can be found in the case of most middleman minorities. Sometimes was this view supported even by central governing organs who, apparently, were also not free from ethnic stereotypes of those days and of their social surroundings, and even the fact that Armenians were "useful" subjects did not help. When, in years 1731–32, Bulgarians and Armenians living in Transylvania asked for reduction of their taxes, the Transylvanian Court Chancery noted: "it is worth considering that the strangers and immigrants become richer and grow stronger at the expense of this country, while its old inhabitants, who had supported heavier burdens (...) decline and become poorer day by day (...)" (Trócsányi 1988: 439). Later on, in the second half of the 18th century Samuel von Brukenthal, the governor himself, for a certain time managed to successfully defend his Saxon compatriots against the Armenian trade competition:

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9   Román Állami Levéltár Maros Megyei Fiókja (Arhivele Naţionale Române Filiala Judeţeană Mureş [Romanian National Archives, County Branch in Mureş], further ML), F 164: A marosvásárhelyi szűcs céh iratai [Writings of the furrier guild of Marosvásárhely], No. 34.

he spoke against the keeping of own "in-house Armenians" by the Gubernium members in Sibiu. Similarly, it was him who upset Maria Theresa's plan to grant the rich Armenians civil rights in the Saxon towns (Teutsch 1907: 169). From Szamosújvár, the archdeacon János Jakabffi was sent to Vienna and was not to come back without obtaining, at any material costs, the upgrade of the town's rank to a free royal town.[10] In a letter from December 1786, the archdeacon reported on intrigues with participation of, among others, the so called *Főkormányszék*, i.e. the highest governing organ of Transylvania. As he wrote: "Those nations had arraigned us and are jealous of us; for they see that we are more vital than they, our eyes are wider open, and they, who only yesterday had entered the country, now want to be decorated by the king with more and greater freedoms than they possess." (Szongott 1901, II: 235).

The atrocities continued through the first half of the 19th century and beyond. Not once did the furrier guild of Marosvásárhely complain that "some of the local Armenians are violating our privileges, at times openly, at times with their usual astute shrewdness (...), depriving us of a branch of our income".[11] The furrier guild repeatedly lodged their complaints about Armenian merchants at the Council: as they reported, the Armenians sold leather goods in their shops which was a violation of the guild's privileges. As a result, "the major part of all the members of" the guild "became poorer, while they [the Armenians] became richer and get richer every day, although the members of the guild are bearers of most of the town's expenses".[12] In 1812, the citizens of Marosvásárhely[13] wrote simply the following: "in our town, to the utmost horror of our (...) citizens, the Armenians became so numerous that now it is them who own the brighter and more beautiful parts of the town; they are paying the highest prices to buy stock in the market place and in the adhering streets. What is more, they are getting so many more every day that one might fear not to be able to buy stock from good sources any longer".[14] Also the furrier guild of Székelyudvarhely[15] fought against similar problems in the course of the 18th and in the first half of the 19th centuries. In 1735, the guild complained to the general judge of the county saying that the Armenians were offering peasants more money and thus buying all leathers in the villages nearby the town; leathers and leather products would later be sold in their shops

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10 Lat. libera regiae civitas.
11 ML, F 164, No. 413 (1814).
12 ML, F 164, No. 436.
13 Rom. Târgu Mureș.
14 ML, F 9: Esküdt közönség jegyzőkönyve [Records of the jury], No. 117/5.
15 Rom. Odorheiu Secuiesc.

in Székelyudvarhely.[16] We do, however, find a counterexample: from a 1779 eye-witness relation it turns out that the butcher guild accepted one Armenian as its member on the condition that he would cut exclusively cattle. One must admit, though, that, as the eye-witnesses reported, the city judge protested "against letting an Armenian join the guild".[17] Similar situations repeated elsewhere, e.g. in 1824 the furrier guild of Marosvásárhely also admitted an Armenian member.[18]

The conflicts were more evident in places where the two communities were more numerous and lived near to one another, like in Gyergyószentmiklós. Initially, since the Armenians rented the Szekler houses, the two groups literally lived together. Thanks to Armenians, the settlement evolved into a so-called *oppidum*, a market town.[19] It was Armenians who boosted the economical life, and who, through commerce and handicraft, provided work opportunities for Szeklers. During the 1785/86 serfdom census, in the villages belonging to Gyergyó county it was noted that one of the income sources was constituted by transporting services for the Armenians.[20]

Living together was mostly peaceful but because of their business, rapid enrichment, not to forget their distinct lifestyle, not once did the Armenians find themselves in a conflict with the Szekler community. Problems were constituted mostly by market right, pre-emption right, running inns and herding. Until 1848 the Gubernium constantly received complaints from both sides of the conflict. In 1726, at the common assembly of the county of Csík, the Armenians were denied the pre-emption right, and further it was stated: "Above all that, for the sake of Harmony, as far as legislation is concerned, the Armenians should keep with and act according to the laws, Officers, places and Nations of the Country."[21] Later, most of the complaints were repeated, jointly with several new problems. One wanted, e.g., to forbid Armenians free herding; it was complained about the Armenians monopolizing the victuals trade, rafting etc. The situation became even more complicated after the creation of the border guard regiments. The soldiers urged the keeping of the 1726 decisions; sometimes it was the officers

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16 Román Állami Levéltár Hargita Megyei Fiókja (Arhivele Naţionale Române Filiala Judeţeană Harghita [Romanian National Archives, County Branch in Harghita] further HL), F 249: Az udvarhelyi múzeum gyűjteménye [The collection of the museum in Székelyudvarhely], No. 174.

17 Ibidem, No. 189.

18 ML, F 164, No. 512.

19 Hun. mezőváros, literally "field town".

20 Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives; further MOL], Gubernium Transylvanicum (in Politicis), F 49: Vegyes conscriptiók, 1785/86-os úrbéri összeírás [Diverse conscriptions, the 1785/86 serf census], 8. csomó [bundle 8], 15, 35.

21 HL, F 1, No. 3.

who influenced the border guards in the spirit of hostility toward the Armenians in order to solve the tensions. The principal source of the discontent was the successful economical activity of the Armenians. The Szeklers feared a complete economical dependency from the Armenians and accused the latter of usury. In an 18th century petition the border guards complained "that due to the debts to be paid to Armenians many had already become similar to serfs".[22] One could quote many more such or similar documents.

It is also interesting to follow the appearance of such conflicts on the level of rhetoric, simultaneously with the "national awakening", both sides started to ideologize their opinions even more intensely. Because of several different factors, like the persistence of Medieval structures and a fitting mentality, the existence of border guard regiments, the lack of financial capital etc., in the economical field the Szeklers could not keep up with the more up-to-date Armenian methods. Thus, the latter practically monopolized both the commerce and the handicraft industry. The frustrated Szeklers feared losing their privileges and sought comfort in the built upon traditional values conservative ideology. Rooted deep in the traditional social system, the Szeklers were against any modernization: their wish was to stop the decline of the class society where everyone had a precisely defined place. The Armenians represented a new lifestyle, while their "distinctiveness" knocked down the traditional social order. In the Szekler complaints many references are made to social differences. In 1831, the community of Gyergyószentmiklós forbade "*every Armenian or other estateless newcomer who were serfs... to run inns and keep slaughterhouses without the acceptance of the communitas*".[23]

The pair of opposites 'carpetbagger-–true patriot' appears as a recurring motive in the mentioned petitions. The Szeklers had also often addressed the *prima occupatio* law: "We, the true Szeklers, whose glorious ancestors had shed their blood for this place, and who had protected it through centuries from Tatars, Turks and other ravening enemies" are now confronting Armenians, who had previously wandered through the mountains and were "taken in out of pity" but "not adopted in this land we had conquered with blood as our heirs and sons, to retrace (because of them), for it is not allowed either by God, or by human and law".[24] Thus, the land belonged to them and not to the Armenians, the Szeklers said, because they "conquered it with much mortifying service and blood shedding".[25]

22 HL, F 1, No. 29.
23 HL, F 1, No. 29.
24 HL, F 1, No. 3/13.
25 Ibidem.

If, during the first three decades of the 19th century, the irritation caused by the economical success achieved by the Armenians contributed to the negative traces of their image, later on the situation gradually changed, resulting in the disappearing of the negative ethnic stereotypes.[26] This new picture is well displayed in a mid-19th century description written by Balázs Orbán: "they had spread in every town of the country, and while Hungarians were agricultural folk who did not understand much of commerce and who therefore looked down on it, [the Armenians], having overtaken the commerce almost everywhere, became richer [...] and garnered a lot of sweet honey for their new fatherland; but let us not be jealous – we should rather be glad about their progress because this fraction of a nation has not been ingrateful towards this land; ...they are paying back what they owe to this land, for everytime they proved they deserved to be treated by this land as ist dear and beloved sons. They took up our language, our culture, they joined our common interest, and as such became our relatives." (Orbán 1869: 75) Further Orbán named features characterizing Armenians: intelligence, responsiveness, puritanism, clear-headedness, that is, only positive features, together with high cultural niveau and support expressed for every noble issue (Orbán 1869: 75).

In the eyes of Hungarians, the Armenians had therefore lost all the negative features which would usually be attributed to the peoples engaged in trade. The reasons should be sought in the disintegration of the hermetic group the Armenians had until then constituted, the beginning of their assimilation, as well as in the fact that the liberal nobility and intelligentsia of the Reform Era saw in Armenians material to supplement the almost nonexistent Hungarian bourgeoisie. As Auguste de Gerando, a French nobleman, noted during his Transylvanian journey in the mid-19th century, Armenians always behaved like good citizens because they understood there was a need for a union among the country's diverse nationalities. He mentioned that during the 1841–1843 National Assembly session where Szamosújvár was represented for the first time ever, the Armenian deputies stressed their love for the country and defined their principal preoccupation as living in concord with Hungarians (De Gerando 1845: 161–162).

At the same time, in the Hungarian towns there began as well the assimilation of the German bourgeoisie. In the Armenian case, the stress was moved from integration to assimilation. In Transylvania, where the leading political role was played by Hungarians, together with the spreading of new liberal and democratic ideas and since the Hungarians were actually a minority, the headcount

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26 A good presentation of ethnic stereotypes which does not, however, include smaller groups of peoples, like the Armenians: Vári 2006.

became a burning queation. That is why the Armenian assimilation was so well-received. The quoted positive picture drawn by Balázs Orbán is not a sporadically appearing one: actually it could be classified as common in the 19th century intelligentsia and other circles. Count Lajos Gyulay, repeatedly chosen as deputy to the National Assembly, in 1867, speaking of one Armenian woman, noted the following in his diary: "Kolozsvár has pretty Armenians: only their big hands and feet should be changed; apart from this they have gentle looks. Although it is common knowledge that there is not a single Armenian prince in the whole World, there are still so many merchants who look like one. At the same time, they have a Hungarian air. It means, they have assimilated with the Hungarians; most of the women do not even understand the Armenian language – Armenian men and women talk always Hungarian. They are just like real Hungarians, who pray, think and count in Hungarian."[27] The quote displays very well the mixture of the old stereotypes and the new positive attitude.

This view prevailed in the Hungarian circles also in the following years. Speaking of the lawsuit regarding the lordship of Szamosújvár, in 1887 the prime minister-to-be, count (Hun. főispán) Dezső Bánffy, said to the prime minister Kálmán Tisza: "The patriotism of Szamosújvár and its readiness to make sacrifices in the Hungarian issues deserve recognition... As long as this land remains in the hands of Armenians, it remains Hungarian, but once taken away from the Armenians, it will no longer be Hungarian either!" (Szongott 1901, II: 433) A prominent 19th century historian, Elek Jakab wrote: "Szamosújvár and Erzsébetváros are two old cores of the Hungarian commerce! Had the Transylvanian Crown lands: Gyalu, Görgény, Déva, Vajdahunyad have been given in those hands a couple of years ago, how different they would be today and what richness would be displayed by our state power and our commercial balance! Who helped Kolozsvár and Marosvásárhely, two apples of the Hungarian eye, become prominent, rich and of stable civil society? Isn't it that our Armenian compatriots who constitute the spine of those two prosperous towns?...Look around on the market places, go to the theater, follow attentively meetings, keep an eye on the lists of charity organizations, go to church or seek them in their houses, and everywhere you will find your true companions, your Eastern brethern...".[28]

There were several factors that contributed to the successful assimilation of the Armenians. The political domination of the Hungarian nation was just one of the circumstances – at that time, ethnic groups in similar positions

27 Diary of Lajos Gyulay, June 27, 1867. Román Állami Levéltár Kolozs Megyei Fiókja (Arhivele Naționale Române Filiala Judeţeană Cluj [Romanian National Archives, County Branch in Cluj). F 351, Fond Gyulay-Kun, Fasc. 382, 131. köt. [vol. 131].
28 An old feuilleton. In: *Armenia*, Szamosújvár – Gherla, II/1888, 273.

followed different paths. In a German geographical work from early 19th century it was noted that, in contacts with other nationalities, the Greeks and the Serbs spoke Romanian, the Jews spoke German, but the Armenians used mostly Hungarian (Marienburg 1813: 81). Since the Armenian diaspora was relatively low in number,[29] the language shift happened within several generations. The Armenians of Szeklerland started using Hungarian within their community already as early as at the end of the 18th century. The use of the Armenian language persisted longer in Szamosújvár and Erzsébetváros, but since the beginning of the 19th century also there Hungarian was gaining more popularity.[30]

An important impulse was the official recognition of Armenians, to be precise – of two Armenian free royal towns – as part of the Hungarian nation during the 1791 session of the Transylvanian National Assembly. The *communitas* of Szamosújvár, with regard to its merits, asked the National Assembly for recognition as Hungarian compatriots, for also their forefathers were admitted due to "the attempt to re-populate the country and to share the joy resulting from prosperous trade". Since there was no chance for them to obtain recognition as an autonomous nation, the Armenians asked to be linked to the Hungarian nation, "in whose lands we [the Armenians] are settled, whose virtues we try to follow, whose clothes we wear and according to whose laws we live".[31] Similarly, an important factor was also religion, and starting from the beginning of the Hungarian Reform Era one should not forget the "readiness to receive" of the other party.

Social psychology has been dealing with a phenomenon of indisposition caused by belonging to a group of lower social prestige, where an individual wishes to change the situation so that the self-image is positively modified.

29 According to census data, the headcount of Armenians in early 18th century can be estimated at 1200–1500. Their number grew systhematically till the mid-18th century; later the number increase became slower. During the 1850 census, in Transylvania 7687 were noted, which made 0,4% of the population. See: Pál 1997. Later the number of Armenians diminishes, also due to their uncertain qualification – from 1880 on the censuses were based upon mother tongue and not upon nationality criterium. In 1880, 3523 persons declared Armenian as their mother tongue; the number of Armenian Catholics was 3223, but of course there were many more persons of Armenian origin, the majority of whom defined themselves as Hungarian.

30 Erzsébetváros lost its economical importance, and around 1850 its Armenian population started to decrease in number. Szamosújvár remained the Armenian "fortress": despite that the language of instruction in the Armenian gymnasium became Hungarian, the Armenian language classes continued through the period of the Dual Monarchy; Hungarian, however, even though it happened later, also here became the "dominant" language.

31 Historical document collection. *Armenia*, I/1887, 252–256.

The social identity is damaged if the in-group, according to important criteria, is defined as of lower rank than the out-group.

In the case of Armenians, the situation was far more complicated than in the case of Jews who were marginalized over a long time. Not only were the Armenians in an advantageous economical situation, but they also had privileges which were considered basic in the society of those days. An advantage was also their Catholic religion, but in spite of all the mentioned factors they had to fight for recognition. According to the researchers of social identity, when a social comparison proves unfavorable for members of a group, they can choose diverse individual and collective strategies to improve their self-image. Individual strategies are put in the foreground mostly if the group considers the situation stable and legitimate. If social mobility is at all possible in a given society, individuals who rate their situation as negative may choose to assimilate to the dominant group by adopting its cultural features and basic values (Bourhis–Gagnon–Moise 1994: 136). This, however, concerns usually the most dynamic and mobile strata. As far as Armenians are concerned, the richest of them acquired Hungarian noble titles already in the 18th century (Tóth 2007: 133),[32] and some bought as well estates.

Changes which took place in the first half of the 19th century led to the gradual economical decline of the Armenians whose market grew narrow and whose economical positions weakened. External trade would rather be replaced by internal commerce; the poorer Armenians moved out to villages, while the richer, who had already rented *puszta* in Bánság and the Great Hungarian Plain, having bought some estates, gradually moved over to Hungary. Many of them became nobility, thus choosing an individual way of self-realization, and assimilated to the dominate political group. Interestingly, as a response, the Armenians wanted to integrate exactly into the feudal structure which simultaneously advocated and blocked their economical activity. In 1807, as a manifestation of this double identity László Gorove, a noble of Armenian background, invited the Theater of Kolozsvár to perform in Szamosújvár. In order to get the Council's permission he referred to their patriotic feelings: "An equally great glory is brought onto our nation if it can keep Hungarian company in its bosom. There is no need to remind the Noble Council that we are Hungarian patriots..." (Szongott 1901, II: 391).

In any case, the mid-19th century was a turning point in the history of the Transylvanian Armenians. After 1848, (also) the Armenian community lost its class privileges which further hindered its emancipation. The events of 1848

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32 53 families of Armenian origin were granted the rank of noblemen, and 5 families received the title of baron.

played a major role in the forming of Hungarian Armenian identity. The integration, as well as the assimilation of the Armenians had started earlier, so that by 1848 the process was even partly complete. However, the year 1848 meant a key phase, a true turning point in this very process. By the end of the 19th century, on the occasion of a feast, in his speech the mayor of Szamosújvár underlined the meaning of the years 1848–49: "In the glorious years 1848–1849, when the existence and independence of the Hungarian nation became uncertain, all the Armenians identified themselves with the fight of the Hungarian nation... and I can proudly say: thank God! – for there were victims of the saint issue among them, but not a single traitor. That is when the country's Armenians melted into the Hungarian nation forever, and now they can and want to fight whenever there is a need to defend the Hungarian culture in any part of the land." (Szongott 1901, III: 178) Before that, the Armenians integrated as part of the Hungarian nation into the specific Transylvanian system of three political nations and four officially recognized religions; the years 1848–49 let them experience the feeling of being a part of a common nation. That is why the keeping of the memory of the revolution, of its victims and of the Armenian heroes of the fight for independence as vivid as possible played such an important role for the Hungarian Armenian identity.

The integration slowly led to assimilation which became definitive by the end of the 19th century. In the second half of the 19th century, according to how Milton M. Gordon divided it, the cultural and structural assimilation was followed as well by assimilation within their identity. Transylvanian Armenians developed a feeling of Hungarian national affiliation, which at the same time resulted also in disappearance of the Armenian-related prejudice (Gordon 1964: 60–83).

However, the accelerated assimilation caused an identity crisis as well. As a response, in the second half of the 19th century a part of the Armenian intelligentsia, mostly the elites of Szamosújvár, initiated a movement for authonomy of the Armenian Catholic Church. The aim of the movement was the establishing of an Armenian bishopric. Actually, all the time they petitioned for the "restauration" of the Armenian bishopric: they referred to the case of Oxendie Verzerescu, stating that he was the bishop of the Transylvanian Armenians.[33] The movement had partly been initiated even earlier. In 1831, the inhabitants of Erzsébetváros addressed the king "in the name of the community of the four Armenian towns in Transylvania", since, as they put it, "the unfavorable times, the bad period in trade and the dispersal of our prominent personalities made

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[33] Verzerescu was a titular bishop, but there was no title of a Transylvanian Armenian bishop.

us so much weaker that today even Lemberg seems to be just as distant and unreachable as Rome", and so "the decline of religious education in the Armenian language" was also dangerous "for the national integrity" (Szongott 1901, III: 265–268). The movement intensified its activity after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. In 1868, referring to the petitions concerning the restauration of the Armenian bishopric, in a letter addressed to the Armenians of Csíkszépvíz the inhabitants of Szamosújvár spoke about a common national issue (Szongott 1901, I: 328–329). Those of Csíkszépvíz expressed their "deepest gratitude" to their "national, religious and language relatives, and merited citizens of the country", and supported the petition (Szongott 1901, I: 335, 338). At the same time, the people of Erzsébetváros asked the Ministry of Religion and Public Education to "restore" the bishopric – they were referring to the fact that "now and then [they] have remained and proved faithful to the Throne and Country regardless of the good or bad circumstances, and see that the guaranteed by the Constitution political rights, the public liberty and the unviolated preserving of the unity of the country remain secured; that they have never had and will never have the idea of forming a politically separate nation, but from the depth of their souls stick to the idea of adherence to the Hungarian nation expressed in the Decree 61 issued by the Transylvanian National Assembly in 1791..." (Szongott 1901, I: 332). As the inhabitants of Szamosújvár wrote in their petition, "none of the nations of the country can see it as a negative that we too want to live morally among and next to them, and that we want to preserve our language and traditional sermons at least in churches and schools! Because every and even the least ambitious nation has the right to a moral life, and it is even more true in the case of a part of a nation who already in Antiquity has played a major role in World history, and so are the Transylvanian Armenians too, who have never separated their interests from the well-understood interest of the Hungarian fatherland." (Szongott 1901, I: 345) Still, the political atmosphere of those days was not particularly favorable for those attempts; besides, the low number of the Armenians, as well as the Roman Catholic Church, i.e. the counter-incentive of the Transylvanian bishopric contributed as well to the failure of the movement.

As a response to the identity crisis, in the second half of the 19th century, that is, when the Armenians were already almost completely Hungarianized, a new ideology was born: with the help of Armenism, an intelligentsia group made an attempt to revive the Armenian national consciousness. Armenism was developed at the end of the 19th century by a group of intellectuals linked to *Armenia* – a magazine published in Szamosújvár and edited by Kristóf Szongott; the ideology tried to define the self-identity of the Armenians of Hungary in two planes: in the political sense, the Armenians described themselves as

part of the Hungarian nation, but in the cultural sense they wanted to remain Armenian. Through the mentioned ideology an attempt was made to both explain the exceptional role played by the Armenian people in the World history (the myth of Ararat and of Armenians as the first people to become Christian) and prove the absolute necessity of the Armenian presence in the Hungarian history (Nagy 1994–95). Having enumerated several sources of the Armenian pride, i.e. language, literature, the paradisiac rivers, Noah's Ark or their ancient nation and statehood, says: "pride comes from the knowledge that we are descendants of the nation that was first among all nations to become Christian" (Szongott 1901, I: 347). Somewhere else he wrote: "in this country, there is no people or nation that would be more religious and moral than the Armenians" (Szongott 1901, II: 367).

The ideologists of Armenism did have a difficult task. For it was not easy to insist on the Armenians' constituting the chosen people, to glorify the Armenian past and traditions, and at the same time to accept assimilation as a positive process. Finally, an attempt was made to link those issues using the duality of the concept of a nation. In the cultural sense, they defined themselves as Armenians, politically, however, as even "more Hungarian than real Hungarians" part of the Hungarian nation. One of the Armenists, Gyula Merza, when asked what he understood by the Armenian-Hungarian ethnographic unity, answered that it meant "all our Armenians as a migrant nationality within the Hungarian society, just like the Szeklers or the Cumans, but who are more special due to their prominent group development on the Armenian national background" (Merza). Kristóf Szongott, the author of a three-volume monograph of Szamosújvár, wrote in the foreword to this book: "Finally, it is a duty of every good patriot to be familiar with the history of this town – the history that tells how these patriotic citizens became Hungarianized, and how faithfully our forefathers fulfilled their obligations to God, the fatherland and the king!" (Szongott 1901: I, VIII).

In the Armenist picture of Armenians a major role was played by the features that could make Armenians likeable in the eyes of Hungarians. The key notions in the self-picture became their adaptation ability and their faithfulness – things that made possible the creation of a bond between the two communities. According to the new national characterology, the Armenians adapt easily, are religious, even pious, honest, as well as mobile, contriving, laborious, sparing but not stingy, even generous, puritan as far as family life is concerned, but are able to live prosperously and, last but not least, are true patriots. Some of the features are complementary with the Hungarian national characterology, while it is underlined that the Armenians are actually also better Hungarians. It is, by the way, a frequently recurrent topos in *Arménia*, but apparently its influence radius was broader than one could have supposed.

In 1889, on the occasion of an EMKE[34] meeting in Szamosújvár, Antal Molnár published an editorial in *Arménia*: in this article, the author stated that since its settling down in Transylvania, the Armenian nation produced a whole range of outstanding men, martyrs, scientists, artists and statesmen, and although they stuck to their ancient culture with piety, they also sympathized with the struggles of their brethern in Orient, while "in heart and soul they are already Hungarian citizens of their Hungarian fatherland" (Szongott 1901, III: 173–175). In his book, Szongott summarizes the active and passive parts of the Hungarian – Armenian relations in the following way: the Hungarians did not lavish their positive attitude and friendship on people who did not deserve it, "because the Hungarian nation offered the country to the stateless, but the Armenians never betrayed the fatherland that fed them: out of gratitude they learned the Hungarian language so that now there is not a single Armenian in the country who would not speak it; they took off their national suit and replaced it with a pretty Hungarian costume; they put on Hungarian mind, Hungarian way of thinking; that is, they became true Hungarians" (Szongott 1901, III: 31).

The ideology of Armenism could not, however, stop the process of assimilation which by the end of the 19th and in early 20th century was already considerably advanced. Although in the assimilation research there is still no adequate theory, and doubt is being cast on the notion itself by replacing it with terms like "acculturation", "integration" or other, on the basis of empirical data we can assume that the assimilation of the Transylvanian Armenians was, despite some differences, in a way similar to the much better researched assimilation of Jews. For example, Viktor Karády describes the assimilation of Jews as an inseparable part of the modernization process. Assimilation meant a growing distance to one's own traditional, hermetic culture, but not just because of the will to adopt another culture or language, but in such a prcess, the Jews wished to take part in the dynamics of modernization. A collective assimilation of Jews would not have been possible without the modernization of the whole society, for it gave the Jews a possibility of social mobility and of improving of their social status. According to Karády, the liberal Hungarian elites offered a so called "assimilation contract", partly in order to increase the headcount of Hungarians, and partly to compensate the missing Hungarian bourgeoisie, so that adequate "cadre material" was secured for the needs of social, administrative, cultural and other modernization (See: Karády 2000: 59). The Armenian assimilation partly fits into the above described model, but it also has some peculiarities.

34 *Erdélyi Magyar Közművelődési Egyesület* [Hungarian Cultural Society of Transylvania].

The integration, i.e. the assimilation of Armenians started earlier and was partly complete already before 1848, to which contributed their social status, their religion and their relatively low number. In the case of two settlements in Szeklerland, under the influence of a predominantly Hungarian milieu the language shift was complete by the end of the 18th century, just like in the case of scattered Armenian communities in Transylvania and in Hungary. In the case of Szamosújvár and Erzsébetváros this process extended into the second half of the 19th century – the highest headcount, the local elites, as well as the Armenian schools contributed to the longer persistence of the Armenian language. The success of the integration is undoubtedly displayed by a great number of politicians, experts in economy and artists of Armenian background who pursued significant careers in the period of Dual Monarchy.[35] One of them, the politician György Lukács reported the following on the Armenian assimilation in the interwar period: "Every nationality of the country has taken part, to a greater or to a smaller extent, in this healthy blood mixing. From most of the nationalities, however, only individuals or groups were drawn into the Hungarian nation. A fading of complete nationalities into the Hungarian nation is an exception, and such an exception is the Armenian nationality which, abandoning its temperament, its features and its inclinations, utterly and without afterthought melted into the Hungarian nation. There is no doubt that it made the Hungarians become richer in substance." (Lukács 1936: 7).

Assimilation did not, however, mean denying of one's own roots: it seems that Armenians have managed to preserve a part of their identity until today. Besides, they remained faithful to the Hungarians also during the changes after World War I, and in their case no dissimilational process was observed, as it took place e.g. among the Transylvanian Jews. As an epilogue we can remark that together with changes in political system both in Hungary and in Transylvania new attempts have been made to revive the "lost identity" in the spirit of a kind of "neo-Armenism".[36]

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35 Among them we can find ministers, ca. 50 National Assembly deputies, university teachers, artists etc.

36 Cf. writings of Kinga Kali and Ilka Veress. Kinga Kali while researching the contemporary Armenian identity called it positional identity because their self-definition is relative and it depends on the environment whether they define themselves as Hungarians or as Armenians. Kali 2007; Veress 2009.

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Kornél NAGY

The Catholicization of Transylvanian Armenians (1685–1715). Integrative or Disintegrative Model?

The main aim of this study is to analyse the Catholicization of Transylvania and its direct consequences. The turn of the 17th and 18th centuries is regarded as one of the most exciting and at the same time most paradoxical periods in the history of Hungary and Transylvania. The integration of the multi-religious Transylvanian Principality into the Habsburg Empire after 150 years of relative independence and Rákóczi's Independence War (1703–1711) meant serious challenges to the Habsburg Court in Vienna. This period brought also great challenges, possibilities and missions for the Roman Catholic Church, as well as serious duties also to the Hungarian Catholic Church, where the Eastern and Northern regions of the Hungarian Kingdom had already been experiencing the process called the Counter-Reformation. The Roman Catholic bishops, who were highly supported by missionaries delegated from Rome in order to re-organise the Catholic religious life, reappeared at the seats of the dioceses that had previously been abandoned due to the Ottoman occupation (Tóth 2002: 27–97; Tóth 2004: 843–892; Molnár 2009: 213–247).

At the same time, strongly supported by the Holy See, the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church's efforts to fulfill its policy coincided with the interests of Vienna. From the perspective of Catholic Habsburgs, these efforts were inspired not only by religious, but by economic, population and social reasons to which, in turn, the Roman Catholic faith ensured adequate ideological background. According to the Habsburg Court's opinion, a religiously homogeneous society increased efficiency in the state management: a religiously more homogeneous population or society was easier to manage, and the people were more disciplined, at least as far as paying taxes to the central treasury was concerned. That is why it was important to have a homogeneous population consisting of predominately Catholic subjects.

The "Catholicisation" of Transylvania must, in fact, be placed, analyzed and researched in this complex historical, or rather church-historical context. Between 1668 and 1672, the religious question of Armenian refugees from Moldavia and Poland was, in many aspects, considered a blank spot in both Hungarian and international church history. The Armenian church union is associated primarily with one person, namely with bishop Oxendio Virziresco (1654–1715) and his missionary and organizational activity. For a long time, there was very little information regarding the Armenian question in the international and the Hungarian historical consciousness. Furthermore, the Catholicization of the Armenians in Transylvania raises a question, to which the previous scholarship has not given any satisfactory reply. For a long time it remained unknown what kind of role the Habsburg Court in Vienna and the Hungarian Catholic Church played in the Armenian church union, and if not – why not. In addition, it wasn't known what role was envisaged by Vienna for the Armenians in the post-Osman re-population and settlement policy. That is to say, did the Viennese Court at the break of the 17th and 18th centuries apply, in regard to Armenians, diverse plans of settlement and religious considerations or not? Furthermore, another question should be answered, namely that about the earlier union and re-Catholicisation means, experience and patterns Vienna intended to use while working on the religious union. Did the Habsburg Court have any intention to unite the Armenians with Rome on the basis of previous church unions done in Hungary? Then, one might as well ask whether the Catholicization, i.e. the union of the Transylvanian Armenians can be compared to the re-Catholicization and mission activities conducted among Carpatho-Rusyns, Serbs in the Délvidék region and the Transylvanian Romanians. Can these religious unions be seen as parallel or, in this case, should we rather speak of a simple union caused by an external factor and created without participation of the Hungarian Catholic Church? Moreover, all the mentioned issues lead to the question whether the Armenian Church union in Transylvania can possibly be regarded as a "for its own sake" event or not. The scholarship has paid little attention to the actual attitude of both the Habsburg Court in Vienna and the Roman Catholic Church to the Catholicization of the Armenians in Transylvania, or to the question of what the Armenians' opinion about the church-union was in this period. Another question should be also explored, namely whether the Armenian Church union in Transylvania can be pronounced a success or a failure when compared to other unions. Finally, the main question is, can the Transylvanian church union be seen a specific kind of an integrative or disintegrative model in the politically changing Transylvania at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries? Hence, all the enumerated questions prove that the Catholicization of Transylvanian Armenians can

only be analyzed by means of a thorough and in-depth research. In the present study, on the basis of partially disclosed and partially secreted (inland and foreign) archive documents, based as well upon the results of a critical analysis of limited literature, I will try to give precise and unambiguous answer(s) to the mentioned union-related question(s). However, before answering the questions raised in the previous paragraphs one should shortly clarify an important thing, namely why the Armenian Church union in Transylvania was considered necessary. To understand the Catholicization of the Transylvanian, one must follow many paths, some of which can be dated from before the 17th and 18th centuries. Considering the fact that in both the international and Hungarian scholarship the history of the Armenian Church and problems that regard it are less known, it is advisable to succinctly outline this seemingly distant subject, especially because the notion of Catholicization, i.e. the church union present in the title and in this study should be regarded as a modern version of an earlier, Medieval church union policy, which was specifically toned by the fact that the Armenian Apostolic Church was confronted with the unification church policies conducted by both Constantinople and Rome, which, in turn, was often inseparably linked to secular political tendencies. Similarly, one could not ignore the 17th century unions aiming at the general re-Catholicization of members of Orthodox Churches of diverse nationalities (Serbian, Romanian and Rusyn), now living in Hungary and Transylvania (Baán 2009).

In this context, the origins of the Transylvanian Armenians can be traced back to the 11th Century. In 1045, Byzantium annexed those ruled by the Bagratuni dynasty of Armenia, which, therefore, lost its political and economical autonomy. In the course of the following centuries, the Seljuq Turk, Georgian and Mongol occupations resulted in the mass emigration of the Armenian indigenous population from the homeland. A significant part of the refugees found new home in the Near East (Cilicia), on the Balkan and Crimean Peninsulas, as well as in the Russian principalities. A further rise of Armenian refugee resulted from the fall of the Cilician Kingdom (1375) that caused a considerable fraction of the local Armenians to seek refuge in Poland (Galicia and Podolia), Moldavia and on the Crimean Peninsula. This, in turn, caused growth in number of the large Armenian communities that already existed in the above-mentioned regions. Neither did the emigration process cease in the homeland: this was due to the demolition of the Armenian territories caused by the troops of Timur Lenk (1380–1405) at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries (Lukácsy 1859: 63–65). Armenians living on the Crimean Peninsula were strongly influenced by the Ottoman political domination in the Crimean Khanate in 1475. As a consequence of this event, many Armenians fled partly to Poland and partly to Moldavia, thus becoming subjects of the Moldavian Principality.

In Moldavia, Armenians settled mostly in Botoşani, Focşani, Galaţi, Iaşi and Suceava, where they founded well-functioning communities. Since 1509, the leader of the Armenian community in Moldavia, the Armenian Apostolic Bishop, was residing in the monastery of Saint Oxan, p. While the Armenian bishops in Moldavia were appointed by the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, in other words "The Catholicos," but from the viewpoint of Canon law, the episcopacy belonged to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Armenian Apostolic archbishopric in Lemberg that had been established in 1365 (Petrowicz 1971: 5–44). At the same time, the headcount of the Armenian communities in Poland and Moldavia was further increased by the military campaigns that took place in the territories of the Armenian homeland. In the second half of the 16th century, the scene for the majority of the Ottoman-Persian wars was the Armenian Territories: this, in turn, resulted in a mass exodus of the Armenian population (Nistor 1912: 55–57).

Therefore, it can be said that in Early Modern times Armenia ceased to exist as an autonomous political entity. In the middle of the 11th century, the country's territory fell apart in the political sense of the term, and furthermore, Armenia literally turned into a desert by the end of the 16th century. The Byzantine conquest that took place after the fight for power within the Armenian political elites, together with the subsequent annexation by Georgia in 1204 and Mongols, Turkish, Ottoman and Persian invasions exercised a major influence on the later fortune of the Armenian indigenous population. Since other peoples settled in the depopulated parts of the country, the ethnic composition of the Armenian area went through a radical change. Serial war campaigns and religious persecutions caused Armenian migration in a biblical scale, which once for all changed the proportion in the headcount of the indigenous Christian and the Muslim populations. The influx of nomadic Kurds and Turkish tribes into the originally predominantly Christian territory resulted in the creation of a mixed population. In this confused and chaotic political situation, it was only the Armenian Apostolic Church that was able to sustain the Armenian people's impression of national unity. Since the 1045 Byzantine conquest, the Catholics resided in Cilicia; they did not return to Armenia until 1441. This was not, however, accepted by the Armenians in Cilicia who decided to choose their own church leader. Thus, already at the dawn of the Early Modern Period, the Armenian Apostolic Church indeed did split into two parts (Maksoudian 1983: 501–502).

The Armenian Apostolic Church would often be accused, both by Rome and Constantinople, of venerating the pronounced as heretic monophysitic teachings on the divine nature of Jesus Christ. The cause of this conflict can be linked to the 451 Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon. Because of its activity

in the 449 War for independence against the Persian Sassanid Empire, the Armenian Apostolic Church could not be officially present at the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon. That is why the Armenians did not deal with the Council's teachings for over half a century. At the same time, Armenia received false information regarding this Ecumenical Council. In this manner, the Armenians believed that the Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon, because it rehabilitated the Nestorian heresy, was hostile to the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Nestorians, who pronounced Virgin Mary, the Mother of Christ, in their teachings, were highly supported by the official Sassanide religious policy and tried to incite opposition against the Armenian Apostolic Church (Garsoian 1999: 21–71, 135–239, 222–227).

At the same time, this approach of the Orthodoxy proved to be false because The Armenian Apostolic Church had already condemned the monophysitism and its leaders, and repeatedly pronounced Nestorianism itself as a heresy at the national councils of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Contrary to these accusations, striving for independence, The Armenian Apostolic Church declared Orthodox religious principles, but, as far as the interpretation of the Ecumenical Council's dogmas in Chalcedon was concerned, it positioned the expansion of Constantinople in front of that conducted by Rome. This kind of autonomy was not well seen by either the Greek Byzantine or the Latin Roman Church: as a result, the Armenians were improperly labeled as monophysitic heretics (Sarkissian 1975: 15–19, 185–213).

The Armenian Apostolic Church was tightly related to the appearance of the liturgical language and literature, both of which strongly contributed to the creation of the Armenian ethnic identity. This was the reason why the church union attempts coming from Constantinople and Rome to convert the Armenians to Orthodoxy or to Catholicism always failed. Indeed, the Roman Catholic Church almost concluded a church union with the Armenian Apostolic Church during the councils of Cilicia and Ferrara – Florence: in the course of church union negotiations, detailed dogmatic and liturgical questions were discussed, but in the end the Armenian Apostolic Church, referring to the national interest, definitely dismissed those councils. The reasons for those failures should be sought in the fact that the leaders of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the "Catholicoi", always stressed the fact that they were true followers of the Bible and the teachings of Early Church Fathers. As far as dogmatic issues are concerned, they always represented a conservative viewpoint, and considered every attempt to create a church union as a harmful approach to the national traditions kept alive by the Armenian Apostolic Church. Usually they maintained a certain distance from new ecclesiastical notions, formulas or interpretations. Traditions and teachings of the Armenian Apostolic Church

that developed between the 4th and 13th centuries became an integral part of the Armenian national identity. Probably this could explain the afore-mentioned conservative viewpoint in the Armenian Apostolic Church, which suspected high treason in every external influence, that is to say, in every attempt to create a church union, regardless of whether it was initiated by Rome or Constantinople. In the Early Modern Period, this thought did, however, completely ossify. It is a true fact that the Armenian Apostolic Church as a cohesive power integrated the Armenian people and strengthened their national identity.

Between 1668 and 1672, the Armenians in the Principality of Transylvania were divided into two groups. The first somewhat larger group of refugees led by bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i (ca. 1610–1686) arrived from Moldavia in 1668 escaping from a series of persecutions. The Armenians were persecuted because of their active participation in the revolts against the Moldavian fiscal policy.[1] The second large group escaped from Kamieniec Podolski and Podolia region owing to the Polish-Ottoman war that had broken out in 1672 (Lukácsy 1859: 14–17). The Moldavian Armenians could have moved ted to Poland in 1668, but they rather chose the multi-religious and multi-national Transylvanian Principality. This choice or decision was partly motivated by the fact that many of them had previously come to know the Transylvanian reality while working as merchants, and partly because they were aware of the relatively tolerant religious policy pursued by the Transylvanian Principality. Moreover, Poland was not attractive enough to Armenian refugees because they had thorough information about the church union process that was initiated by Nikol Torosowicz (1603–1681), the Armenian archbishop in Lemberg, and his forced Catholicization policy (Schütz 1987: 247–330).

The Armenian settlers arrived to Batoş (Hun. Bátos), Bistriţa (Hun. Beszterce), Braşov (Hun. Brassó), Şumuleu Ciuc (Hun. Csíksomlyó), Frumoasa (Hun. Csíkszépvíz), Gurghiu (Hun. Görgényszentimre), Remetea (Hun. Gyergyóremete), Gheorgheni (Hun. Gyergyószentmiklós), Alba Iulia (Hun. Gyulafehérvár), Ditrău (Hun. Ditró), Făgăraş (Hun. Fogaras), Canta (Hun. Kanta), Suseni (Hun. Marosfelfalu), Tîrgu Mureş (Hun. Marosvásárhely), Sibiu (Hun. Nagyszeben) and Petelea (Hun. Petele). Later, Armenians as closed communities settled also in Dumbrăveni (Hun. Ebesfalva; since 1692) and in Gherla (Hun. Szamosújvár, since 1712).[2]

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1 Archivio della Congregazione *de Propaganda Fide* (further APF SC FM. Vol. 1. fol. 168–169, 233–236, 257–259, 358.
2 ELTE EKK CH. Vol. 21. pag. 82.

In the light of the these events, from the church-historical point of view the Catholicization of the Armenians in Transylvania proved to be a marginal subject for a long time. This qualified as both an advantage as well as disadvantage. It was an advantage because little information was at scholarship's disposal through long decades. Furthermore, literature concerning this theme was not easily available. Additionally, the research of this problem required special knowledge of Armenian studies. The advantage of the above-mentioned marginality was actually concealed beneath that of the disadvantage. On the basis of the less-systematized documents, there unfolds a very interesting and colourful view of the Armenians' religious situation. As a matter of fact, we received an inspection of the events in Transylvania for the period 1685–1715, as seen from the Armenians point of view, more precisely from bishop Oxendio's perspective. It is an exciting period: this is approximately when Transylvania goes through a political metamorphosis from a relatively autonomous principality into the politically influenced by the Viennese Court Gubernium. This power change in structure triggered quite serious religious changes, which had direct or indirect influence on the Armenians as well. It means that after long decades, in 1696, the Roman Catholic Episcopacy in Transylvania was successfully re-organized, while in years 1697–1701 with the support of Jesuits a church union with the Orthodox Romanians in Transylvania was signed in Alba Iulia (Hun. Gyulafehérvár, Rom. Alba Iulia). It is true, though, that the described process slowed down significantly because of the liberation wars against the Ottomans, the Tatar invasions and Rákóczi's Independence War.

If we regard the Armenians church union in Transylvania from the perspective of the Habsburg Court, especially as far as the Habsburg demography and church policy is concerned, there emerges a problematic picture. First, the Armenians were not an integral part of the demographic policy of the Viennese Court: the fact that on the basis of plans designed by Cardinal Leopold von Kollonich (1631–1707) and Palatine Paul Esterházy (1635–1716) Vienna focused first and foremost on the recuperated from the Ottoman Turks parts of central and southern Hungary. Transylvania was not object of this policy at this level: it was only the restoration of the Roman Catholic Bishop's office or seat in Transylvania that made part of the constitutional projects (Nagy 2009: 122). The Habsburg Court in Vienna just dealt with the Armenians in Transylvania when it intervened in the negotiations regarding the donation of Gherla's domain to the Armenians, which was approved by the Court at the end of 1696 (but it concretised later, about 1700.) Moreover, the Armenians moved to Gherla from Bistrița (Beszterce) and its neighbouring villages only after Rákóczi's Independence War (Varga 1991: 449–488; Varga 1999: 41–50; Szántay 2005: 202–206, 208–210, 213–214; Soós 2009: 801–852).

Furthermore, the Armenians came to Transylvania in the times of independent principality. They arrived spontaneously in two big refugee waves, not to mention the preceding and following slow influx and emigration. As a result, the Habsburg consciously did not invite Armenians to settle down in Transylvania. Moreover, not based upon any preceding political vision regarding population, in the years 1668–1672, prince Michael I Apafi (1661–1690) himself strove for what can be called inviting a large-number of Armenians from Moldavia to Transylvania. The Armenians fled voluntarily to Transylvania, above all seeking refuge from pogroms that took place in Moldavia and Poland. At the same time, their escape might well have been planned. In the 17th century numerous Armenian merchants visited large Transylvanian markets, thus becoming well informed about social circumstances in the principality and the relatively broad religious freedom there. It must also be mentioned, however, the fluctuation of Armenians in Transylvania was quite significant between 1685 and 1715. As the persecutions ceased, many Armenian families returned to Moldavia, but internal relations that followed their Catholicization in Transylvania, such as the Tatar invasions, as well as the misfortunes of Rákóczi's Independence War, speeded up their emigration. As a result, by year 1711 the number of Armenians in Transylvania dropped significantly.

As it was already mentioned, prince Michael I. Apafi did not consciously invite Armenians in Transylvania. The prince of Transylavnia started to treat seriously the Armenian issue only about ten years after their arrival to the principality. This resulted, first of all, from economical-political reasons. The Prince regarded the Armenian refugees in Transylvania as a meaningful economical and social power, whom he wanted to use to corner both the influential Saxons representing a serious financial strength and organized merchant associations of Greeks in Transylvania. That is why on October 25, 1680 Prince Apafi issued a decree that guaranteed the Armenians in Transylvania freedom of trade and settlement in the whole area of the principality (Govrikean 1896: 14–15; K'olanjian 1967: 361; Nagy 2008: 254–255). The decree was not abolished after 1690, by either the Habsburg Court or by the newly created Gubernium. Also, no radical changes that would negatively affect the situation of the Armenians in Transylvania were introduced. Until the beginning of the 1730s, Armenian activities were not really an object of the policy of the Habsburg Court in Vienna (Lukácsy 1859: 74; Petrowicz 1988: 169). As a result, the afore-mentioned Apafi decree remained in force till the end of that era. At the same time, there was the traditional image of the prince consciously conducting the Armenian settlement in Beszterce (Rom. Bistrita), Csíkszépvíz (Rom. Frumoasa), Gyergyószentmiklós (Rom. Gheorgheni) or in his own family estate, Ebesfalva (Rom. Dumbrăveni). Moreover, in the last of the mentioned

settlements the origins of the Armenian community should not even be linked to Michael I Apafi, as the Transylvanian Armenian tradition wants it to be. A significant change, however, did not take place until 1692, when, due to some inner church conflicts in Bistrita, the elected prince of Transylvania, Michael II Apafi (1690–1713) moved sixty Armenian families to Ebesfalva – a settlement that later became Erzsébetváros.[3]

Between 1685 and 1715, the Armenians in Transylvania were only an indirect object of the Habsburg policy. Precisely, the Court started interfering only in 1696, at the end of the negotiations of the purchase of the manor of Szamosújvár (Rom. Gherla), and actually gave its blessing to it. The issue became concrete in 1700, but it was not until the end of Rákóczi's Independence War that the Armenians from Bistrita and the surrounding villages settled in Szamosújvár.[4]

However, neither Michael I Apafi, nor the Habsburgs interfered with the Armenian religious life. In early 1680s, the prince asked the vicar of the Roman Catolic bishop of Transylvania, Bertalan Szebelébi (1631–1707), to provide Armenians with churches for liturgical and service reasons. This by many was seen as the first step towards the Catholicization of Transylvanian Armenians. This view, however, seems to be a little exaggerated and forced – by then, the Armenians already had their own bishop, their own liturgy and continued to conduct services according to their own traditions. What is more, around 1680 the vicar made a try to convert the Armenians to Catholicism, but his attempts failed due to the harsh resistance of bishop Minas and the clergy (Vanyó 1933: 113; Nagy 2008: 255; Molnár 2009: 222–223; Nagy 2009: 102).

Of course, it was in the interest of both the Habsurg Court in Vienna and the Hungarian Catholic Church to win as many souls as possible for the Roman Catholic religion in Transylvania and in Hungary. In the context of the church union, however, not much meaning was attributed to the Armenians. What is more, the Habsburg Court in Vienna regarded the mission conducted within the Armenian circles as an issue of the Holy See. Perhaps an explanation to this situation could be that a year before the issue of Diploma Leopoldinum, in 1689, the Armenians in Transylvania already signed a religious union (Ṛoskʿay 1964: 186). After the declaration of Diploma Leopoldinum in 1690, though, the Habsburg Court in Vienna and the Hungarian Catholic Church gladly welcomed the fact that the Armenians in Transylvania had already signed a church-union. Much more serious attention was paid to

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3 APF SC FA. Vol. 4. fol. 265–266; ELTE EKK CH. Vol. 21. pag. 84.
4 APF SOCG. Vol. 520. fol. 286–287, Vol. 524. fol. 363, 366, Vol. 525. fol. 111–112.; APF LDSC. Vol. 84. fol. 6–11.; APF SC FA. Vol. 4. fol. 268.

the church unions signed by Rusyns in Upper Hungary, the Serbs in Southern Hungary, and the Romanians in Transylvania, and subsequently – to the further consolidation of those. These three nationalities were more important for the Habsburg Court in Vienna: considering solely the number of population, they constituted a greater and more serious social, economical and political power than the Armenians in Transylvania. The untapped economical potential of the low in number (maximum 10–15.000 persons), but very mobile Armenian population in Transylvania was recognized only long after Oxendie's death, in the 1730s.

The church union of the Armenians in Transylvania had a true scope. It was created clearly because of the will to restore the ancient religious unity and not due to economical reasons. Seen from the viewpoint of the Roman Catholic Church, the signing of the unions with the Armenians was qualified first of all as an ideological factor. Also, the Holy See sustained that the Armenian union could restore the religious unity that characterized the two churches in the 4th century, i.e. in the times of Saint Gregory, the Illuminator, the Apostle of the Armenians (287–325), who successfully converted Armenians to Christianity. According to the Roman Catholic Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church diverged from the Roman church and stepped on the path towards heresy and schism because of the Armenian Apostle's descendants.[5]

In years 1682–1684, the focus on religious unity missions among the Transylvanian Armenians was initiated by the Armenian Uniate Archbishop[6] in Lemberg, the Apostolic Nunciature in Warsaw, and the leaders of the Armenian College in Lemberg between 1682 and 1684.[7] The archbishopric's hidden intention to unite them with Rome was that Lemberg had jurisdiction over the Armenians living in Crimea, Poland, and Moldova before its union. Thus, the Armenians in Transylvania did not escape spiritual leadership because they emigrated from regions like e.g. Moldova and Podolia, which were subject to the Archbishop's jurisdiction in Lemberg (Nagy 2008: 256).

The goal of the archbishopric was highly supported by the Apostolic Nunciature in Warsaw and Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propagana Fide*), also called simply Propaganda Fide, the Holy See's missionary institute.[8] The support of nuncios, namely Francesco Martelli (1633–1708), Opizio Pallavicini (1635–1700) and Giacomo Cantelmi (1645–1702), was important also because until 1690, according to the

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5 APF CP. Vol. 29. fol. 644–648.
6 The union was signed between 1627 and 1681.
7 APF SC FA. Vol. 3. fol. 378–381; APF SC FM. Vol. 2. fol. 126–127, 134–135.
8 The institution is further called 'Propaganda Fide'.

Propaganda Fide's administration, the Catholic missions in Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia were subject to the supervision of the Apostolic Nunciature in Warsaw. This situation changed around 1690: since then, the Transylvanian mission issues were supervised by the Apostolic Nunciature in Vienna, but the role of the Nunciature in Warsaw remained decisive between 1685 and 1715. As a matter of fact, because the role of the Nunciature in Warsaw remained significant – a considerable amount of mission correspondence regarding the Transylvanian Armenians continued to be delivered to the Holy See and the to Propaganda Fide via the Apostolic Nunciature in Warsaw in the mentioned period.

The Catholicization of the Transylvanian Armenians and the following three decades was tightly related to Oxendio's pastoral activity. After all, the appearance of Botoșani, the Moldavian Armenian Uniate missionary-priest Oxendio in Transylvania in 1685, actually made the plans of the Armenian bishopric in Lemberg come true. Oxendio arrived to his final destination from Rome via Poland (Ṛosk'ay 1964: 185).[9] After the initial difficulties in Transylvania, in particular the Armenian priests' resistance, his pastoral activity proved to be hard. Oxendio needed at least a four-year hard work to fulfil his mission.[10] However, the missionary did not have good relations with the Armenian Apostolic (Eastern) bishop who fled to Transylvania, Minas T'oxat'ec'i. Oxendio, who knew with a complete certainty that the key to unite the Armenians with Rome was to convince the Bishop Minas of their conversion to Catholicism. From Oxendio's reports, we know that he could not manage to convince old and ill bishop Minas that the union was a useful thing.[11] At the very end of the year 1686, he managed, however, to persuade bishop Minas to come along and take part in the negotiations with the Armenian Uniate archbishop of Lemberg and the Apostolic Nuncio in Warsaw, Opizio Pallavicini. Later, it was said about bishop Minas that in 1686 he made a confession of faith and signed the church union with the Roman Catholic Church under Oxendio's influence (Lukácsy 1859: 68; Petrowicz 1988: 85). This is confirmed only by several documents from the Hungarian archives, documents that were written by Jesuits who were very active in Transylvania in the mid-1690s, namely a Hungarian, Zsigmond Vizkeleti (1648–1718) and a Moravian, Rudolf Bzensky (1651–1715).[12] According to these reports, it can be stated that Father Vizkeleti and

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9 APF SC FA. Vol. 3. fol. 417.
10 APF SC FA. Vol. 3. fol. 462, 488, 490.
11 Ibidem. fol. 468–469.
12 ARSI FA Hist. Vol. 155. fol. 81; ELTE EKK CH. Vol. 16. pag. 32., Vol. 21. pag. 82., Vol. 29. pag. 346.

Bzensky took their information about the Armenians in Transylvania directly from the already nominated bishop Oxendio (Molnár 2009: 222).

Documents kept at the historical archive of the Propaganda Fide and Vatican Secret Archives explicitly contradict Bishop Minas' confession of faith within the Roman Catholic Church. These documents do not underpin the fact that the Catholic religion was not strengthened by bishop Minas, nor was a word was said about this act. However, after Bishop Minas's death at the very end of the year 1686, the situation changed completely (Ṙosk'ay 1964: 185).[13] Traditionally, it is reported that bishop Minas adopted the Catholic religion from the hand of the Apostolic Nuncio in Warsaw, Opizio Pallavicini. This, however, is definitely denied by the official correspondence of the Propaganda Fide: one can read that bishop Minas died as a heretic and not as a uniate, i.e. Catholicized bishop in 1686 (Lukácsy 1859: 68; Alisan 1896: 125–128; Nagy 2009: 100–112).[14]

Oxendio prepared the first long report on his Transylvanian mission for the Propaganda Fide in 1686. In the writing, he emphasized that a Uniate bishop should be highly appointed and ordained among the Transylvanian Armenians.[15] Oxendio knew that Minas, the old Armenian Apostolic bishop was not a good candidate for this position, and furthermore, he could not think of anyone else to be nominated than himself. After Minas' death, Oxendio initiated and started spreading information on the bishop's supposed conversion to Catholicism. Moreover, he proved his rights to the vacant, already Uniate bishop's seat. Thus, by nominating himself for bishop, he created a model of legitimacy for himself. Later, Oxendio spread the most-likely false information to the Jesuits Zsigmond Vizkeleti and Rudolf Bzensky, with whom he had formed good relations during his missions in Translyvania (Molnár 2009: 222). Subsequently, numerous Hungarian and other language writings, mostly old literature of the subject, adopted the story, without its authenticity being questioned.

The church union was eventually signed and Transylvanian Armenians adopted the Catholic religion only in February 1689, in Lemberg, in the presence of the Uniate bishop Vardan Hunanean (1644–1715) (Molnár 2009: 223; Nagy 2009: 113).[16] It is hard to define the exact date of this event, but since the Armenian Church union in Transylvania was discussed by the Propaganda

13   APF SC FA. Vol. 3. fol. 434–435, 498.
14   APF SOCG. Vol. 532. fol. 456–45; APF SC FA. Vol. 4. fol. 13; APF CU. Vol. 3. fol. 472; ASV ANV. Vol. 196. fol. 219–220.
15   APF SC FA. Vol. fol. 469.
16   APF Acta SC. Vol. 63. fol. 68–70; APF ASC. Vol. 68. fol. 165–169; APF SOCG. Vol. 504. fol. 103; APF SOCG. Vol. 506. fol. 66.; APF CP. Vol. 29. fol. 610, 612, 630–631, 651; ELTE EKK CH. Vol. 16. pag. 34, Vol. 21. pag. 82.; ELTE EKK G. Vol. 522. fol. 96, 137.

Fide on 8th of April 1689, it is advisable to accept this date.[17] At the same time, many problems emerged as a consequence of the Transylvanian Armenian church union in Transylvania. FirsT of all, the church union obliged them to recognize exclusively the primacy of the Roman pope. Besides, the church union did not touch many important details, as e.g. the situation and the financing of the uniate clergy, the marital status of the uniate priests, the language use during the liturgy, calendar issues, or the clearing of the attitude towards the teachings of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. It proved to be important problems because other church unions signed with Eastern Churches discussed and cleared all the above-listed ones (Nilles 1885: 916–918).[18]

Already as a student at the Propaganda Fide priest seminar, the founded in 1627 by pope Urban VIII (1623–1644) *Collegium Urbanum*, Oxendio regarded the complete Latinization an important issue (Hodinka 1909: 2–3; Nagy 2009: 118–119). What determined his attitude to the question of Latinization was the fact that he was ordained as a priest in the Latin Rite.[19] From his missionary viewpoint, the Uniate and the converted Armenian priests should have the same duties as the priests of the Latin Rite. The uniate clergy in Transylvania, however, was henceforward attached to old Armenian liturgical customs despite the church union. In their opinion, the church union was only focused upon nothing but the acknowledging of the Pope's primacy. This attitude caused much tension and led to the apostasy commited by Vardan Martinus Potoczky in Ebesfalva (1691/92), as well as to the so called case of Elia Mendrul in 1697 in Beszterce. These conflicts undermined the common scholarly view that the religious union of Armenians in Transylvania was reached without conflicts and discords in a peaceful and calm way. Consequently, it had realised its purpose only about 1700, when bishop Oxendio and his assistants forced the apostate Armenians to accept the church union.[20] His op-

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17 APF ASC. Vol. 60. fol. 14–19; APF LDSC. Vol. 79. fol. 134–135.

18 ELTE EKK CH. Vol. 24. pag. 289–292.

19 APF ASC Vol. 68. fol. 62–68; Vol. 69. fol. 108; APF SOCG. Vol. 512. fol. 181, Vol. 529. fol. 266–275, Vol. 532. fol. 282, fol. 434–472, Vol. 533. fol. 483–484, Vol. 534. fol. 426–427; APF SC FA. Vol. 4. fol. 261–267, 519–531; ASV ANV. Vol. 196. fol. 159–251; PLE AEV SPSZ. no. 273–274.

20 APF ASC. Vol. 63. fol. 68–70, Vol. 67. fol. 303, Vol. 68. fol. 62–68; Vol. 69. fol. 107–116, fol. 396–397, Vol. 70. fol. 103–106; APF SOCG. Vol. 512. fol. 181., Vol. 514. fol. 495–496, fol. 497, fol. 498, fol. 499, fol. 500, fol. 501, fol. 502, Vol. 529. fol. 266–275, Vol. 531. fol. 298, Vol. 532. fol. 282, fol. 434–472, Vol. 533. fol. 483–484, Vol. 534. fol. 426–427; APF CP. Vol. 31. fol. 469; APF SC FA. Vol. 4. fol. 261–267, 518–531, fol 601, fol. 610; APF LDSC. Vol. 81. fol. 130–131, Vol. 82. fol. 40, fol. 63–64, fol. 100. fol. 110.–111, fol. 119, fol. 147, Vol. 85. fol. 61, Vol. 86. fol. 267, Vol. 88. fol. 30–31, fol. 58, fol. 259–260; ASV ANV. Vol. 196. fol. 159–251; ELTE EKK CH. Vol. 21. pag. 83–84; PLE AEV SPSZ. no. 273–274.

ponents in the church, however, left Transylvania together with several Armenian families who denied their uniate religion and returned to Moldavia. Therefore, Oxendio tried to organize a mission among these emigrant Armenians in Moldavia in order to reconvert them to Catholicism. At the same time, the attempt failed because of the harsh resistance of the Holy See, the Nuntio in Warsaw, the Uniate Archbishop in Lemberg and the authorities in Moldavia at the end of Rákóczi's Independence War (Petrowicz 1988: 99–100).[21]

Neither were Oxendio's ideas fully accepted by the Uniate Armenians. Many of his close collaborators were alumni of the seminar called Armenian College in Lemberg, founded in 1664 by the Italian Theatine missionary, Clemente Galano (1610–1666). Due to the education received at this seminar, they were rather for preserving of the Armenian church traditions than for the bishop's Latinization plans (Petrowicz 1988: 17–34). This clash of views created further problems in the community. The problems were signalized among others by the fact that, since the Armenian customs were not fully present during the 1689 Uniate Council (October 20–23), the Armenian Uniate priests who arrived from Lemberg evidently intended to follow the union in the religious and traditional sense.[22] Despite being invited, though, Oxendio was not present at the Council, nor did he regard the teachings of the Council compulsory as far as his own person was concerned. He continued to promote his Latinization viewpoint, i.e. the use of the Latin language instead of Armenian during the Holy Mass. This caused further tension in the community.

Oxendio was a typically neophyte priest, who considered the Roman Catholic religion the only true path to be followed by the Armenians. In his eyes, all the ancient Armenian traditions like e.g. the use of the Armenian language were old godless, schismatic and heretic customs that needed to be rooted out in Transylvania. He regarded himself not as an Uniate Armenian, but as a priest of Armenian origin and Latin Rite.[23] Oxendio's case was not an exception. In the 1680s in Lemberg, bishop coadjutor, Deodatus Nersesowicz (1647–1709) and archbishop Vardan Hunanean represented as well the absolute Latinization perspective. Like Oxendio, both of them studied theology in the Collegium Urbanum in Rome. Later in Lemberg, however, a serious difference appeared, since the Polish Armenians whose number was greater than that of the Armenians in Transylvania could oppose Nersesowicz and Hunanean Latinization plans far more effectively than the Armenian community in

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21   APF ASC. Vol. 70. fol. 103–105, Vol. 71. fol. 177–179, Vol. 72. fol. 237–240, Vol. 73. fol. 41.; APF SOCG. Vol. 535. fol. 346–350, Vol. 537. fol. 412–419, Vol. 539. fol. 180–183, Vol. 545. fol. 243–245.; APF SC FA. Vol. 4. fol. 613–615, 670, 708–709; ASV ANV. Vol. 196. fol. 245–257.
22   Ibidem.
23   ASV ANV. Vol. 196. fol. 265–268.

Transylvania. Moreover, the Polish Armenians received a considerable support from the Italian Theatines who taught in the Armenian College and many of them had spent long years as missionaries in the ethnically Armenian territories. The Theatines reckoned that the exagerrated Latinization could cause the church-union to fail. What is more, they won the support of the Apostolic Nuncio in Warsaw, Giacomo Cantelmi, who initiated the council in Lemberg, where disputable problems of the Armenian Uniate Church in Poland were discussed in most details in the spirit of the 1596 Union of Brest (Petrowicz 1988: 7–17). The Armenians in Transylvania and bishop Oxendio, however, did not participate in the council.

It was not until a very old age that Oxendio started to partly change his Latinophile attitude, especially as far as the use of liturgical language was concerned. At the end of 1711, in his addressed to the Viennese Court petition regarding the issue of Szamosújvár, Oxendio wanted to support the use of the Armenian language during liturgies. The way to this change, however, was long and bumpy: the bishop, apparently due to his earlier experience with the 1690s church conflict completely modified his Latinophile attitude to the question not long before his death.[24]

It is complicated to define whether the Armenian church union in Transylvania could have historical antecedents. One can hardly compare it to the Mediaeval (12–14th centuries) union projects of Cilicia, the Synod of Ferrara – Florence (1439) or the church union of Lemberg (1627–1681). These councils were particularly occupied with dogmatic and liturgical questions, but the Armenian Apostolic Church had decidedly refused those referring to national interest. Similarly, neither can it be said as to the dogmas of the Council in Brest in 1596, at least from the Transylvania Armenian perspective. In this case, it was true that the union of Brest was built upon the dogmas of the council in Ferrara – Florence, but the Armenians stayed away, too (Petrowicz 1971: 51–62).

As far as the piloted by Nikol Torosowicz (1603–1681) church union of Lemberg, this was an art for art's sake, unambiguously self-fondling religious junction. Although, thanks to the church union, this process placed the Apostolic Archbishopric of Lemberg nearer to Rome, from the viewpoint of an eventual fusion many important liturgical, dogmatic and doctrine questions. Moreover, the church union of archbishop Torosowicz was not truly successful: a series of abuse caused rather the loss of Rome's favour, even if the converted archbishop was not removed from his position over a long time. By the time of his death, the Armenian Apostolic Church in Poland was neither Eastern, nor Uniate, but appeared as a rather disorganized institution. The organization of the

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24 MOL F 234. XII ½ fasc. 2 litt. A.

Armenian Uniate Church in Poland fell on Deodatus Nersesowicz and Vardan Hunaneanra; after numerous local conflicts, the task was only completed by the already mentioned 1689 Council in Lemberg (Petrowicz 1950: 177–270).

Actually, the Armenians church union in Transylvania had no model to follow. Maybe one could compare it to the situation in Lemberg after 1681 (i.e., after archbishop Nikol Torosowicz's death), but here the only parallel would be the fact that it was the archbishopric who, between 1682 and 1684, initiated the Catholic mission among the Armenians in Transylvania. As for them, one should rather say that their church union was a specific, local fusion confined solely to the Roman Pope's primacy.

Here, another question should be asked: was the Armenian Apostolic Church in Transylvania qualified to be an integral part of the church union process in the entire area of the Carpathian Basin? The answer is a definite 'no'. The union of the Transylvanian Armenians was not initiated by either the Habsburgs or the Hungarian Catholic clergy. Their church union was not initiated by the Habsburg Court in Vienna, but it was not initiated by the Hungarian Catholic Church either. In the Hungarian church history, from the perspective of the Armenian history, their union proved to be marginal. In addition, the official declaration of the union took place in Poland, and not in Hungary.

At the same time, the Armenian church union in some aspects is similar to other unions. For example, the Protestant elite of Transylvania tried to impede the unions. The Protestants feared that church unions could break the until now well-functioning religious balance in Transylvania to their detriment. This is why they tried to divide the Uniate Romanians and to reconvert to Orthodoxy (as in Gábor Nagyszeghi's and Ion Tisca's case),or they had supported, directly and indirectly, such rebel Armenian priests like e.g. Vardan Martinus Potoczky and Elia Mendrul – the opponents of bishop Oxendio (Nilles 1885: 263–269; Hodinka 1909: 253).[25]

A further parallel can be seen in the fact that both the Uniate Rusyns and the Transylvanian Armenians suffered heavy losses during Rákóczi's Independence War banned were both the bishop of Uniate Rusyns, Giovanni Giuseppe De Camillis (1649–1705), and the bishop of Uniate Romanians in Transylvania, Atanasie Anghel (1697–1713). Oxendio Virziresco spent three years (1704–1707) as prisoner of the castle in Munkács (Mukačevo), and was subsequently banned from Transylvania and Hungary, just like it happened before to bishop De Camillis (Hodinka 1909: 432–433). In the case of Armenians in Transylvania, the primary problems were constituted not by Canon law

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25   ELTE EKK CH. Vol. 24. pag. 83–86, 259–260, 267–272; MOL G 19. II. 2. e/A.; ELTE EKK CH. Vol. 8. pag. 61. Vol. 24. pag. 199–202).

and legitimation discussions regarding the bishop nomination, as it happened among the Rusyns, or 'heresy' and 'schismatism', like in the Romanian case, but by the fact that because of Rákóczi's Independence War numerous Armenian families returned to Moldavia. That is why bishop Oxendio and his supporters continuously feared that the Armenian Catholicos would send Armenian priests from Moldavia to re-convert the Uniate Armenians in Transylvania back to the Armenian Apostolic Church.[26] This fear, apart from the 1708 isolated case of Ebesfalva, proved false (Ávedik 1896: 107; Pál 2006: 32). Their fear, however, might have been fed by the Romanian example in Transylvania: with the tacit support of the Orthodox patriarchs of Constantinople, to pursue a propaganda against the Romanian church union, the metropolitan bishops in Bucharest sent Greek and Romanian Orthodox priests to Transylvania. Similar method, the scope of which was to destroy the Romanian church union in Transylvania, was implemented as well by the Serbian patriarchs of Sremski Karlovci (Nilles 1885: 221, 309–312).

Under bishop Oxendio's pontificate, the Armenians in Transylvania did not experience canonization problems. Initially, the Armenians were subject to Lemberg, and later they remained under the direct supervision of Propaganda Fide, i.e. of the Holy See. Unlike the Uniate Rusyns, they did not need to fight for the creation of a bishopric that would be subject directly to the archbishop of Esztergom (in other words, Primate of the Hungarian Roman Cathilc Church in Hungary). It must also be said, though, that they have not been thinking of organizing themselves as an independent bishopric. They were content with the supervision of a bishop directly subject to the Holy See. It is true that, in 1696, the phrase 'Armenian bishopric' can be found in two letters signed by Oxendio, but soon did he stop using this expression.[27] This happened most probably to avoid a potential conflict with the Hungarian Catholic Church – the Roman Catholic bishopric of Transylvania was to be newly organized soon and they did not want to engage in a conflict with the Hungarian Catholic Church. Thus, there appeared no conflict similar to that between Esztergom and Eger in the 17th and 18th centuries over the Rusyn Uniate bishopric in Munkács.

The Holy See consciously appointed Oxendio as a titular bishop on 2nd of October 1690 (Ṛoskʼay 1964: 187).[28] This decision had three reasons: firstly, Rome took into consideration also the interests of the Hungarian Catholic Church, especially because the Hungarian Church did everything to

26 APF SC FMPR. Vol. 2. fol. 296. fol. 524, 528–529.
27 APF SC FA. Vol. 4. fol. 407–408.
28 APF SOCG. Vol. 510. fol. 94+101; APF SC FA. Vol. 4. fol. 140, 146; APF LDSC. Vol. 80. fol. 64–65; ELTE EKK CH. Vol. 15. pag. 252, Vol. 16. pag. 34, Vol. 21. pag. 83, Vol. 29. pag. 346; ELTE EKK G. Vol. 522. fol. 137. 173.; PLE AEV SPSZ. no. 273/2.

re-organize and re-erect the authority of the Roman Catholic bishopric in Transylvania (Nagy 2008: 267–268).

Next, on the basis of missionary reports, the Holy See was well informed about the situation of the Catholics in Transylvania. Following the political change in Transylvania in 1690 (Diploma Leopoldinum), the Holy See considered as well that because of a strong Protestant influence, it would not be particularly wise to openly nominate a Uniate Armenian bishop. That is why it was decided upon a titular bishop among the Armenians in Transylvania, so that Oxendio could continue his pastoral activity among the Transylvanian Uniates and Roman Catholics as a simple priest or monk. This method was earlier applied in the case of Kázmér Damokos (1606–1678) (titular bishop of Coron) or István Kada (1617–1695) (titular bishop of Augustopolis) (Tóth 1998: 61–85; Galla 2005: 189–256, 264–267).[29] A counter-example can also be found: in 1689, the already mentioned Giovanni Giuseppe De Camillis (1689–1705) was appointed and ordained as a bishop of Uniate Rusyns already, namely titular bishop of the Armenian city of Sebasteia (Tur. Sivas), to avoid an eventual violation of the authority of bishop in Eger – the spritual supervisor of the Rusyns (Hodinka 1909: 325–326, 400, 405–408, 569).

Finally, this nomination method was nothing new also in the Armenian case. We know of many examples, mostly from inland missions, of sending by the Holy See archbishops or bishops dressed as simple priests to work among the local Armenians. In this way, the bishops remained unidentified by both the Ottoman and Persian authorities and the people of the Armenian Catholicos. Such was for example the case of titular (arch)bishops of Nakhchivan (Naxiǰewan) (e.g. archbishop Paolo Piromalli) (Ṛoskʼay 1964: 177–178; Petrowicz 1950: 113–115; Schütz 1987: 297–299). But we could have seen that the honors of titular bishop were granted in the case of the Armenian bishopric in Lemberg. The Holy See granted the rank of titular bishop of Epiphania to Vardan Hunanean (1675), of Traianopolis to Deodatus Nersesowicz (1683), and in 1710 – of Himeria (Hymeria) to Stefan Stefanowicz Roszka (1670–1739) (Ṛoskʼay 1964: 183, 186, 189, 193–195; Petrowicz 1950: 295–297; Petrowicz 1988: 1–12, 49–60).

During Oxendio's office, due to the lack of organised work conducted by the local Roman Catholic bishop, the Armenians had practically no relation to the Roman Catholic bishopric in Transylvania. In 1696, András Illyés (1637–1712) was nominated Roman Catholic bishop in Transylvania, but – contrary to Oxendio – he could not get a durable foothold in the province (Galla 2005: 270–272). The Catholics in Transylvania were thus guided by apostolic vicar

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29 APF ASC. Vol. 34. fol. 253–254; APF SOCG. Vol. 423. fol. 299–300; APF FV. Vol. 6. fol. 353–356.
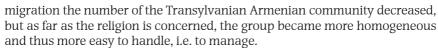
Bertalan Szebelébi, and later by apostolic vicar János Antalffy (+1728). Both of them maintained good relations with the Uniate Armenian bishop whom they recognized as their own superior. In 1712, after the death of András Illyés, they asked the Uniate Armenian bishop to supervise the bishopric until the nomination of a new Roman Catholic bishop in Transylvania. The successor of András Illyés was appointed in 1713 György Mártonffy (1640–1721), whose witness in the lawsuit launched against him in Vienna was the residing in the imperial city since 1712 and lobbying for the Szamosújvár issue Oxendio Virziresco (Galla 1942–1945: 167; HC 1952, 386; Galla 2005: 273).

Another question that should be answered is whether the church union of the Armenians in Transylvania was successful if compared to other church unions in Hungary or Transylvania. It is well-known that the union of Serbs was an evident failure. In 1690, the Habsburg Court donated serious economical and political privileges to the Serbian settlers and so the need to sign a union with Rome was no longer there. What is more, because of discussions regarding Canon Law and a definite standpoint of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the earlier Serbian attempts to sign a union in Slavonia, Syrmia, Baranya and Tolna had no long-lasting effect either (Hodinka 1909: 23–24, 429–438, 445–446).

As for the Carpatho-Rusyn case in the discussed period (1685–1715), it was only partially successful. The union was, in fact, declared in the mid 17th century. Moreover, uniate priest's payment and status were clarified. The practical implementation of the aforementioned, however, came true only at the beginning of the 19th century. Thus, the canonical debates of the Uniate Bishop's office in Mukačevo (Munkács) between the Rusyns and the Bishop of Eger exercised a very sensitive influence upon their church union (Hodinka 1909: 23–24, 429–438, 445–446). The discussion lasted till the times of Maria Theresa (1740–1780), when, in 1771, it was finally decided upon the founding of a Rusyn bishopric (Hodinka 1909: 23–24, 429–438, 445–446, 453–458, 461–494).

The Transylvanian Romanians concluded a successful union in 1701. What is more, contrary to the will of the Roman Catholic Bishopric of Transylvania, in 1720 they managed to negotiate with the Holy See the foundation of an independent bishopric, but because of the protests of the lower clergy and the faithful, as well as by the so called Schism movements conducted by the Greek, the Romanian and the Serbian Orthodox priests (Hodinka 1909: 255; Miron 2004: 74).[30]

In the case of Armenians in Transylvania, their church union can be intrepreted as a success, while their Catholicization was an effective attempt of social integration. One of the reasons was the low number of the Armenians as compared to other Uniate groups. By the end of the 17th century, due to

30 APF SOCG. Vol. 433. fol. 483; APF SC FUT. Vol. 4. fol. 86.

migration the number of the Transylvanian Armenian community decreased, but as far as the religion is concerned, the group became more homogeneous and thus more easy to handle, i.e. to manage.

Bishop Oxendio's activity – the union – actually put an end to an old Armenian tradition according to which the Armenian community practically meant the church. The center of the community, especially in the Medieval diasporas, was the Armenian Apostolic Church which was the embodiment of the national identity. As for the Armenian union and Oxendio's activity, due to the introduction of forced Latinization the Armenian identity was pushed to the background.

On the other hand, if we regard the church union from inside, the union itself proved to be a failure, because in the sense of a purely religious union it resulted in a language and cultural assimilation. In the course of history, those of the Armenian communities that united with Rome underwent a complete language assimilation to the people surrounding them within just a couple generations (Schütz 1987: 316–317).

Generally, the Armenians' tenacious adherence to their religion and language as to the carriers of the Armenian consciousness helped to preserve the ancient Armenian culture and national identity in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. In this manner, the Church symbolised national unity among Armenians living in the fatherland or among the Armenian diaspora. To preserve religion, language, identity and culture was, however, even more difficult for the diaspora. At the same time, by his bishopric office – and also the union – in Transylvania, Oxendio actually broke down such an old Armenian tradition in which the Armenian community was equal with the Armenian Apostolic Church. The forced process of Latinization managed by Oxendio decreased the importance of national identity (Schütz 1987: 316–317).

With the death of bishop Oxendio Virziresco in 1715, an important period in the Catholicization of the Transylvanian Armenians reached came to an end. The documents in the Archives of the Holy See are still hiding huge amount of untouched source text regarding the Armenians' further fate in Transylvania. Discussions concerning the Uniate Armenian bishopric, tensions around the church jurisdiction, forced Latinization pursued by the Roman Catholic bishops in Transylvania and relations maintained with the Romanian Uniate bishopric in Fogaras indicate that the history of the Armenian Uniate Church in Transylvania does not end with the researching of the church union, the Catholicization, as well as bishop Oxendio's religious activity. The last-mentioned issues, however, apart from exploring of the Holy See's archives regarding the period after 1715, can only be further researched if new source groups are engaged.

List of abbreviations

Archives

APF = Archivio storico della Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o de „Propaganda Fide" [Historical Archive of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith or "de Popaganda Fide" (Rome, Italy)

APF ASC. = Acta Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide

APF CP. = Congregazioni Particolari

APF CU. = Collegio Urbano

APF FV. = Fondo di Vienna

APF LDSC. = Lettere e Decreti della Sacra Congregazione

APF SC FA. = Scritture riferite nei Congressi. Fondo Armeni

APF SC FM. = Scritture riferite nei Congressi. Fondo Moldavia

APF SC FMPR. = Scritture riferite nei Congressi. Fondo Moscovia, Polonia e Rutheni

APF SC FUT. = Scritture riferite nei Congressi. Fondo Ungheria e Transilvania.

APF SOCG. = Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali

ARSI = Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (Rome, Italy)

ARSI FA Hist. = Fondo Austria Historia

ASV = Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Città del Vaticano, Vatikán)

ASV ANV. = Archivio della Nunziatura in Vienna

ELTE EKK = Eötvös Lóránd Tudományegyetem Egyetemi Könyvtár és Kézirattár [University Library And Manuscripts of the University of Lóránd Eötvös] (Budapest, Hungary)

ELTE EKK CH. = Collectio Hevenesiana

ELTE EKK G. = Historia (Res Transylvanica)

MOL = Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian State Archives] (Budapest, Hungary)

MOL F 234. = Erdélyi Fiscalis Levéltár [Transylvanian Fiscalis Archive]

MOL G 16. = II. Rákóczi Ferenc fejedelem levéltára [Archive of Prince Francis II Rákóczi]

MOL G 19. = Fejedelmi Kancellária Levéltára [Archive of the Administrative Office of the Principality]

PLE = Prímási Levéltár [Archive of the Primate] (Esztergom, Hungary)

PLE AEV = Archivum Ecclesiasticum Vetus

PLE AEV SPSZ. = Sub Primatae Széchényi (1685–1695)

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Wojciech BEDYŃSKI

The Memory of the *Shtetl*. Some Remarks on Life in a Multicultural Society in the Pre-war South-eastern Poland through the Eyes of Living Witnesses

Introduction

It is needless to convince anyone that the Jewish topic is now becoming very popular in Poland's scholarly and social debate. In the nearest large bookstore, one can find an entire department of "Judaica." Growing interest in the Jewish studies has appeared after a long period of "silence" that occurred after 1968. Currently, there are festivals of Jewish culture, the largest being in Cracow and Warsaw, and new Jewish schools and kindergartens are opening. Increasingly more people are learning Hebrew and even Yiddish as they seek their Jewish roots. Also, many take action to preserve what still remains in Poland of the Jewish heritage. Renovation of synagogues, Jewish cemeteries and monuments of the Holocaust is undertaken thanks to the initiative of the Jewish community, various foundations, and also by local authorities.

Despite this growing interest, some issues remain sensitive and controversial. Of such a nature is Polish anti-Semitism, which characterized the attitude of Poles towards Jews before, during, and after World War II. After the latest extremely lively argument, which was launched by two publications by Jan Tomasz Gross[1], these issues have returned with double the strength.

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1   *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*, Sejny 2000; *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after the war*, Cracow 2008

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, in her essay, "Obsession of Innocence," published in *Misty Things* (Tokarska-Bakir 2004), responds to the criticisms of the author of *Neighbors*, trying to explain the Polish reluctance to study Polish-Jewish relations. In the preface to this book, Maria Janion suggests that the habit of not considering the darker aspects of Polish history is related to the dogma of innocence and suffering which makes up part of the idea of "national Messianism," characteristic of Polish Romanticism. Poland as "Christ of the Nations" suffered innocently, but never attacked. According to Janion, the "supporters of Polish hearts," Mickiewicz together with Sienkiewicz, tried to make saints of all the Poles (Janion 2009).

So, where does the opinion about Poland as an anti-Semitic country derive? Partially, it results from false associations which from time to time appear in the global press, such as articles about "Polish concentration camps." This would be a simple shortcut: "Polish lands" shortened to simply "Poles," as the Holocaust was carried out mainly in Poland. But only partially. The second reason is the voice of Jewish communities, including Polish Jews who have settled in Israel or in the U.S. This voice must not be ignored even if it touches deeply the society "obsessed with innocence." As Gross writes in *Neighbors*, "our attitude to the victims of the Holocaust should change from doubtful to affirming." In fact, Polish-Jewish relations have been diverse, and so have been Poles, too. These were war experiences of individuals and their attitudes, and any generalization must therefore be very careful.

Holocaust and war are such a dominant point in the memory of both Jews and Poles that it is hard to initiate a conversation and not immediately jump to this topic. The pre-war relations also tend to be loaded by the memory of the Holocaust experience. During my research, I have tried not to talk about war or the Holocaust, but about even earlier times.

The population inhabiting the Second Republic of Poland (1918-1945) was a multiethnic society. Jerzy Kłoczowski writes in the preface to his book *History of Central Eastern Europe* (Kłoczowski 2000), that multi-ethnic society has been the main feature of this part of Europe, where borders changed so often, and in which many different migrants were coming to settle: Huns, Goths, Avars, Hungarians, Tatars, Ormians, Gypsies, Turks and Jews. The ethnic composition and character of Central-Eastern European society originated directly from feudal society. Jews in the sixteenth and seventeenth century were treated in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a separate *stan* (class), proven by the fact that the Ukrainian peasants during the Chmielnicki Uprising slaughtered "the nobles and the Jews." For hundreds of years of common existence on the same land, a specific cultural symbiosis emerged, where each ethnic group was there to fulfill a separate level in the

socio-economic structure. This situation was especially present in the borderlands, where the peasant population was not Polish, as in Eastern Galicia.

This symbiosis limited conflicts and religious or ethnic discrimination, but certainly it does not mean that the conflicts and discrimination did not exist at all. They did not, however, produce a constant danger for the identity of any group. foreigners were shocked by tolerance shown towards the Jewish population. The Commonwealth was named the "Jewish paradise" (*Paradisus Iudaeorum*) at the same time when, in Western Europe, pogroms and expulsions took place many times (*e.g.* in Spain during the year 1492).

This tolerance, glorified by contemporary historians, also had a dark side. Jews did not live with the Poles, but only next to them. Cultural contact was extremely limited. Aleksander Hertz, in his book *The Jews in Polish Culture* (first edition Paris 1961), called this situation using a metaphor of the "fortress." Jews were standing in the middle of its walls and the Polish population outside (Hertz 1988). By standing at two different sides of the wall, both ethnic groups had a very limited occasion for mutual understanding. This reality pleased the Jewish side, since it was able to preserve its identity, in spite of living in an area with a Polish majority. Adam Bartosz, in the article *Gypsies and Jews. What is kosher and what magerdo* (Bartosz 2009), shows a parallel mechanism in the Gypsy community. Both groups, Gypsies and Jews, maintain their identity by a negative element: the answer to "Who we are not" is at least as important as to the question "Who we are."

Limited cultural contact was the basis for the development of the stereotypes of Jews which, in turn, through centuries of coexistence, have become a permanent element of Polish (or Ukrainian) culture. According to Ireneusz Krzeminski (*Anti-Semitism in Poland and Ukraine. Research Report*, Cracow 2004), we can distinguish two types of anti-Semitism: the traditional one and the modern one. Traditional anti-Semitism is based on religious prejudice and primarily concerns traditional society. Modern anti-Semitism began with the collapse of traditional society on both sides of the "fortress." Krzeminski links it with the phenomenon of acculturation and assimilation of Jews into the environment, for example, by abandoning traditional dress, or by not wearing beards. Traditional anti-Semitism manifested itself especially in stereotyped rituals (*e.g.*, "hanging of Judas," the myth of taking Christian blood for producing *maca*). Modern anti-Semitism was based on the danger of losing identity (we already do not know who is a Jewish and who is not, since we cannot guess from the appearance or behavior), and on the conspiracy theories that placed the Jews at the helm of the most important issues and institutions. Inability to distinguish between "us" and "them" caused the need for stigmatization, or even permanent removal from society.

In the situation of the *shtetl* (small town inhabited mainly by Jews), we deal primarily with traditional anti-Semitism. But in the last years before World War II, Polish-Jewish economic conflict increased in small towns. Moreover, the assimilation of Jewish elites provoked the appearance of the modern form of anti-Semitism as described by Ireneusz Krzemiński (Krzemiński 2004).

The aim of this article is not only to discuss the phenomenon of anti-Semitism. I would like also to show a broader background of cultural contact between the Jews and the Poles, in the context of the coexistence of both ethnics groups in the multiethnic society of prewar South-Eastern Poland. But the ethnic mosaic of the region consisted of many groups, not only two. Poles, Ruthenians (Ukrainians), Jews, Boykos, Lemkos, Germans, Armenians and Gypsies have inhabited this area. It is impossible then to accurately depict Polish-Jewish relations without sketching a historical and cultural background of pre-war Poland of many nations, especially since some remnants of this old multicultural reality still exist. In the Beskidy Mountains, there are still a few Lemkos, and some Poles still do remain on the Ukrainian side of the border and some Ukrainians on the Polish side.

Jews also still remain, especially in Ukraine, partly because it was much harder for them to leave the Soviet Union to go to Israel or to the U.S. In Lviv, I have seen a Jewish man wearing a long black robe a couple of occasions, and the only functioning synagogue in the city has not been deserted. A great experience was a visit to Sambor in 2005, where I met a 95-year old Jewish man living in a nursing home (unfortunately he died in 2006). The older man was hard of hearing and tired quickly, but talked to me in correct Polish with undoubtedly prewar vocabulary. The man was born in Sambor, where he spent his childhood, but before the war he studied English Philology at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. At the end of the interview, I asked him if he remembered something "in Hebrew." After a while, he took a deep breath and the words flowed of the prayer *Shma Israel*[2]. Listening to the prayers recited in Hebrew, I thought that, not only is this man a "relic" of the former Republic of Many Nations, but in him the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was still alive.

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2   Three biblical verses that are repeated in the morning prayer *shaharit* and during the evening prayer *maariw*. It is a confirmation of monotheism and a declaration of deep relation between God and Israel (Utermann 1998: 269).

Research

The time during which I conducted my research (2004-2008) was perhaps the last moment for doing so. The generation that remembered this world was dying, and, even then, I had problems selecting and recruiting respondents. The lower age limit in the group was therefore about seventy-five years. A small number of interviews have been conducted with younger people because of their contact with Jews after the war in Poland or in Ukraine, usually up to 1968. Other people under the age of seventy-five did not show any knowledge of Jews beyond the reproduction of very simple, mostly negative stereotypes. The greater the knowledge, the greater the cultural contact was. In the sites that are currently visited by Jewish tours from Israel or the U.S. (*e.g.* Rymanow), knowledge about Jews - at least a basic, minimal level - is common, regardless of the age. In places where Jewish people did not visit, there is no more vivid interest in Jews among younger people.

The average age of my respondents was eighty-two years. These people were already several years old when the war begun, and this is the age at which children already pay attention to their environment. Their memory was even more reinforced by the dramatic events of war. I particularly appreciate interviewing those over eighty-five years of age, as they had been fully aware as young people, having behind them a period of contacts with Jews in school, neighborhoods, shops and markets.

Some issues, however, can be approached in conversation with both the older and younger generation. These are, for example, jokes about the Jews, and those told today are surprisingly similar to those from before the war. Many of them have their source in the humorist tradition of Jews themselves (Drożdżyński 1988). Also minor anecdotes from the town life have survived, usually repeated by those better educated and more aware of the history, but sometimes narrated by Jews coming from abroad to visit the graves. One of them I noted in Ustrzyki Dolne:

"I'll tell you something interesting, because I know. Jews were not allowed to trade on the Sabbath, that is, leave the house with money in their pockets. But how not to do business as the opportunity arises? So Ustrzyki was fenced with wire and it was one home of the Jews."

This memory I heard from a woman aged about 60, living in Ustrzyki.

Another issue in the selection of interviewees was their region of origin. When we examine the memory of the prewar period in such a mixed community as the population of Podkarpacie, especially the Polish part of it[3], it

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3   Due to many population exchanges ordered by Stalin in 1945-1951.

is important where the respondent was born and where he or she passed their childhood days. Almost always I had to deal with people who were born elsewhere from where they lived during the time of the interview. For example, in Lutowiska there is no one who stayed in the town after the war, and in Ustrzyki only five Polish families who lived there before the war came back after 1945. But I talked only to people born in the Podkarpacie area and carefully noted the place where they spent their childhood before the war. In total, I collected 54 interviews.

I conducted interviews with the Jewish respondents during my research trip to Israel in August and September 2008. I talked with those born in Polish Podkarpacie (eastern Galicia) before the war. All the interviews were done in Polish. In Poland and Ukraine I collected interviews with people born in following places: Olchowiec, Tylawa, Dukla, Rymanów, Lesko, Ustrzyki Dolne, Dźwiniacz, Brzegi Dolne, Krościenko, Lutowiska, Sambor, Lviv, Kolomyia, Jagielnica, Tłumacz, Rzeszów, Przemyśl and Równe.

The *shtetl* in the Central-Eastern Europe

The cultural space of my research is well described by the Jewish term *shtetl* (Yiddish: "small town"). Eva Hoffman, inspired by the film "Shtetl" by Marian Marzyński, wrote an interesting book with the same title published in Polish (Hoffman 2001). She describes a typical *shtetl*, Brańsk, a small town near Bielsk Podlaski (eastern Poland). The author defines the concept of the entire Jewish "*shtetl* province." Even more, she shows the entire pre-war Polish province from the Jewish point of view. It is, therefore, that world of small towns and villages where the Jewish population was mixed with the Polish, Belarusian, German and Armenian inhabitants. Hoffman notes that, "the most important was the division on the Jews from large cities and Jews living in *shtetls*" (Hoffman 2001: 18). Agreeing fully with the author, in this paper I will describe the second, but equally important dividing line between the Jews of the towns and the villages. Therefore, I try to not deal with the Jewish population of large cities, which are very few indeed in the Carpathian Mountains. Village and town were two separate and distinct entities in terms of the proportion of ethnic composition and the relationship between ethnic groups, although together they created a provincial *shtetl* landscape. In addition to the book by Hoffman, the following positions are important in the study on the *shtetl*: *The Shtetl. Image and Reality. Papers of the Second Mendel Friedman International Conference on Yiddish* (University of Oxford 2000), the whole "Polin" vol 17, 2004, and the work of Martin Pollack *Around Galicia. The*

Hasidim, Huculs, Poles and Ruthenians. Imaginary tour of Eastern Galicia and Bukovina, a trip to the world that does not exist (Pollack 2007). "The term Central and Eastern Europe, [...] describes basically these areas of Europe, which for many centuries belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: the Polish Kingdom and Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the historical kingdoms of Czech and Hungary. On today's map of Europe (...) such countries as Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine - to the north of the mountain ranges of the Sudetes and the Carpathians, and the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia and a substantial part of Romania (Transylvania) - to the south of this band" (Kłoczowski 2000: 7).

Thus begins Professor Jerzy Kłoczowski, founder and director of the Lublin Institute of Central and Eastern Europe, his great work about the international history of Central-Eastern Europe. Concepts from Kłoczowski and his colleagues reviewed the thought about this area of Europe. The term "Central-Eastern" reconciles two contradictions that form the identity of this region – because it is geographically Eastern Europe (at least in regards to Central Europe, *i.e.* the German speaking states), while culturally, since the early Middle Ages, these lands gravitated towards the West.

What are the specific markers of this region? According to Dr Andrzej Gil, an employee of the Lublin Institute, a specific issue in Central-Eastern Europe, compared to other regions of Europe, is its complicated ethnic structure. Since the dawn of time, gone all possible migrations have gone over this area that changed the ethnic map of the continent. Just to name a few: the Celts, Goths, Huns, Slavs, Hungarians, Tatars, Turks, and finally the Russians and Germans. One cannot forget about the gradual, peaceful infiltration of groups such as Jews, Armenians, Gypsies, Vlachs, and Flemish or German colonizers in the Middle Ages. A result of this mixing of ethnic groups, cultures, traditions, value systems, a kind of a distinct culture of the region occurred.

Characteristic of this part of Europe, therefore, are multiethnic and multicultural features. Only in this region was the following situation possible, whereby a noble-Pole dressed in Persian robes attached a Turkish saber to his belt, said farewell to his Ruthenian peasants and left to fight the Russians in the company of the Tartars. Along the way, in a country where people spoke Lithuanian, he stopped in a Jewish tavern and drank some Hungarian wine. Something like this would have not been possible in seventeenth-century France, nor in Italian or German countries. There, after the end of the Great Migrations and invasions of the Normans, the ethnic structure remained basically unchanged. The Franco-German struggle for Lorraine and Alsace lasting from the ninth century was the remains of a dispute over

the inheritance after Lothar. For a thousand years, these areas passed from hand to hand, but without major changes in the ethnic structure.

In Central-Eastern Europe, it was quite the opposite. Each conflict removed the previous ethnic mosaic and, in its place, created a new one. As a result of wars, there were always adjustments of borders, and, in forming new states again, various ethnic groups appeared. The Tartar minority remained here after the great invasions of medieval times; the First World War broke multiethnic Habsburg monarchy, in its place arose few smaller, but also multi-ethnic states. At the end of World War II, the Holocaust, the massive deportations of the population and the extermination of the Gypsies, again completely changed the political and ethnic picture of the Central-Eastern Europe.

Living in an area so fragile and unstable, yet so colorful and rich in different cultures, required development of methods to mitigate conflicts and rules of coexistence. The Confederation of Warsaw from 1573 and the famous Polish tolerance in an era when there was not similar tolerance in Western Europe may be the proof of this. An excellent example of a simple continuation of this great and centuries-old tradition is the following brief quotation from an interview with an 87-year-old inhabitant of Brzegi Dolne:

"And the Ukrainians in the same way referred to the Jews and Poles?

As to brothers.

And the Germans before the war?

And the Germans did the same. Because it was full of them here, it was a German colony. These all houses, you see the rebuilt houses, were all German. Yes.

Well, and how the Germans lived with the Jews?

Like family. There was no difference one day, sir. But there was Grossman's shop and all the Germans went to Grossman[4]." [Polish woman about 87 years old, Brzegi Dolne]

That is representative of Central-Eastern Europe as a whole. In one Ruthenian village with a Polish majority, three Jewish families engaged in trade, as well as in *Siegenthal*, a German colony that had existed there since the seventeenth century. Moreover, this all occurred on the eve of World War II.

I provide one more quotation from the same interview. The interviewee responds to a question about a particular funeral of a Jewish man in the thirties:

"So the Poles and Ukrainians went there, too?

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4   Grossman was an old Jewish owner of the shop.

Yes. I mean saying good-bye to the Jew, prayed, prayed, each in his own way. And the Jews prayed in their own way, "Vey, Vey," is their prayer." [Polish woman about 87 years old, Brzegi Dolne]

The coexistence of so many traditions and ethnic groups in one area, however, also led to misunderstandings and conflicts. It was fertile ground for the formation of stereotypes.

If we had a map of Central-Eastern Europe and looked at the approximate central point, we would see the area of the Carpathian Euroregion.[5] It lies right in the middle of the area. The Euroregion lies at the crossroads of five countries, and one might say that it is the heart of Central-Eastern Europe. It also lies at the intersection of main trade roads, which are also routes of cultural exchange, going from north to south and from east to west. In this melting pot, each group had its influences and left its traditions: Polish, Ruthenian, Jewish, Hungarian, Vlachian, German (through a number of colonies), Turkish, Tartar, Slovak, Gypsy, and finally Lemko and Boyko. This ethnic mosaic lived together for centuries and has developed a network of trade dependence and social and cultural rules. During the forty-five years under Communist bloc rule, relations between countries of the region weakened, and exchange of people and ideas reduced.

And thus I came to identify the exact area of my research. It is only a part of the great land of the Euroregion, which lies on the Polish-Ukrainian border, on both sides of it. In Poland, it includes a number of small towns and rural areas of Podkarpacie: Olchowiec, Tylawa, Dukla, Rymanow, Lesko, Ustrzyki Dolne, Dźwiniacz, Brzegi Dolne, Krościenko, Lutowiska and Rzeszów. In Ukraine, I only conducted interviews in Sambor and Lviv, but I visited the whole region from Eastern Galicia to Kolomyia, Kamieniec Podolski, Hotyn and Chernivtsi.

This area in its entirety once belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. After the First World War, it was also within the Second Polish Republic. Mountains determined the borders of this area for centuries and have influenced economic and social relations. With a small generalization, one can try to describe a linear system: going in the direction of the Carpathian Mountains, we pass through the line of large cities, such as Krosno, Jasło, Sanok, Przemyśl, Rzeszów, Sambor and Lviv. They are large administrative centers, which provide coverage for mountain areas, although they are located below, on the plains or in the foothills. Going further, we have a line of small towns, often county capitals. This includes the majority of sites where I conducted the research: Lesko, Ustrzyki, Lutowiska and Dukla. Historically,

5   It consists of parts of Poland, Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania.

these places were the *shtetls* and they recorded the highest percentage of Jewish population (61% in Lesko). These are small units of administration in the sparsely populated mountain regions. In the Podkarpacie district, the capital city of a county is usually located on the northern edge, and the whole area of the county goes a long way to the south. The population of the mountainous regions do not feel much connection with the administrative center, since it lies on the periphery rather than in the middle of the county. Such towns had however a very important role in trade: the fair took place here. The market was an opportunity to exchange products of pasturage and agriculture (in that order) for the crafts and goods from outside the region, which reached the towns from the greater centers located in the lowlands. The third line in the linear system was the mountain range, populated mostly by Ruthenian groups of Lemkos and Boykos.

Theoretical approach

The primary tool in my studies was human memory. Kristen Hastrup writes that, "the art of memory in different centuries has varied enormously" (Hastrup 1997: 23). At a certain historical period, which for Europe was the Middle Ages, one way of representing the art of memory turned into a science, history. It is characterized by continuity of the narrative of events from a start to an end, where the, "central points are as important as the extreme ones" (Hastrup 1997: 24). Another way of representing memory is called myth and it works "by analogy or metaphor." In the myth, the first and last events are important. Mythical memory and historical memory function differently, although "both history and myth are the arts of memory" (Hastrup 1997: 25). The distinction between these arts is very important for this work. Memory of the contemporary citizens of Podkarpacie about Jews, as often people's memory in general, has rather mythical character. People tend to describe reality by linking the "world with the Jews" (past) and the "world without the Jews" (present). They do not think about history in a continuous manner, describing the sequence of events one after another. The liminal point is the Holocaust. Peoples' memory is retrospective in nature and, as Hastrup notes, "always begins in the present and goes back in time." Therefore it is "constantly transformed in the process of remembering the past" (Hastrup 1997: 24). One could say that we are investigating not so much the past itself, but rather visions of the past.

"The past is now and was indeed back in time shaped by the stereotype – collective unconsciousness adapts memory to the changing representations"

(Hastrup 1997: 24). It can therefore also be assumed that, for Jewish people, the memories will be modeled upon a stereotype. Sometimes there is a conflict between real memories and a coded pattern (stereotype). The classical definition by Lippmann, who defined stereotype as the "image" which we keep in our minds, is simplified, but adequate to the objectives of this work: describing the image of "Jew" in the minds of people living in Podkarpacie. Another definition of the stereotype states that it is "a kind of cognitive effect of categorizing people, which is made by particular individuals - members of a particular category – defined by selecting some personality traits and behaviors" (Chlewiński 1992: 10). This definition, however, is more psychological than sociological, since it refers to the individual perception of members of a certain group. My research confirmed that the memory of individuals is not necessarily guided by the collective heterostereotype of the group. On the contrary, often memories of Jewish neighbors are different from the stereotypical image of "all Jews" as an entire ethnic group. Ida Kurcz defines perceiving the stereotype, "as a prototype to be referred to social categories," whereby the author understands the prototype as, "the best example of central tendency" (to be understood as the so-called: "ideal Jew"), a definition which appears to be much more adequate (Kurcz 1992: 38). This involves an individual approach to stereotypes (Stangor–Schaller 1999: 14). It also confirms the popular saying, that in every stereotype there is a grain of truth, and the mechanism of their formation lies in making a collection of the information and beliefs about the surrounding social groups. This approach also implies some flexibility and subjectivity in the use of stereotypes by the respondent (as well as by the investigator).

More often, however, the Jewish stereotype expressed by individuals is remarkably constant. This may prove that there is a deeply rooted cultural stereotype, "common to a certain society," forming "one of the aspects of the collective knowledge of its members" (Stangor–Schaller 1999: 20). This can therefore determine the existence of the stereotype of a "Jew," which is rooted deeply in the culture and passed down from one generation to the next. Most relevant, in the context of the work on Jewish people of the Carpathians, seemed the definition of the term, "stereotype," in *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, which Zbigniew Bokszański chose for his work (Bokszański 2001: 6). The stereotype is described there as a, "simplified mental picture of some groups of people, institutions or events which, in its essential features, is shared by a large number of people." A very similar definition can be found in the *Ethnological Dictionary*: "A stereotype is a schematic, standardized image of a particular ethnic group or the idea of the characteristics of its members in a particular group, usually emotional, and gradual" (Staszczak 1982: 327).

In the case of the Jews, the linguistic element in the structure of the stereotype is very important. The very term "Jew," in fact, has taken on a pejorative nature and has begun to detach itself from the name of the ethnic group (Chlewiński 1992: 10). In my opinion, that is the cause of the contemporary phenomenon occurring in Poland, an "anti-Semitism without Jews." Those who have never seen a real Jewish person use the term of the ethnic group to identify people who, in their opinion, fit the nature or appearance of the negative stereotypes attributed to Jews. Sometimes the word "Jew" is no longer associated with the representatives of the ethnic group, but has simply the pejorative connotation.

Stereotypes arise where there is a cultural contact. At a time when both groups are trying to retain their identity, as it was in the case of Polish-Jewish relations, cultural contact may degenerate into a clash of cultures, and even cultural conflict. This conflict could be seen in the Polish *shtetls*, especially in the last years before World War II. It resulted primarily from the isolationism of the minority group of Jews who, because of the desire to preserve and cultivate their own identity, would not surrender to assimilation. The majority group, the Poles, who felt very clearly the "alienity" of the culture with which they were confronted, denounced such a isolationist attitude, particularly represented by the Hasidic groups in the countryside,, Despite nearly a thousand years of coexistence in a multicultural society, that sense of otherness as well as the desire to preserve identity led to a situation described by Alexander Hertz metaphorically as the "fortress" (Hertz 1988). "Fortress" is not, however, a restricted territorial unit, which in medieval Europe was the urban *ghetto* (De Fontette 1992: 71). Rather, it is a social phenomenon; the "fortress" is a closed group. Each member of this group who was born in the "fortress," also dies there. "It is difficult, sometimes impossible, to leave the fortress" (Hertz 1988: 59). The walls of the "fortress" grew over the centuries from both sides: the Poles were not interested in the internal affairs of the Jews, and the Jews themselves were not interested to introduce the Poles to their culture.

Prewar Poland was a very specific "fortress" in the context of European Jews. In any other country, Jews were rather imaginary "others" (*e.g.* in Germany they made up less than 2% of the population). In Poland there lived more than 3 million Jews (10% of the population), and they were a visible, distinctive ethnic minority group. Eva Hoffman defines the "otherness" as "a mixture of subconscious images, fictions and prejudices, projecting on our perception of strangers. These subconscious assumptions and archetypes can and do have indeed a great impact on relations between people" (Hoffman 2001: 16). The presence of Jews in the Polish daily life, which lasted for

a thousand years, had to leave traces on both sides of the "fortress." Alina Cała states that, although being the "other," "Jew" functioned, and, despite the passage of years, continues to function in Polish culture. He was "not the margin, but an integral part" (Cała 2005: 14). Despite the existence of the "fortress," the Jews performed "more interest and emotion than, by reference, any other of the minorities, even those still coexisting with the Polish population" (Cała 2005: 13).

"From where these Jews"? History and its concept by the inhabitants of Podkarpacie

Jews in Podkarpacie appeared a thousand years ago. A Jewish community already existed in Przemyśl in the eleventh century (Potocki 2000: 115). They were Ashkenazim. Sefardi Jews, very few indeed, have settled only since the sixteenth century, when they were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula. From the year 1356, we possess the act of location of Lviv given by King Casimir the Great. It allows religious Jews to preserve their religion and follow their own laws. The last of the Piast Dynasty actively supported Jewish settlement in his country. The Polish Kingdom became a Jewish paradise.

The next big wave of Jewish immigrants appeared in Poland after the expulsions from England, Palestine, France and Spain from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Some cities had the privilege of *de non tolerandis Judaeis* and did not allow Jews to settle. In Podkarpacie, where regular colonization had only begun, privileges of such kind were rare. The first Jewish settler in the Bieszczady Mountains, of whom we know, was a certain Matysz from Lesko, mentioned in 1542 (Potocki 2000: 121). We also posses the oldest preserved tombstone (*macewa*), from the mid-sixteenth century, in the cemetery of Lesko (Trzciński 1996). In 1921, only 14 out of the 224 villages in the district of Lesko had no Jewish presence (Olszański 1991: 10).

The next period, in which the Jews came to Poland in massive numbers, were the days of partitions. In the Congress Kingdom (Russian partition) a large increase in numbers was due to the so-called resettlement of "Litwacy" from the interior of Russia. In Galicia in 1787, Emperor Joseph II proclaimed a decree to change the names of Jews to be more German. Whoever resisted was punished with fines (Potocki 2000: 117). Generally, the Prussian Jews were more assimilated than those in the Russian and Austrian partitions, and they were much fewer in numbers.

In the Second Republic of Poland, the Jewish population was greater than three million, making up 10% of the country's population. According to the census of 1931, in the Lviv region, which covered almost the entire area of my research, there were 342,400 Jews, including nearly 100,000 in the city of Lviv (Potocki 2000: 119).

The census of 1921 can offer some interesting conclusions regarding these 342,000 Jews. The first observation is that the percentage of the Jewish population in relation to other ethnic groups strongly increased from west to east. Therefore there were 5.9% of the Jewish population in the county of Brzozów, 11.1% in the county of Lesko and more than 16% in the counties of Drohobych and Kolomyja (Olszański 1991: 11). The further to the east, the higher the concentration of the Jewish population in all counties, towns and cities is, up to 91% in the Kolomyja region and 98% in Stryj region, in relation to the respective Jewish populations. The percentage of Jewish people living in the countryside is smaller. Lesko, however, holds the record when it comes to the percentage of Jews in relation to all the citizens, representatives of other ethnic groups; in the town, 61% of citizens were Jews before the war (Olszański 1991: 12).

That is what the literature tells us. I also asked my respondents about the origins of Jews in the Podkarpacie. Most people responded that they did not know. For them, the Jews were just always there, since they and their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents lived together with Jews:

"In the stories told by my parents, grandparents, they just were. They were consistently. [...] In any case, surely in the end of the nineteenth century they were already here." [Polish women, 85 years old, Lesko]

I heard also an interesting theory about this:

"Well, as I was a boy, I didn't care much about it. I have heard just saying that they were entering the best lands. In Nisko there [were] not as many Jews. And here in the city and the villages plenty. They pushed up where the rich lands were." [Polish man, about 82 years old, Ustrzyki Dolne, but born in Sokal]

The above quote is from a respondent from Sokal, who was very nostalgic for the land of his childhood that passed to the USSR after the war. It probably could be the cause of theories on the causes of Jewish settlement in those areas; people thought that the richer in natural resources the territory was, the more Jewish people would have settled there in the past. This fits the stereotype of the rich, greedy and clever Jew.

"The Stranger"

Sixty years had passed from the extermination of Polish Jews, and since then, hardly any Pole saw a Jewish person with his or her own eyes. The society knew them through memories of the oldest people. From my research, one can assume that a reliable memory lasts up the age of about seventy years. If so, what caused that the "Jew" has survived as the proverbial "stranger"?

Alina Cała thus describes the issue of foreignness: "Rural communities form a closed, ethnocentric group. Much attention is paid to the dichotomous division of reality into the sphere of >our< and >foreign<, which was an important component of self-knowledge of the world. Awareness of your own identity, you can get in contact with what is different" (Cała 2005: 13).

The category of "otherness" can be perceived from the example of Polish attitudes towards Jews. However, it needs to be examined in the context of the entire pre-war ethnic mosaic of Podkarpacie. Ukrainians and Lemkos could not become the "alien" to the Polish folk culture, because too little was different between them and the Polish people. They were "ours" but only a little bit different, because they were Greco-Catholic or Orthodox Christians. Here is a quotation from an interview from Ustrzyki:

"I know the stories of my parents. Poles went to their [Ukrainian] church on their feasts, because there was [sic.] plenty of mixed families." [Pole, about 60 years, Ustrzyki Dolne].

And another statement, this time from Sambor:

"(...) When the Corpus Christi procession went out on the town, on the market, near the town hall, the Jews were hiding. They could not be seen then in all the city. When the procession came from the old Bernardine church it was joined by the Greek Catholics coming out of their church." [Polish women, 83 years old, Sambor].

The relatively small differences between Catholicism and Orthodoxy or Greco-Catholicism (union church) meant that, in many religious ceremonies, people could participate together, for example, at the procession of Corpus Christi Day mentioned in the interview. Even now, many Greek Catholic Ukrainians in Sambor come to the Catholic Parish of John the Baptist. Among friends, they jointly celebrate baptisms, weddings and funerals. Many families were mixed, and are still today. There was no problem with inter-group marriages because both sides were baptized. There was a general rule that the son took over his father's confession, and the daughter was baptized after her mother, which still would not prevent the whole family to attend Mass once in the Catholic Church, and once in the *cerkiev*. Often, especially in the high mountains, there used to be only one religious building in the village,

and most often it was a Greek-Catholic church (*e.g.* Tylawa, Łodyna). Poles living in the area went to pray together with the Ruthenians. The similarity of the languages allowed mutual understanding, which eliminated suspicion.

Jewish people were different on almost all counts: language, dress, religion, behavior, feasts, tradition - culture in general; all were extremely different from Polish. The main difference of religion (*i.e.* no recognition of Christ as the Messiah and the absence of the New Testament) resulted in a whole range of complications: non-baptized Jews could not enter into marriage unions with Poles or Ukrainians. If such a marriage took place, which happened very rarely, the Jewish person would change his or her faith. As a *przekrzta* (convert), he or she was no longer tolerated by his or her own community, and the new Christian community also remembered his or her Jewish roots.

Dress, language, character, occupation, religion, wooden *kuczki*[6] - everything was different, alien and very exotic. Because of this "otherness," Jews in Poland were far from being assimilated, in particular the Chasidic groups. They formed a rather hermetic community, closed to the rest of the inhabitants of the village or town. Therefore the locals, even though they saw them every day, really knew little of them. Everything was based on speculation. At the same time, this mystery opened a wide field for folk fantasy. Here is an excerpt of one of my interviews. The respondent is a 86-year old Ukrainian women from Ustrzyki. She speaks with much excitement about the Jews of her village (Liski near Sokal), who went to pray to an inn run by one of them - the old Leibach:

"There I did not go inside because it was far, but they had talked something in their language.. Here on the head they had such thing. It was black. And somehow I saw something on their hands. I have no idea. I saw it somewhere, but today I cannot remember. On the head with this, at the hands with such a thing and they had scarves. Black and yellow, so long scarves they had when walking. And hats, not like ours. [Ukrainian women, 86 years old, Ustrzyki, born in Liski]."

Strangeness is a gradual concept. The more the group deviates from the "norm" established in the community, the more this strangeness will be noticed and stigmatized by the community. In Podkarpacie, if we take the Polish majority as starting point, Gypsies would be the second strangest group, immediately after the Jews. In this scale of strangeness, Lemkos, Ukrainians and Boykos would take a much closer place to the Polish majority.

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6   Popular name for Jewish houses.

Finding ourselves on one side of the scale, and others ("strangers"), on the other, allows us to determine our identity.

"The awareness of our own identity, we can get in contact with what is not a subject, what is different. Man in the educational process slowly discovers that he is not a tree or dog, to finally reach self-awareness. Similarly, a group first identifies what it is not to answer the question what it really is" (Cała 2005: 13).

The more we see the differences, the easier it is to determine identity by way of opposition. These differences were so great between Poles and Jews, so the Jews constituted the main counterpoint to the Polish identity. It is they who allowed me to determine that I am a Pole, a Catholic, Christian, farmer, *etc.*

Neither Ukrainian (Ruthenian), Boyko, Lemko, nor those of the Greek Catholic religion virtually did become a counterweight to the Polish-Catholic culture. German or Russian - in religious terms, Protestant or Orthodox respectively, were different enough to reach "alien" status in the folk culture; for example the devil would be often dressed like a German (Bystroń 1995: 178). Gypsies, apart from espousing a different culture, were primarily nomads, which differentiated them much from the Polish agricultural ethos and, thus were not acceptable. A "Jew" was distinguished by multiple aspects, which I will discuss in more detail later.

1. Appearance

Appearance has played a significant role in the perception of the Jews. Often it became a source of pejorative terms and nicknames (Bystroń 1995: 94). Those respondents who had closer contact with the Jews usually started by describing their character and focused on particular persons, *i.e.* their friends and neighbors. Those who had less contact with Jews would remember them more as a group of men dressed in black long coats with a beard and side locks.

"They were walking in the black coats, they had hands in the back pockets. They had white socks, and wore shoes without lacing. Well, they had side curls, beards." [Ukrainian women, 86 years old, Ustrzyki Dolne]

"They were walking, even during a day, in long linen coats, black pants, black dress generally round. And black hats, with a large pan, beard at least as long as this, twisted side curls. It was a normal Jewish dress." [Pole, 83 years old, interviewed in Lesko, from Brzozów]

Such a description of the appearance of a "typical Jew" dominated in the interviews. It should be noted at this point, that the aforementioned descrip-

tion was the everyday dress only of the Hasidim, who were rather a minority in the Jewish community. As the most distinctive "other," their outfit was remembered best and became one of the elements of the "Jew" stereotype. It does not change the fact that the majority of interviewers perceived the difference between Orthodox Jews and those more or less assimilated:

"This is all Hasidim, because those Jews that were more elegant did not wear this. [Pole, 83 years old, interviewed in Lesko, from Brzozów]

Well, the Jewish youth was normal, they were well dressed people. They had already been educated. And those Orthodox Jews: beard, side curls and hat. Jews wore hats and they wear hats today.

And the Orthodox Jews were the older ones, and young people were normally dressed?

Yes. Youth was elegant." [Ukrainian, 79 years old, Sambor]

On the basis of the collected material it can therefore be concluded that the Jews were not a homogeneous group. I have just shown the first line of the division between the orthodox Jews, and those who were "looking like the Poles" - *and these normal, our Poles did not distinguish* [Polish woman, 81 years old, Lesko] The second distinction occurred between the generations – the respondent pointed out the difference between young and old Jewish people. This is partly true, but it seems to me that this also reflected closer contact with the Jews of their own age. Elders of the Jews were only observed; it was with the young ones with whom the respondents entered into closer relations. Older Jews were then remembered as orthodox, living a different era. Young Jewish people, in turn, based on the interviews, were described as modern, elegant and assimilated, speaking well the Polish language.

Jewish women were almost not visible in the recounted memories. This is another proof of the preposition that we remember best what is most different. Again, the dividing line is between old and young; the younger Jews were not distinct from the Poles:

"No. Just like us. I am talking about young people all the time." [Pole, 81 years old, Lesko].

There was however, one difference:

"Among Jewish women there was not as much of the nudity as among ours. Everything was so dressed up." [Polish woman, 81 years old, Lesko]

Older women were presented in opposition to the girls, just like the male part of the Jewish community:

"The old ones like this: a scarf around the head, as in our rural areas. Sometimes the shawl, depending on what were the financial possibilities, I think. Because the richer ones they were elegantly dressed. Well, and above all, what distinguished them, all Jewish women had curly hair. And they

were black, brunette. As it appeared a blonde she was pretty. And it was hard to tell whether she was Jewish or not. But the blonde ones were beautiful. That I remember some of these blondes from Lesko." [Polish women, 81 years old, Lesko].

2. Character

Even more important than appearance, is the character, but rather this attribute was stereotypical. I tried to obtain from respondents character traits that they regarded as typically Jewish. A picture of a "typical Jew," according to residents of the villages and towns of Podkarpacie, emerged from this. Below are mentioned the most important, in the order in which they most frequently appeared in the interviews:

astute – the vast majority of the interviewers gave smart and cunning as a fundamental feature of the Jews. This is primarily a flair for business, a flair for trade. Jews were accused for the tendency to cheat.

"The Jews are cunning. Well, how they say? "Oh, you astute Jew!" [Pole, about 82 years old, Sambor]

knowing-how - the Jews were considered to be those who would well deal with problems in a difficult situation. They do not drink, are intelligent and smart. One family had nothing, the other had even less, but when it came to the wedding of the young, there was always something for the new couple for start. This know-how was perceived as a characteristic of the entire Jewish nation:

"Well, smart, hard for me to say. Well, you know – it [wealth] just could not come alone." [Pole, 82 years old, interviewed in Lesko, from Brzozów]

Jewish smarts were perceived as very social in nature. The whole community united in solidarity with problems. This was manifested in alms for the poor and assistance for young couples.

"Let's say a Jewish couple got married. There was a shop, there was another shop, in the hallway between them these young people had their new one, even in the gate! For these young people they made a new shop, for they had something to live." [Couple, both Poles about 60 years old, Ustrzyki Dolne]

wisdom (intelligence) - Jews were seen as more intelligent, which went along with having smarts. They were perceived as better in learning, which sometimes provoked envy among school peers.

"It was quite easy to distinguish her from our family. She was such a wise, learned girl and graduated to high school and has been a teacher, when she went to Lviv. Right now you would see, she's not of our form." [Polish woman,

82 years old, Sambor; speaking about her adoptive sister who was Jewish, who was adopted from a Jewish family to save the child from the Holocaust].

Also interviewees perceived being trade-savvy as specifically Jewish. They said, a Polish person always lost the competition with a Jewish person, because the latter could manipulate prices and "creep" in favor of customers so well that the Polish business fell. The respondents blamed collapse of Polish businesses on Jewish intelligence, which was called mostly "cunning."

piety - the respondents insisted that Jews were very religious, far more than the Poles. It seems to me that people usually equate the notion of piety with the frequency of prayer:

"And how often did they pray?

For example, you walked into an inn there, to do something, well, for example, cigarettes. And you met a praying Jew. He had on the forehead such a box, the Jewish commandment, and there some rags on the head, black string. And you had to wait because you couldn't buy until the prayer was over. And the Jew prayed like this: waj waj waj. It's nothing you could understand. We had to wait a minute, then he interrupted his prayers and then you bought something. Because there was a certain time, a certain time the prayers were mandatory. In the morning, noon and evening. Before each meal." [Pole, 83 years old, interviewed in Lesko, from Brzozów]

Often the proof for a greater devotion of the Jews was their attitude to the holy day - the Sabbath. During the Sabbath, "even in the oven he could not light a fire" [Pole, 86 years old, Ustrzyki Dolne, from Lubatowa]. Conversely, the argument for low piety of Poles, was that "the Poles do not respect Sunday" [Polish women, 81 years old, Sambor]

In the descriptions of respondents appear almost exclusively "orthodox" Jews ergo the Hasidim. Their devotion was appreciated and on this base was made the opinion about the devotion of all Jews.

"Oh, those Orthodox Jews are religious." [Pole, 83 years old, interviewed in Lesko, from Brzozów]

Although some respondents, describing the Jewish piety note that:

"Oh, the Jews prayed, but only to God. (...) So they do not worship Jesus, but "let God be praised." [Ukrainian, 77 years old, Sambor]

Most respondents were aware of the common roots of both religions (Christianity and Judaism). They knew that Jews pray to the same God, only that they do not recognize in Christ the Son of God, the Messiah.

willingness to help others - sometimes Jews were treated as the "first bank." When a Pole did not have enough money, he went to a Jew and asked for help. Some of the respondents regarded the loan as fraud and theft, be-