

# Two Letters of the Armenians in Transylvania to the Holy See from 1689

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## Introduction

In February 1689, an Armenian delegation arrived from Transylvania to Lemberg (Pol. *Łwów*, Russ. *L'vov*, Arm. *Lewonopol*, now *Lviv* in Ukraine). The intention of this delegation was primarily to make a confession of faith and declare officially the church-union with the Roman Catholic Church on behalf of the whole Armenian community in Transylvania in Armenian Uniate Archbishop, Vardan Hunanean's (1644-1715) presence in Lemberg.

While making the confession of faith, the Armenians in Transylvania wrote two letters in Armenian (with their translation in Latin) addressed to the Holy See. One letter was written to the Pope himself, and one letter to the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*), the Holy See's Missionary Institution in Rome. In these two documents, the Armenians humbly and kindly asked the Holy See to appoint and ordain for them Oxendio Virziresco (Arm. *Ōgsēntios Vrcrēsḡul*) (1654-1715) as a Uniate Bishop of the Armenians in Transylvania who had been working as a missionary delegated from Rome in Transylvania since 1685<sup>1</sup>.

The aforementioned documents emerged from the Historical Archive of the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith in Rome a few years ago. Furthermore, these two documents can be found in the document series of the so-called Particular Sessions (*Congregatio Particularis*, *Congregazione Particolare*) at the above-mentioned archive. This Session at the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith primarily focused upon special missionary cases or issues, namely declarations of the church-unions, confessions of faith, or missionary bishops' or prefects' nominations and appointments, etc. Generally, this Session was informally sitting between two official General Sessions (*Congregatio Generalis*,

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<sup>1</sup> Archivio storico della Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o de "Propaganda Fide" (Rome, Italy) [hereafter, APF], Congregazioni Particolari, vol. 29 [hereafter, CP], fol. 644r, 647r-v. The documents were translated into Latin by Basilio Barsegh (Arm. *Basil Parsēlean*), a Uniate Armenian Priest, who worked for the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith as a missionary specialised in Armenian ecclesiastical cases in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. See further on: APF, CP, fol. 645r, 648r-v.

*Congregazione Generale*) in the presence of the higher leadership of the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith in Rome<sup>2</sup>.

The history of Armenians in Transylvania, who escaped from Moldavia (Arm. *Pultan*) and Poland (Arm. *Lehk*) between 1668 and 1672, is regarded practically as an undiscovered area from the perspective of the international church-historical studies. Because of the Armenians' active participation in revolts against the hard fiscal policy pursued by Gheorghe Duca (1668-1684), Prince of Moldavia in 1668, and the Polish-Ottoman wars broken out in 1672, the Armenians with their spiritual leader, Minas (Alēk'sanean) T'oxat'ec'i (ca. 1610-1686), Apostolic Bishop of the Armenians in Moldavia, were obliged to flee from Moldavia to Transylvania<sup>3</sup>.

The Armenian refugees consciously chose Transylvania, because they had more or less exact information about the relatively tolerant religious policy pursued by the Transylvanian Principality, which was led by the politically strong Protestant *élite*. Indeed, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox believers and Jews had been living in a relative peace for more than a century in Transylvania. However, according to the laws of the Transylvanian Principality, which were created as a reaction to the increasing expansion of the Counter-Reformation in the neighbouring Hungarian provinces, strongly supported by the Habsburg Court in Vienna, the Roman Catholics were not permitted to have their own Diocesan Bishop until the very end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, the Roman Catholics' cases in Transylvania had been dealt with by a Roman Catholic Episcopal Vicar, appointed by the Protestant Princes of Transylvania personally since the early 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>4</sup>.

The Apostolic-believer Armenians established themselves dispersedly in Transylvania, forming economically strong colonies in towns and villages, like Alba Iulia (Ger. *Karlsburg* or *Weissenburg*, Hung. *Gyulafehérvár*), Batos (Ger. *Botsch*, Hung. *Bátos*, Arm. *Padōš*), Bistrița (Ger. *Bistritz*, Hung. *Beszterce*, Arm. *Pistric*), Fogaraș (Ger. *Fogarasch*, Hung. *Fogaras*, Arm. *Fōk'araš*), Frumoasa (Hung.

<sup>2</sup> *Litterae missionarium de Hungaria et Transylvania (1572-1717)* (ed. by István György Tóth), 1, Rome-Budapest, 2002, p. 62-63.

<sup>3</sup> Initially, the Armenians just wanted to stay provisory in Transylvania, because they had an intention of returning to Moldavia upon consolidation of the political situation there. Consequently, after Prince Gheorghe Duca's final fall in 1684, many Armenians left Transylvania and returned to Moldavia. Thus, a fragmentary manuscript written in Armenian remained from Bishop Minas, narrating that he was consumed with desire to be back to Moldavia. Bishop Minas feared that he would be removed from his diocese on account of his escape from Moldavia. APF, Scrittura riferite nei Congressi [hereafter, SC], Fondo Armeni, vol. 1, fol. 525r-526v, 602r-610v; Matenadaran [National Archive of Republic of Armenia] (Yerewan, Armenia) [hereafter, MA], Manuscripta [hereafter, MS], nos 5350, 6582, 9800; Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem. Egyetemi Könyv- és Kézirattár [Archive and Library of the Lóránd Eötvös State University] (Budapest, Hungary) [hereafter, ELTE EKK], Collectio Hevenesiana [hereafter, Coll. Hev.], Cod. 21, p. 81; *Kamenic': Taregirk' Hayoc' Lehasani ew řumenioy*, Venice, 1896, p. 127, 197; Suren K'olanjian, *Les Arméniens en Transylvanie en Xe-XVIIIe siècle*, "Revue des études arméniennes", new series, 4 (1967), p. 355-376 (359, 362).

<sup>4</sup> Ferenc Galla, *Ferences misszionáriusok Magyarországon: a Királyságban és Erdélyben a 17-18. században* (ed. by István Fazekas), Budapest-Rome, 2005, p. 269-274; Antal Molnár, *Lehetetlen küldetés? Jezsuiták Erdélyben és Felső-Magyarországon a 16-17. században*, Budapest, 2009, p. 218-222.

Csikszépvíz, Arm. *Sip'kic'*), Gheorgheni (Ger. *Niklasmarkt*, Hung. Gyergyószentmiklós, Arm. *Čurčōv*), Gurghiu (Hung. *Görgényszentimre*, Arm. *ĴurĴin*), Petelea (Ger. *Birk*, Hung. *Petele*, Arm. *Bēt'ēlē*), Remetea (Hung. *Gyergyóremete*, Arm. *Rēmēdē*), Suseni (Ger. *Pränzdorf*, Hung. *Marosfelfalu*, Arm. *Felfalō*) and Târgu Secuiesc (Hung. *Székelyudvarhely*, Arm. *Ganda*)<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, they received free commercial privileges from Mihály Apafi I (1661-1690), Prince of Transylvania in 1680<sup>6</sup>.

Prior to the Catholic Habsburg Court's increasing political influence at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Counter-Reformation had begun to strengthen in Transylvania. Not surprisingly, the Apostolic Armenians in Transylvania did not remain untouched<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, the possibility to send Catholic missionaries to the Armenians in Transylvania was denied to the Holy See for nearly twenty years after their escape (1668–1685). However, Bertalan Szebellébi (1631–1707), the Roman Catholic Bishop's vicar in Transylvania, and the Observant Franciscan fathers in Transylvania, did attempt to convert the Armenians to Catholicism. Their attempts, though, were systematically blocked by the harsh resistance led by Bishop Minas and his clergy in the late 1670s<sup>8</sup>.

The Roman Catholic missions among the Apostolic-believer Armenians in Transylvania, of which the aim was to create the church-union, were initiated by the Armenian Uniate Archbishopric Office in Lemberg, in ca. 1683. The Archbishopric's wish to unite them with Rome was owing to the fact that Lemberg – before its church-union process happened between 1627 and 1681 – had an ecclesiastical jurisdiction upon the Armenians living in Moldavia and Poland<sup>9</sup>. It seems that the Armenians in Transylvania did not escape the spiritual leadership of the Armenian

<sup>5</sup> Christophorus Lukácsy, *Historia Armenorum Transsilvaniae a primordiis usque nostram memoriam e fontibus authenticis et documentis antea ineditis elaborata*, Vienna, 1859, p. 17-18; *C'uc'ak hayerēn jeragrac Matenadaranis Mxitareanc' i Vienna* (ed. by Yakobos Dašean), Vienna, 1895, p. 116; Grigor Govrikean, *Elizabēt'opol. Dransilwanoy Hayoc' metropolisē*, Vienna, 1896, p. 8-12; Gregorio Petrowicz, *La chiesa armena in Polonia e nei paesi limitrofi. Parte Terza. (1681–1951)*, Rome, 1988, p. 81; A. Molnár, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

<sup>6</sup> G. Govrikean, *op. cit.*, p. 14–15; Ašot Abrahamyan, *Hamarot urvagic hay gal't'avayreri patmut'yan*, 1, Yerevan, 1964, p. 142-145; S. K'olanjian, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

<sup>7</sup> Kornél Nagy, *Emlékirat az erdélyi örmények egyházáról. (Az 1693. évi Fidelis relatio.)*, "Történelmi Szemle" 50 (2008), 2, p. 251-285 (255).

<sup>8</sup> APF, SC, Fondo Moldavia, Vol. 1, fol. 155r-156r, 265r-267r; APF, Fondo Visite e Collegi, Vol. 21, fol. 3r-22r; ELTE EKK, Coll. Hev., Cod. 15, p. 248; Ibidem, Cod. 16, p. 33; Ibidem, Cod. 21, p. 81-82; Ibidem, Cod. 23, Liber V, Cap. 16 (without pagination); Tihamér Aladár Vanyó, *Püspöki jelentések a Magyar Szent Korona országainak egyházmegyéiről, 1600-1850*, Pannonhalma, 1933, p. 113; Teresa Ferro, *I missionari cattolici in Moldavia*, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 87-88, 97-98.

<sup>9</sup> APF, SC, Fondo Armeni, Vol. 3, fol. 380v-381r; APF, SC, Fondo Moldavia, Vol. 2, fol. 126r-127r, 134r-135v; APF, SC, Fondo Moscovia, Polonia e Rutenia, Vol. 2, fol. 260r-261v. Generally, the attempts in the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1439 to form a church-union with the Greek (Byzantine) Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic Church had failed, and therefore the conversion of the Eastern Christians was still on the agenda from the Holy See's point of view. In this manner, the Ruthenians' church-union in Brest in 1596 and the Armenians' church-union in Lemberg in 1627 (in Poland), with the Roman Catholic Church represented for the Holy See an enormous advance in Eastern Europe. See *Litterae missionarium* cit., p. 81.

Uniate Archbishop in Lemberg, because they emigrated from the regions, namely Moldavia and Poland, which were initially subdued to the Uniate Archbishop's ecclesiastical jurisdiction<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, the Holy See, agreeing with the Armenian Uniate Archbishop in Lemberg, sent out Oxendio Virziresco, an Armenian Uniate priest born in Moldavia and educated at the Seminary of the Armenian College (Lat. *Collegium Armenum*, It. *Collegio Armeno*, Arm. *Dpratur Hayoc'*) in Lemberg and at Seminary of Urbanian College (Lat. *Collegium Urbanum*, It. *Collegio Urbano*, Arm. *Dpratur Urbanean*) in Rome, on a mission among the Armenians in Transylvania in 1685<sup>11</sup>.

Owing to initial conflicts, and particularly the Armenian Apostolic clergy's harsh resistance, his pastoral activity proved to be very hard. Oxendio Virziresco needed at least four years of hard work to fulfil his mission successfully<sup>12</sup>. The missionary himself had a very contradictory relation to Minas T'oxat'ec'i, the Apostolic Bishop of the Armenians residing in Transylvania. Oxendio Virziresco knew that the key to unite the whole Armenian community in Transylvania with the Roman Catholic Church was to convince Bishop Minas of the necessity of

<sup>10</sup> Initially, Minas T'oxat'ec'i was ordained by Philip I (1633-1655), Catholicos (Patriarch) of the Armenians as Bishop of the Armenians in Moldavia in 1649. His episcopacy had been subjected to the Armenian Archbishop's supremacy in Lemberg from a jurisdictional point of view since its foundation in 1509. Moreover, bishop Minas's pontificate coincided with the period of Archbishop Nikol Torosowicz's (1604-1681) contradictory church-union with Rome in Lemberg (1627-1681). Notwithstanding, the Armenian episcopacy in Moldavia was regarded as one of the last strongholds resisting this church-union policy in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Additionally, Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i himself was against any kind of process aimed at uniting confessionally the Armenian Apostolic Church with Rome. See Gregorio Petrowicz, *L'unione degli Armeni in Polonia con la Santa Sede (1626-1686). Parte prima*, Rome, 1950, p. 9-12, 14, 16, 22-23, 52, 79-80, 101-102, 104, 115, 124, 195-196, 225-229, 235, 246-251, 266-270, 295, 297, 307; Edmond Schütz, *An Armeno-Kipchak Document of 1640 from L'vov and its Background in Armenia and in Diaspora*, in *Between Danube and the Caucasus. A Collection of Papers concerning Oriental Sources on the History of the Peoples of Central and South-Eastern Europe* (ed. by György Kara), Budapest, 1987, p. 284-316.

<sup>11</sup> APF, Acta Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide [hereafter, Acta SC], Vol. 51, fol. 154r-v, 232r, 255v.; Ibidem, Vol. 57, fol. 81r, 114r; APF, Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali [hereafter, SOCG], Vol. 490, fol. 110r; Ibidem, Vol. 492, fol. 313r; Ibidem, Vol. 493, fol. 30r-31v, 376r-378v; Ibidem, Vol. 497, fol. 335r-v, 338v; APF, Lettere e Decreti della Sacra Congregazione [hereafter, Lettere SC], Vol. 70, fol. 42r, 54v; Ibidem, Vol. 76, fol. 33r-34r; APF, SC, Fondo Armeni, Vol. 3, fol. 417r, 419r, 462r-v, 457r, 464r, 465r, 488r, 490r; APF, SC, Fondo Moldavia, Vol. 2, fol. 41r-46v; Step'anos Rošk'ay, *Žamanakagrut' iwn tarekank' ekelec' akank'* (ed. by Hamazasp Oskean), Vienna, 1964, p. 186; Ferenc Galla, *Pápai kinevezések, megbízások és felhatalmazások. Erdély, a magyar Királyság és a Hódoltság területére (1550-1711)* (ed. by Péter Tusor, Krisztina Tóth), Budapest-Rome, 2010, p. 139, 141, 142.

<sup>12</sup> The Armenians in Transylvania, exhorted by the Armenian priests, tried to kill Oxendio Virziresco twice, because the missionary himself was regarded as a "heretical priest" loyal to "heretical Rome". Additionally, the Armenians, primarily the clergy, had a vivid memory of the church-union process led by Archbishop Nikol Torosowicz, which had caused many damages to the Armenian colonies in Moldavia and Poland. See APF, SC, Fondo Armeni, Vol. 3, fol. 468r.

conversion to Catholicism<sup>13</sup>. Oxendio Virziresco himself was not able to persuade the Bishop to unite with Rome. However, he succeeded in persuading Bishop Minas to escort him to Lemberg and start negotiations with Cardinal Opizio Pallavicini (1635-1700), Apostolic Nuncio in Warsaw (Poland) and the Armenian Uniate Archbishop in Lemberg, upon a possible church-union in the late autumn of the year 1686<sup>14</sup>.

According to the generally accepted scholarly opinion, immediately before his death in 1686, Bishop Minas made a confession of faith with Rome in the presence of Cardinal Opizio Pallavicini and Vardan Hunanean, Armenian Uniate Archbishop in Lemberg at the end of year 1686. After his alleged confession of faith, Bishop Minas prepared to return to his people in Transylvania, but, on his way home, he unexpectedly fell ill and died in the same year<sup>15</sup>.

Yet the documents, which can be found at the historical archives of the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith in Rome, written by Archbishop Vardan

<sup>13</sup> Oxendio Virziresco in his long report sent to the Holy See in the autumn of 1686 gave an account of his link with Bishop Minas. In his report, Oxendio related that he was accused by the Armenians of acting as a spy. Namely, Bishop Minas and his followers caught Oxendio Virziresco's letters addressed to Federico Veterani (1650-1695), a military general at the Habsburg Court's service in Vienna, and Bishop Deodatus Nersesowicz (1647-1709), coadjutor of the Uniate Archbishop's Office in Lemberg. Allegedly, Oxendio sent very intimate accounts to them of the political and religious situation in Transylvania. On this pretext, the Armenians wanted Oxendio to be expelled from Transylvania. For this reason, Bishop Minas and his clergy laid a charge against him with Michael Apafi I, Prince of Transylvania. The accusation, however, yielded no result, for reasons unknown to us. In any case, Oxendio could further continue his missionary work in Transylvania without any other difficulties. See APF, SC, Fondo Armeni, Vol. 3, fol. 468r.

<sup>14</sup> APF, Lettere SC, Vol. 76, fol. 33r-34r; APF, SC, Fondo Armeni, Vol. 3, fol. 468r-469v.

<sup>15</sup> The information on Bishop Minas's confession of faith as a historical fact spread over the Hungarian and international secondary literature without any reservations. To be sure, the secondary literature concerning the Armenians' church-union in Transylvania published in Hungarian or any other languages is extraordinarily few. Research has become difficult since the majority of these, with some exceptions, proved to be very obsolete, that is to say, these have already come to light at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These monographs or articles very often referred to each other. Thus, they adopted entire chapters word by word from each other. They had the same opinion upon Bishop Minas' confession of faith and Bishop Oxendio's missionary efforts in Transylvania. Most authors did not go into the details, examining their pastoral activity. APF, SOCG, Vol. 537, fol. 418r-v; Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (Rome, Italy) [hereafter, ARSI], Fondo Austria, Historia, Vol. 155, fol. 81v; ELTE EKK, Coll. Hev, Cod. 16, p. 32; Ibidem, Cod. 21, p. 82; Ibidem, Cod. 23, Liber V, Cap. 16 (without pagination); Ibidem, Cod. 29, p. 346; ELTE EKK, Collectio Kaprinayana. First Series [hereafter, Coll. Kapr. A.], Cod. 11, p. 112; Andreas Ilia, *Ortus et progressus variarum in Dacia gentium et religionum*, Cluj-Napoca, 1730, p. 67; C. Lukácsy, *op. cit.*, p. 68; Kamenic' *cit.*, p. 17; Antal Hodinka, *A munkácsi görög-katholikus püspökség története*, Budapest, 1909, p. 2-3; S. K'olanjian, *op. cit.*, p. 362-363; Zsolt Trócsányi, *Transilvaniayi hayeri iravakan kac'ut'iwnē Leopoldyan hrovartaki šrjanum*. (1690-1848), in *Hay-hunagarakan patmakan ew mšakuyt'ayin kaperi patmut'iwnic'* (ed. by Vladimir Barxudaryan, Antal Vörös, Yerevan, 1983, p. 168-271 (173); G. Petrowicz, *La chiesa armena*, *cit.*, p. 78; Paul Shore, *Jesuits and the Politics of Religious Pluralism in Eighteenth-Century Transylvania. Culture, Politics and Religion, 1693-1773*, Rome, 2007, p. 75-79; A. Molnár, *op. cit.*, p. 222-223.

Hunanean<sup>16</sup>, Oxendio Virziresco and other Catholic missionaries delegated from Rome between 1686 and 1688, definitively refute the fact that Bishop Minas had made a confession of faith with Rome<sup>17</sup>. No more do the missionary reports which are kept in the Vatican Secret Archives (*Archivio Segreto Vaticano*) confirm Bishop Minas's confession of faith with the Roman Catholic Church, either. These sources explicitly rendered accounts of Bishop Minas's negotiations with Archbishop Vardan Hunanean upon a possible confession of faith and church-union with Rome on behalf of the Armenian community in Transylvania. But, according to contemporary sources, these negotiations were unsuccessful<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, Oxendio Virziresco's long missionary reports written in Italian to the Holy See between 1686 and 1688 inform us that he was on no good terms with Bishop Minas both from the confessional and the dogmatical point of view. Thus, he described concretely in his reports addressed to Holy See that Bishop Minas died as a heretic Bishop and not a Uniate one in 1686. These documents well may attest that Bishop Minas himself was unwilling to negotiate upon a confession of faith or a church-union with Rome. Further on, this also suggests that there were only religious disputes in Lemberg, and not a confession of faith or a church-union with Rome<sup>19</sup>.

Bishop Minas's confession of faith with Rome in Lemberg as a historical fact was propagated by Oxendio Virziresco in the mid-1690s. Consequently, it was in Oxendio Virziresco's interest to spread this information, because he was very ambitious to be nominated and ordained as an Armenian Uniate (Catholic) Bishop of

<sup>16</sup> Archbishop Vardan Hunanean emphasised in his two letters addressed to the Holy See in 1687 that owing to Bishop Minas's death, a Uniate Bishop or an Apostolic Vicar or an Apostolic Administrator should be appointed, ordained, and delegated by the Holy See to the Armenians in Transylvania, because the Armenian Catholicos in Ejmiacin (Armenia) wanted to appoint a new Armenian Apostolic Bishop among them. This newly-appointed Bishop could be Theodor Vartanowicz (1652-1700), a Polish-Armenian priest, born in Lemberg, who wanted to enter Transylvania. On Bishop Vartanowicz see the following documents: APF, Acta SC, Vol. 60, fol. 78r-81v, 125r-127v; APF, SOCG, Vol. 507, fol. 87r-88v, 89r, 90r, 91r, 92r, 93r-94r; Ibidem, Vol. 509, fol. 112r; APF, Lettere SC, Vol. 79, fol. 7r-8v, 22v-23r, 129r-132v; Ibidem, Vol. 80, fol. 3r-v, 45r; APF, SC, Fondo Armeni, Vol. 2, fol. 807r; Ibidem, Vol. 3, fol. 434r, 469v; Ibidem, Vol. 4, fol. 51r-v, 64r, 69r, 70r, 71r-72v, 82r-83v, 86r-87v, 100r-v, 129r; C. Lukácsy, *op. cit.*, p. 69-70; G. Petrowicz, *La chiesa armena cit.*, p. 78-79.

<sup>17</sup> APF, Lettere SC, Vol. 76, fol. 90v-91r; APF, SC, Fondo Armeni, Vol. 3, fol. 434r-435v, 498r; Ibidem, Vol. 4, fol. 374r-375v; S. Rošk'ay, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>18</sup> At these archives, we have never found any official or half-official sources i. e. reports, letters and documents, which would underpin decidedly Bishop Minas' confession of faith. Moreover, there are no any documents originated from Opizio Pallavicini, Apostolic Nuncio in Poland, either. Thus, there are no any materials in the archives of the Holy See which would have underpinned unanimously the fact that Bishop Minas could have met personally Nuncio Opizio Pallavicini in Lemberg, 1686. The documents among the official materials belonging to Apostolic Nunciature in Vienna (Habsburg Monarchy) or in Warsaw (Poland) found at Vatican Secret Archives have remained silent. APF, SOCG, Vol. 532, fol. 456r-457r; Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Vatican City, Vatican) [hereafter, ASV], Archivio della Nunziatura in Vienna [hereafter, ANV], Vol. 196, fol. 219r-220r.

<sup>19</sup> APF, SC, Fondo Armeni, Vol. 4, fol. 13r-v; APF, Collegio Urbano [hereafter, CU], Vol. 3, fol. 472r-v.

the Armenians in Transylvania in the late 1680s. Therefore, in contrast to the documents written by himself between 1686 and 1688, he stated from the mid-1690s that Bishop Minas died as a Uniate, – and not an (Eastern) Apostolic – Bishop as a result of his negotiations in Lemberg. It seems that Oxendio Virziresco created a theory of legitimization, justifying that he had the exclusive right to become a Bishop of the Armenians in Transylvania after Bishop Minas's death. In this way, Oxendio Virziresco had definitely managed to lead his age as well as the posterity astray with his theory.

At any rate, Bishop Minas's death in 1686 had facilitated without any doubt Oxendio Virziresco's missionary activity in Transylvania<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, Oxendio Virziresco's missionary efforts met with a success. In February 1689, an Armenian delegation from Transylvania, led by two Apostolic Armenian priests, namely archdeacon (*awagerēc*) Eſia Mēndrul (ca. 1630-1701) and monk (*abelay*) *vardapet* Vardan Martinus Potoczky (ca. 1640-1702), arrived in Lemberg in order to negotiate upon the confession of faith and church-union with the Armenian Uniate Archbishop on behalf of the whole Transylvanian community<sup>21</sup>.

In conclusion of these negotiations, the church-union was declared in Lemberg in February 1689 when the Armenians in Transylvania made a confession of faith with Rome in the Uniate Archbishop Vardan Hunanean's presence<sup>22</sup>. However, it is not easy to decide the precise date of the church-union. Since the General Session of the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome discussed the Armenians' church-union in Transylvania on April 8, 1689, therefore, it is highly reasonable to accept this act as an official date of their church-union<sup>23</sup>. At the same time, in connection with the Armenians' church-union in Transylvania, several problems emerged. First of all, the church-union itself was exclusively confined to acknowledge the Roman Pope's primacy. Secondly, the church-union did not touch several very important details, for instance the Uniate clergy's social status and payment, the Uniate priests' marital status, use of language in holy liturgies, use of the unleavened bread at Eucharist, the *Filioque*-prayer, the chanting of the *Trisagium*-hymn, the question of Purgatory itself and, finally, dogmas of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod in Chalcedon in 451 A.D.<sup>24</sup> These problems were, however, clarified in details during the progress of other Eastern churches' union in Poland, Hungary and Transylvania<sup>25</sup>. But these ones have remained untouched and caused

<sup>20</sup> ARSI, Fondo Austria, Historia, Vol. 176, p. 106; Ibidem, Vol. 177, p. 79; P. Shore, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

<sup>21</sup> APF, Acta SC, Vol. 59, fol. 165r-169r; APF, SOCG, Vol. 504, fol. 103r; Ibidem, Vol. 506, fol. 61r, 65r, 66r; APF, Lettere SC, Vol. 78, fol. 36v-37r, 37r-38r, 102r-v; ELTE EKK, Coll. Hev., Cod. 15, p. 251; Ibidem, Cod. 16, p. 34; Ibidem, Cod. 21, p. 82; Ibidem, Cod. 23, Liber V, Cap. 16 (without pagination.); ELTE EKK, Res Transylvanica, Vol. 522, fol. 96r, 137r-v; Library of the Armenian Catholic Parish in Gheorgheni (Gheorgheni, Romania) [hereafter, LACPG], no I/1.

<sup>22</sup> APF, SOCG, Vol. 532, fol. 282r; APF, CP, Vol. 29, fol. 651r.

<sup>23</sup> APF, Acta SC, Vol. 60, fol. 14v-19v; APF, Lettere SC, Vol. 79, fol. 134v-135r.

<sup>24</sup> ELTE EKK, Coll. Hev., Cod. 21, p. 77-80.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, Cod. 24, p. 83-86, 199-202, 259-260, 267-272; *Symbolae ad illustrandam historiam ecclesiae orientalis in terris Coronae S[ancti]. Stephani* (ed. by Nicolaus Nilles), 1, Innsbruck, 1885, p. 263-269.

many rude conflicts within the Armenian community in Transylvania for the years to come.

In case of the official declaration of the Armenian's church-union in Transylvania, the Armenian delegation wrote two letters in Armenian addressed to the Holy See. In these documents, they asked the Holy See to appoint and ordain Oxendio Virziresco as a Uniate Bishop of the Armenians in Transylvania who had been working fruitfully among them as a simple missionary for four years<sup>26</sup>.

At any rate, the success of the Armenians' church-union in Transylvania meant a great step towards Oxendio Virziresco's candidacy for a Uniate Bishop of the Armenians in Transylvania<sup>27</sup>. After long canonical debates in Rome, thanks to the Apostolic Nuncio of Poland, Archbishop Giacomo Cantelmi's effort (1645-1702), Oxendio Virziresco was appointed as a titular – *in partibus infidelium*<sup>28</sup> – Bishop by the Holy See on October 2, 1690<sup>29</sup>. Further on, Oxendio Virziresco was solemnly consecrated as Bishop by the Uniate Archbishop Vardan Hunanean in the cathedral of the Holy Virgin (Arm. *Mayr Tačar Astuacacni Srboyn*) in Lemberg on July 30, 1691<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> APF, CP, Vol. 29, fol. 644r, 645r, 647r-v, 648r-v.

<sup>27</sup> APF, Lettere SC, Vol. 80, fol. 80v-81r, 82r-v, 94r-96r, 123r, 129r-132r.

<sup>28</sup> It is a specific term used at the Roman Catholic Church in the ecclesiastical Latin language in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The term *in partibus infidelium* approximately means a bishop sent out on a mission by the Holy See among the infidels in order to convert them to Catholicism.

<sup>29</sup> Obviously, Rome took the Hungarian Catholic Church's interest into consideration, because the Hungarian Church was keen to restore the non-functioning Roman Catholic diocese in Transylvania. Consequently, the Hungarian Catholic Church tolerated just one Catholic Diocesan Bishop in Transylvania, and not more. See APF, Acta SC, Vol. 59, fol. 165r-169r; Ibidem, Vol. 60, fol. 14r-19v, 78v-81v, 125v-127v; APF, SOCG, Vol. 506, fol. 61r-v, 63r-64r; Ibidem, Vol. 510, fol. 94r; Ibidem, Vol. 512, fol. 180r; APF, CP, Vol. 29, fol. 612r-617v, 628r-629v, 630r-631r, 636r; APF, Lettere SC, Vol. 79, fol. 80v-81r, 82r-v, 123r, 129r-132r, 133v, 134v-135r; APF, SC, Fondo Armeni, Vol. 4, fol. 140r, 146r-v, 221, 224r, 261r; Prímási Levéltár (Esztergom, Hungary) [hereafter, PL], Archivum Vetus Ecclesiasticum. Sub Primatae Széchenyi (1685–1695) [hereafter, AEV SPSZ], No. 273/2; ELTE EKK, Coll. Hev., Cod. 15, p. 252; Ibidem, Cod. 16, p. 34; Ibidem, Cod. 21, p. 83; Ibidem, Cod. 23, Liber V, Cap. 16 (without pagination); Ibidem, Cod. 29, p. 346; ELTE EKK, Res Transylvanica, Vol. 522, fol. 173r-v; C. Lukácsy, *op. cit.*, p. 70; Kamenic' cit., p. 128; S. Rošk'ay, *op. cit.*, p. 186-187; G. Petrowicz, *La Chiesa armena* cit., p. 94-97.

<sup>30</sup> APF, Lettere SC, Vol. 80, fol. 4r-v, 13r-14v, 64v-65r, 74r-75r, 86-87; ELTE EKK, Res Transylvanica, Vol. 522, fol. 73r; Minas Bžškeanc', *Čanaparhodut' iwn i Lehastan*, Venice, 1830, p. 118.



## Appendix

### Documents

#### 1.

#### **Letter of the Armenians in Transylvania to the Cardinals of the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) upon Oxendio Virziresco's Nomination as a Uniate Bishop**

Date and place: Lemberg (Ukr. *Lviv*, Russ. *L'vov*, Pol. *Łwów*, Arm. *Lewonopol*), February 1689.

Language: Contemporain Armenian

Document: APF, CP, Vol. 29, Fol. 644r.

Publication: Unpublished.

Regestum: *Vardapet Oxendio Virziresco, an Armenian Uniate priest and missionary, arrived in Transylvania four years ago. In the beginning of his mission, the Uniate priest himself was sorely tired by the Armenians in Transylvania. Owing to this, the Armenians, however, do believe that they will be absolved from their frail ignorance and sins committed against the Uniate priest. But, by grace of God, due to Oxendio Virziresco's teaching and preaching, the Armenians in Transylvania have united with the Roman Catholic Church in a great unity and love, about the details of which they have already written to the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland (Warsaw). For this reason, in this letter, the Armenians in Transylvania express their gratefulness attributed to the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, because this Institute delegated their compatriot, Oxendio Virziresco, like the Armenians' Apostle and Holy Father, Saint Gregory the Illuminator, Apostle of the Armenians, who was taught and educated in Rome by courtesy of the above-mentioned Institute, to Transylvania, in order to convert them to the Roman Catholic Faith. In this manner, the Armenians in Transylvania kindly ask the Cardinals at the Holy See to receive them as their humble sons into the Roman Catholic Church and render them help both in corporeal and in spiritual things. Therefore, they kindly ask the Cardinals to help them appoint Oxendio Virziresco as a Uniate bishop for the Armenians in Transylvania in order to confirm and increase the Armenians' honour towards the Holy See.*

Gerapatiw ew ciranap'ar teranc'd Gartinalc'd Srboy Žołovoyñ Tē Brōbakanta Fidē<sup>31</sup>,  
oġjoyn siroy ew xonarhut'ean meroy hnazandut'ean ar hramayealod!

Aha č'ors<sup>32</sup> amē, or ar mez haseal ē mer srbut'ean Ašakertn, mer Vardapet Ōgsēntios  
Vcrēsguln<sup>33</sup>. Ew aynmhetē šat anc'k' ēnd mez ew ēnd na, bayc' angitut'eamb, vasn oroy

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<sup>31</sup> Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith. The Holy See's Missionary Institute was established in Rome on January 6, 1622 by Pope Gregory XV's (1621-1623) bull entitled *Inscrutabili divinae providentiae* [Inscrutable Divine Providence].

<sup>32</sup> Addendum in the text.

<sup>33</sup> Oxendio Virziresco (1654-1715). Armenian Uniate missionary in Transylvania born in Moldavia. Alumnus of the Armenian College in Lemberg and the Urbanian College in Rome

ew zyoys t'olūt'ean melac' meroc' ditagoynapēs ēnduneloc' emk'. Ard šnorhōk' Astucoy ew iwr xrat'iwn miabanec'ak' sirov ew mecaw p'ap'ak'anōk' ēnd irears, orpēs ew aṙ Gerapatiw Nuirakn Aṙakelakan<sup>34</sup> aṙ Lēhēs<sup>35</sup> grec'ak' miēstmiojē. Ayžm hamarjakec'ak' grel ew aṙ Srbazan Hayrapetn, orpēs ew aṙ srbut'iwn jer. Šnorhakal linelov zi zmer azgakic' ew gawarācic' Ōgsēntios Vardapetn usuc'eal ēk', ew aṙ mez aṙak'ealk', or mek' ews nora usmambn usak' ew caneak' zčšmartut'iwn ew hetewec'ak' Hōrn Meroy Srboyn Mecin Grigorin Lusaworč'in<sup>36</sup>, gohut'ean aynu urax emk'. Miayn xndremk' zi zmez aysmhetē oč' ibrew ōtars, ayl ibrew zxonarh ordis ēndunic'ik', ew zōgnut'iwn jer hasuc'anēk' mez t'ē i hogewors ew t'ē ēnd marmnawors. Ew manawand zxndirk'n mer wasn episkoposi katarel janasc'ik', zi sēm mer ews k'anzew ačesc'i ew hastateac'i aṙ ayd Vehap'aṙ Surb Ēndhanrakan At'oṙd<sup>37</sup>. Ew ayspēs zgrapan ciraneac' srbazanic'n meroc' jērmeṙand sirov ew<sup>38</sup> hambuberov kamk' ew mnak' aṙ hramans srbut'ean jeroy patrast ew xonarh caṙayk'.

Es Tēr Eliał awagerēc<sup>39</sup>. L.S. (red-wax seal)

Es TērAstuacatur<sup>40</sup>. L.S. (red-wax seal)

Es Tēr Vardans<sup>41</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

Es T'oman ēresp'oxan<sup>42</sup> Sējovu<sup>43</sup>. L.S. (red-wax seal)

Es Asvatur Pilalīn<sup>44</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

Es Xoṙay K'ristoratur<sup>45</sup>. L.S. (red-wax seal)

Es Lusikn ēkēlec'pan<sup>46</sup>. L.S. (red-wax seal)

Es Grigorios<sup>47</sup>. L.S. (red-wax seal)

Es Vardan Surukčoc' sarostan<sup>48</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

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between 1678 and 1683. Apostolic Administrator of the Armenians in Transylvania between 1687 and 1690. He was appointed as a Uniate Bishop and Apostolic Vicar of the Armenians on October 2, 1690. Furthermore, he was consecrated as a Uniate Bishop by Armenian Uniate Archbishop Vardan Hunanean in Lemberg on July 30, 1691.

<sup>34</sup> Giacomo Cantelmi (1645-1702). Titular Archbishop (*in partibus infidelium*) of Caesarea between 1683 and 1690. Between 1685 and 1688 Apostolic Nuncio in Switzerland. Between 1688 and 1690 Apostolic Nuncio at Warsaw (Poland). He was created as a Cardinal in 1690. He was the Archbishop of Capua (Italy) between 1690 and 1691 as well as he was the Archbishop of Napoli (Italy) from 1691 to his death (1702).

<sup>35</sup> Poland.

<sup>36</sup> Saint Gregory the Illuminator (287-325) (Arm. *Surb Grigor Lusaworič'*). Apostle of the Armenians. The first Catholicos (Arm. *Kat'olikos*) and Patriarch (Arm. *Hayrapet*) of the Armenians.

<sup>37</sup> Holy See.

<sup>38</sup> Addendum in the text.

<sup>39</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>40</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>41</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>42</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>43</sup> Suceava (Arm. *Seč'ov*).

<sup>44</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>45</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>46</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>47</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>48</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

Es Lusik ērēc'p'oxan<sup>49</sup> Pōjanu<sup>50</sup>. L.S. (red-wax seal)

Es Es Parōnč'an ēkēlec'ban Pōjanu<sup>51</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

Io postcritto Giovanni Battista Volponi<sup>52</sup> Minor Conventuale e Prefetto delle missioni in<sup>53</sup> Moldavia e Vallachia me sono trovato presente quanto di sopra.

1/a.

**Letter of the Armenians in Transylvania to the Cardinals of the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) upon Oxendio Virziresco's Nomination as a Uniate Bishop (Latin translation done by Basilio Barsegh)**

Date and place: Lemberg (Ukr. *Lviv*, Russ. *L'vov*, Pol. *Łwów*, Arm. *Lewonopol*), February 1689.

Language: Latin

Document: APF, CP, Vol. 29, fol. 645r-646v.

Publication: Unpublished.

*Regestum: Vardapet Oxendio Virziresco, an Armenian Uniate priest and missionary, arrived in Transylvania four years ago. In the beginning of his mission, the Uniate priest himself was sorely tired by the Armenians in Transylvania. Owing to this, the Armenians, however, do believe that they will be absolved from their frail ignorance and sins committed against the Uniate priest. But, by grace of God, due to Oxendio Virziresco's teaching and preaching, the Armenians in Transylvania have united with the Roman Catholic Church in a great unity and love, about the details of which they have already written to the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland (Warsaw). For this reason, in this letter, the Armenians in Transylvania express their gratefulness attributed to the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, because this Institute delegated their compatriot, Oxendio Virziresco, like the Armenians' Apostle and Holy Father, Saint Gregory the Illuminator, who was taught and educated in Rome by courtesy of the above-mentioned Institute, to Transylvania, in order to convert them to the Roman Catholic Faith. In this manner, the Armenians in Transylvania ask the Cardinals at the Holy See to receive them as their humble sons into the Roman Catholic Church and render them help both in corporeal and in spiritual things. Therefore, they ask the Cardinals to help them appoint Oxendio Virziresco as a Uniate bishop for the Armenians in Transylvania in order to confirm and increase the Armenians' love towards the Holy See.*

Eminentissimis et purpuratis Dominis Cardinalibus Sacrae Congregationis De Propaganda Fide<sup>54</sup> Salvatione Amoris et humilitatis nostrae obedientia ad praecepta.

<sup>49</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>50</sup> Botoșani (Arm. *Bočan* or *Pojan*, Hung. *Botusán*).

<sup>51</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>52</sup> Giovanni Battista Volponi (Volpone) da Fiorentino (ca. 1632-1698). Conventual Franciscan (Minorite) monk and missionary. He served as a Prefect of the Conventual Franciscan missions in Moldavia and Wallachia at the behest of the Holy See between 1685 and 1695.

<sup>53</sup> Addendum in the text.

<sup>54</sup> See above, note 31.

Ove<sup>55</sup> ecce a quattuor annis iam ad nos pervenerat Vestrarum Eminentiarum Alumnus<sup>56</sup> noster Vartabet<sup>57</sup> Oxendius Virzeresgul<sup>58</sup>, qui postquam venit ad nos, multa accidentia digustativa<sup>59</sup> molesta<sup>60</sup> fuerunt inter nos et ipsum. Sed omnia per nostram ignorantiam, ideo et speramus veniam peccatorum nostrorum facilius obtinere. Sed per gratiam Dei, et illius instructione uniti fuimus et reconciliati amore, et magno affectu simul et adinvicem sicut ad Illustrissimum Nuntium Apostolicum in Polonia<sup>61</sup> scripsimus omnia particularita. Nunc autem ausi sumus, ad fortissimum pontificem, et ad Vestras Eminentias scribere, gratias agendo, qua nostrum consocium, et connationalem Oxendium Virzesgul Vartabetem<sup>62</sup> docueratis, et instruxeratis, et ad nos miseratis quia et nos etiam ex eius doctrina didicimus, et novimus veritatem, et secuti sumus Patrem Nostrum Sanctum, Gregorium<sup>63</sup> Magnum negotium Illuminatorem,<sup>64</sup> gratias agimus Deo, et gaudemus. Et tantum petimus a vobis, ut nos in posterum non tamquam alienos, sed tamquam humiles filios recipiatis, et auxilium vestrum nobis concedatis, tam in spiritualibus, quam in corporalibus. Et praecipue petitiones<sup>65</sup> nostras<sup>66</sup> pro Episcopo perficere conemini, ut amor noster plus et plus crescat, et<sup>67</sup> confirmetur ad istam Vestram Supremam, Sanctam et Universalem Sedem Apostolicam. Et ita fimbrias Sacrorum Purpurorum Vestrarum osculando, cum devotione et amore manemus et expectamus ordine vestra praecepta paratissimi et humillimi servi Vestrarum Eminentiarum.

Ego Dominus Elia Archipresbiter<sup>68</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Dominus Asuazadur<sup>69</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Dominus Vartan<sup>70</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

<sup>55</sup> Italian.

<sup>56</sup> Pontificium Collegium Urbanum. Seminar of the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith in Rome founded by Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644) according to his bull entitled *Immortalis Dei Filius* [Immortal God's Son] in Rome on August 1, 1627.

<sup>57</sup> *Vardapet* is a theological rank in the Armenian Apostolic Church. A monk became strictly vardapet. Initially, the word or term *vardapet* is a Middle-Persian (known as *Pehlevi*) loanword in the Armenian language in the meaning of 'doctor of theology'. This term was also adopted by the Armenian Uniate (Catholic) Church with the same meaning in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>58</sup> See above, note 33.

<sup>59</sup> Italian.

<sup>60</sup> Interpolation in the text.

<sup>61</sup> See above, note 34.

<sup>62</sup> The Armenian ecclesiastical term *vardapet* is declensioned according to third declension in the Latin language.

<sup>63</sup> Addendum in the text.

<sup>64</sup> See above, note 36.

<sup>65</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *petitiones*.

<sup>66</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *nostros*

<sup>67</sup> Addendum in the text.

<sup>68</sup> Elia Mendrul (ca. 1640-1701). Armenian secular priest and archdean was born in Moldavia. He was charged as a Vicar of the Apostolic-believer Armenians in Transylvania after Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i's death.

<sup>69</sup> Astuacatur Nigoșean († 1693). Armenian monk and *vardapet* was born in Moldavia. He was ordained as a priest by Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i himself in ca. 1683.

Ego Thomas<sup>71</sup> Consul Seciovi<sup>72</sup> civitatis. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)  
Ego Asvadur praefectus<sup>73</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)  
Ego Cogia Christodur<sup>74</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)  
Ego Lusigh praefectus<sup>75</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)  
Ego Gregorius<sup>76</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)  
Ego Lusughis. Consul Civitatis Bocciani<sup>77</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)  
Ego Barongian praefectus<sup>78</sup>. Bocciani civitatis. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)  
Ego Vartan Surughiazi Starosta<sup>79</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Praeter haec ad est illum, quod in margine scribitur italice, legete et videte quid dicit.  
Supra scriptio: Ad Sacram Congregationem de Propaganda Fide. Romam<sup>80</sup>.

Note: Io Fratello Padre Giovanni Battista Volponi<sup>81</sup> Minor Conventuale e Prefetto delle missioni in<sup>82</sup> Moldavia e Vallachia me controvato presente quanto di sopra.

(*Fol. 646v*) I jeṛn Žołovin tē Brōbaganta Fidē.  
Litterae<sup>83</sup> ad eosdem Cardinales Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide.  
Armenorum Siciliae<sup>84</sup>.  
I Hṛom<sup>85</sup>.  
(Red-wax seal)

## 2.

### Letter of the Armenians in Transylvania to Pope Innocent XI upon Oxendio Virziresco's Nomination as a Uniate Bishop

Document: APF, CP, Vol. 29, fol. 647r-v.

Date and place: Lemberg (Ukr. *Lviv*, Russ. *L'vov*, Pol. *Łwów*, Arm. *Lewonopol*),  
Febuary, 1689.

Language: Contemporain Armenian

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<sup>70</sup> Vardan Martinus Potoczky (ca. 1630-1702). Armenian monk and *vardapet* was born in Lemberg (Poland).

<sup>71</sup> We have not found any data on this person .

<sup>72</sup> Suçeava (Arm. *Seč'ov* or *Sejov*).

<sup>73</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>74</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>75</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>76</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>77</sup> Botoșani (Arm. *Boč'an* or *Poĵan*, Hung. *Botusán*).

<sup>78</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>79</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>80</sup> Rome.

<sup>81</sup> Giovanni Battista Volponi (Volpone) da Fiorentino (ca. 1632-1698). Conventual Franciscan (Minorite) monk and missionary. He served as a Prefect of the Conventual Franciscan missions in Moldavia and Vallachia at the behest of the Holy See between 1685 and 1695.

<sup>82</sup> Addendum in the text.

<sup>83</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *litterae*.

<sup>84</sup> The Szeklerland (Rom. *Ținutul Secuiesc* or *Secuimea*, Hung. *Székelyföld*). Here Transylvania.

<sup>85</sup> Rome (Armenian).

Publication: Unpublished.

*Regestum: As the Roman Pope's humble sons, the Armenians in Transylvania, who lived once in Moldavia, and who are staying at this moment in Transylvania due to their sins, express their homage to the Roman Pope. Furthermore, the Armenians in Transylvania inform the Roman Pope that they have united with the Roman Catholic Church and taken an obedience to the Roman Pope due to their compatriot's pastoral activity, namely Oxendio Virziresco, who was educated, taught and sent out on a mission to Transylvania by the Holy See. In this letter, the Armenians in Transylvania are emphasising that this church-union is very similar to that church-unity, which existed between Pope Saint Sylvester I and Saint Gregory the Illuminator, Apostle of the Armenians, a long time ago. For this reason, the Armenians in Transylvania firmly believing in God hope that this church-union will not fail. Further on, the Armenians in Transylvania justify that they have united with the Roman Catholic Church by reason of their fellows' spiritual salvation, and not by reason of their human nature. The Armenians in Transylvania have already written their intention to unite with the Roman Catholic Church on several occasions but now they have circumstantially written this intention to the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland (Warsaw), too. Therefore, the Armenians in Transylvania humbly ask the Roman Pope to receive them as his sons with his fatherly love into the Roman Catholic Church in the near future and not as foreigners. Moreover, they ask humbly the Roman Pope to ordain Oxendio Virziresco as their bishop and shepherd, who has planted a good seed into them and cared about them. Similarly, the Armenians in Transylvania ask humbly the Roman Pope to let Oxendio Virziresco be their teacher (vardapet) in their both corporeal and spiritual consolation because they have hitherto been without a shepherd.*

Amenavehid i steŭcuacu P'rkič'n meroy eres'oxanid aylew Gařanc', ew oč'xarac'n K'ristosi Hōtapetid čšmarti glxoyd ēnthanur Ekelec'oy'n ew mioyd ew Tēr yAstucoysn ař mez iskakan ew anpatreli Hogoy'n Srboy t'argmanč'id tearnd meroy amenasrboy ew erjankapēs tirapetoŭid Hōrd ew Papid Innōc'ēnc'iosi Metasanerordid!<sup>86</sup>

Mek' amenanuast ew xonarhac'eal ordik'd, erbemn Poŭtanu<sup>87</sup>, bayc' ayžm vasn meŭac' meroc' pantxtac'ealk' yerkrin Mačarac'<sup>88</sup> Hazaynik' kah'anayk', eresproxank', ekelec'apank', sarōsdayk' ew vadahk' anuamb bovandak Poŭtanu žoŭovrdeann vaŭap'apak' jermerandut'ean hamburemk' zsrbazan ots eranelut'eand, ew mišt hayc'emk' yApēniazēn<sup>89</sup> Astucoy zhastut'ean Amenabarjr<sup>90</sup> Gahoyd, ew tirapetut'eand i šahaw ēut'ean k'ristonean gndin<sup>91</sup>. Aylew hamarjakimk' ibrew Hōrd Amenagut'i yaytnel t'ē soypnēs šnorhōk'n Astucoy ew ardeambk' srbut'eand ew amenōrea<sup>92</sup> k'aroz'uteamb

<sup>86</sup> Pope Innocent XI (1676-1689).

<sup>87</sup> Moldavia.

<sup>88</sup> Hungary. Here Transylvania.

<sup>89</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *i Apēniazēn*.

<sup>90</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *Amena barjr*.

<sup>91</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *gnti*.

<sup>92</sup> Correction in the text. In the text: *amēnōrea*.

mer sirel azgakic' ew gawaṛakic' vardapetin Ōgsēntiosi Vrcrēsḡulin<sup>93</sup>, zor ayḡmik usuc'eal ēk'<sup>94</sup> ew aṛ mez aṛak'eal, ekak' i miabanut'iwn ew i hnazandut'iwn Srboy At'oṛoyd<sup>95</sup>, yamenayn ew aṛ amenayn, ēst orum ew Surb Hayrn Mecn, Grigorios Lusaworč'in<sup>96</sup> arar ēnd Srboyn Selbesdrosi<sup>97</sup>. Ew yoysut'iwn emk' aṛ Astuac, zi mi ews k'aktesc'i ays, orovhetew<sup>98</sup> oč' šaržec'ak' aṛ na<sup>99</sup> patčaraw mardkac'in aknarkut'ean, ayl miayn vasn p'rkut'ean hoguoc' meroc'n, ew apagayic' mer azneac'n, orpēs k'anic's grec'ak', ew ayḡm manawand manrapēs aṛ Gerapatiw Nēuirakd<sup>100</sup> Aṛakelakan<sup>101</sup> i Lēhs<sup>102</sup>. Ew yoyḡ xndremk' zi zmez yaysmhetē, oč' ibrew zōtars, ayl ibrew zxonarh ordis k'oys hayrakan sirovd ēndunic'is. Ew mez zŌgsēntiosi vardapet mer mez episkopos ew hoviw hramayic'es jeṛnadrel, zi soynpēs ink'n tnkeac' zsermn bari i mēj mer, noynpēs ink'n jresc'ē ew bresc'ē aṛi aṛnoł začumn i verust<sup>103</sup>. Aylew xnamacu lic'is i vardapet mer, orpēs očxarac' minč'ew c'ayḡm aṛanc' hovui. Ew ōgnakan ews i neḡut'ean merum t'ē i hogewors, t'ē i marmnawors. Ew ayspēs kmelov zhamboys otoc'd srboc'd kamk' ew mnamk' aṛ hramayealsd.

Es Tēr Etieas awak'ērēc'<sup>104</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

Es Tēr Vardans<sup>105</sup>. L.S. (red-wax seal)

Es Tēr Astuacatur<sup>106</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

Es T'oman ērēsp'oxan<sup>107</sup> Seḡōvu<sup>108</sup>. L.S. (red-wax seal)

Es Asvatur ēkēlec'bans<sup>109</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

Es Xoḡjay K'ristosatur<sup>110</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

Es Lusik ēkēlēc'ban<sup>111</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

Es Grigorios<sup>112</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

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Es Lusik vadahs<sup>113</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

Es Vardan Surukč'oc' sarosda<sup>114</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

<sup>93</sup> See above, note 33.

<sup>94</sup> Correction in the text. In the text: *usuc'ealēk'*

<sup>95</sup> Holy See.

<sup>96</sup> See above, note 36.

<sup>97</sup> Pope Saint Sylvester I (314-335).

<sup>98</sup> Correction in the text. In the text: *orov hetew*.

<sup>99</sup> Correction in the text. In the text: *aṛna*.

<sup>100</sup> See above, note 34.

<sup>101</sup> Addendum in the text.

<sup>102</sup> Poland.

<sup>103</sup> Biblical reference in the text. Matthew, 13:8; Marc, 4:8; Lucas, 8:8.

<sup>104</sup> See above, note 68.

<sup>105</sup> See above, note 70.

<sup>106</sup> Astuacatur Nigoșean († 1693). Armenian monk and *vardapet* was born in Moldva. He was ordained as a priest by Bishop Minas T'oxat'ec'i himself in 1683.

<sup>107</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>108</sup> Suceava (Arm. *Seč'ov*).

<sup>109</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>110</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>111</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>112</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>113</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

Es Ėsank'on T'ukč'oc'n sarosda<sup>115</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

Es Lusik vadah<sup>116</sup>. L. S. (red-wax seal)

Note: Io Fratello Padre Giovanni Battista Volponi<sup>117</sup> minor conventuale e prefetto delle missioni in<sup>118</sup> Moldavia e Vallachia me controvento presente quanto di sopra.

2/a.

**Letter of the Armenians in Transylvania to Pope Innocent XI upon Oxendio Virziresco's Nomination as a Uniate Bishop (Latin translation done by Basilio Barsegh)**

Document: APF, CP, Vol. 29, fol. 648r-v.

Date and place: Lemberg (Ukr. *Lviv*, Russ. *L'vov*, Pol. *Łwów*, Arm. *Lewonopol*), February, 1689.

Publication: Unpublished.

*Regestum: As the Roman Pope's humble sons, the Armenians in Transylvania, who lived once in Moldavia, and who are staying at this moment in Transylvania due to their sins, express their homage to the Roman Pope. Furthermore, the Armenians in Transylvania inform the Roman Pope that they have united with the Roman Catholic Church and taken an obedience to the Roman Pope due to their compatriot's pastoral activity, namely Oxendio Virziresco, who was educated, taught and sent out on a mission to Transylvania by the Holy See. In this letter, the Armenians in Transylvania are emphasising that this church-union is very similar to that church-unity, which existed between Pope Saint Sylvester I and Saint Gregory the Illuminator, Apostle of the Armenians, a long time ago. For this reason, the Armenians in Transylvania firmly believing in God hope that this church-union will not fail. Further on, the Armenians in Transylvania justify that they have united with the Roman Catholic Church by reason of their fellows' spiritual salvation, and not by reason of their human nature. The Armenians in Transylvania have already written their intention to unite with the Roman Catholic Church on several occasions but now they have circumstantially written this intention to the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland (Warsaw), too. Therefore, the Armenians in Transylvania ask kindly the Roman Pope to receive them as his sons with his paternal love into the Roman Catholic Church in the near future and not as foreigners. Moreover, they ask humbly the Roman Pope to ordain Oxendio Virziresco as their bishop and shepherd, who has planted a good seed into them and cared about them. Similarly, the Armenians in Transylvania ask imploringly the Roman Pope to let Oxendio Virziresco be their protector in their both corporeal and spiritual consolation because they have hitherto been without a shepherd.*

Summi<sup>119</sup> Pontifici, Creatoris Nostri Redemptoris Vicario, et agnorum<sup>120</sup> et omnium Christi Archipastori vero, Capiti Universarum Ecclesiarum et uni et solo in divinis ad nos

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<sup>114</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>115</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>116</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>117</sup> See above, note 81.

<sup>118</sup> Addendum in the text.



proprio et infallibili<sup>121</sup> spiritus sancti interpreti, Domino Nostro Sanctissimo, et felicissimo<sup>122</sup> Dominatori, Patri et Papae Innocentio Undecimo!<sup>123</sup>

Nos intimissimi et humillimi filii vestri, qui aliquando eramus in Moldavia, nunc autem ob peccata nostra degentes in terra Transilvanorum sumus Armeni sacerdotes, consules, ecclesiarum praefecti<sup>124</sup>, starosti<sup>125</sup> et vadahiti<sup>126</sup>, et nominatim omnes cleri, et populus et plebs ardentissimo desiderio et devotione osculamur sacros pedes Vestrae Beatudinis et continuo oramus et petimus a Deo omnipotente firmam stabilitatem Altissimi Vestri Throni, et supremi dominis in utilitatem Christiani populi.

Et audemus notificare vobis, tamquam patri piissimo quomodo per Dei gratiam et per merita Sanctitatis<sup>127</sup> Vestrae et continua<sup>128</sup> praedicatione nostri clarissimi consocii et connationalis Domini Vartabeti Oxendii Virzesguli, quem vos nuper aluistis, et docuistis in vestro collegio<sup>129</sup> et ad nos misistis, venimus ad unionem, et ad obedientiam Sanctae Sedis Vestrae, per omnia et ad omnia, eodem modo et tenore, quo et Sanctus Pater Noster Magnus Gregorius Illuminator<sup>130</sup> fecit cum Sancto Silvestro<sup>131</sup>. Et speramus in Deum, quod ultra non dissolvetur haec nostra unio quomodo quidem non fuimus moti ad hoc per causam humani nutus, sed tantum per salutem animarum nostrarum et aliorum in futuro nationalium, sicuti toties scripsimus, et nunc etiam praesertim particulariter ad Illustrissimum Vestrum Nuntium in Polonia<sup>132</sup>. Et nunc suppliciter petimus, ut nos deinceps non tamquam alienos, sed tamquam intimos filios vestro paterno amore recipias. Et nobis supradictum Oxendium Virzesgum<sup>133</sup> Episcopum et Pastorem iubeas consecrari, ut sicut ille ipse plantavit bonum semen inter nos, sic ipse idem irriget, et fodiat ad accipiendum incrementum desuper<sup>134</sup>. Item deprecamur, ut sit nobis protector, tamquam proprius<sup>135</sup> omnibus<sup>136</sup>, quia usque<sup>137</sup> iusto<sup>138</sup> fuimus sine pastore, et consolatione in

<sup>119</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *Summus*.

<sup>120</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *ognorum*.

<sup>121</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *in falabili*.

<sup>122</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *feliciter*.

<sup>123</sup> Pope Innocent XI (1676–1689).

<sup>124</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *praesenti*.

<sup>125</sup> Polish *starosta*. In Armenian: *sarōsdayk*. In this case, it means ‘mayor’ or ‘secular leader of the Armenian community’.

<sup>126</sup> Armenian: *vadahk*. In this case, it means ‘secular member of the Armenian communities’ leadership’.

<sup>127</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *Sanitatis*.

<sup>128</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *contina*.

<sup>129</sup> See above, note 56.

<sup>130</sup> See above, note 36.

<sup>131</sup> See above, note 97.

<sup>132</sup> See above, note 34.

<sup>133</sup> See above, note 33.

<sup>134</sup> See above, note 103.

<sup>135</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *propriis*.

<sup>136</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *onibus*.

<sup>137</sup> Armenicism. The verbal translation of the Armenian expression ‘*minč’ew c’ayžm*’ (in the meaning of *hitherto*).

<sup>138</sup> Correction in the text. In the document: *iusdo*.

nostris tribulationibus, tam spiritualibus, quam corporalibus. Et ita reiterando osculum pedibus vestris perseveramus, et expectamus vestra placita.

Ego Dominus Elia Archipresbiter<sup>139</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Dominus Vartan. L.S.<sup>140</sup> (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Dominus Asuazadur<sup>141</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Thomas Consul<sup>142</sup> Seciovi<sup>143</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Asvadur praefectus<sup>144</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Cogia Christodur<sup>145</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Lusigh praefectus<sup>146</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Gregorius<sup>147</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Lusighis Vadahtus<sup>148</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Vartan Surughiazi. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

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Ego Esanco Tucciozi Starosta<sup>149</sup>. Ego praefectus aut consul civitatis Bociani<sup>150</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Barongian Consul civitatis Bociani<sup>151</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Ego Lusigh Vadahtus<sup>152</sup>. L.S. (place of red-wax seal)

Deinde adest, quod scribitur italice lege, quid dicit.

Ad Papam Innocentium Undecimum. Armeni ex Transilvania.

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<sup>139</sup> See above, note 68.

<sup>140</sup> See above, note 70.

<sup>141</sup> See above, note 106.

<sup>142</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>143</sup> Suceava (Arm. *Seč'ov*).

<sup>144</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>145</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>146</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>147</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>148</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>149</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>150</sup> Botoșani (Arm. *Boč'an*, Hung. *Botusán*).

<sup>151</sup> We have not found any data on this person.

<sup>152</sup> We have not found any data on this person.