

UKRAINE'S RE-INTEGRATION
INTO EUROPE: A HISTORICAL,
(~~HISTORICAL~~) HISTORIOGRAPHICAL
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**GREEK-SPEAKING HIERARCHS ON A
RUTHENIAN SEE: THE DIOCESE OF MUNKÁCS
(MUKAČEVE) IN THE SUBCARPATHIAN REGION
AT THE END OF THE 17TH CENTURY**

The diocese of Munkács (Mukačeve, Ukraine) – situated in the north-eastern part of the former Hungary – was a multiethnic and multicultural unit, populated by Ruthenian peasants, Vlach shepherds, Serbian and Hungarian soldiers, and Greek merchants, who only had one thing in common: their membership of the Orthodox Church and its liturgy celebrated in Church Slavonic or, in some communities, in Greek. The vast region incorporated thirteen counties – roughly fifteen percent of the territory of the medieval Hungarian Kingdom – and the traditional residence of the bishops was in the St. Nicholas Monastery on Černeča Hora (Black Mount), near Munkács (Baán 2003, pp. 515-516). At that time, in 1646, when the so-called Union of Ungvár (Užhorod, Ukraine) was signed and a negligible 10 percent of the total clergy accepted the basic Roman articles of faith (Baán 2003, pp. 519-520), the diocese was divided between three political powers: the Hungarian Kingdom, ruled by the Catholic Emperor in Vienna as the so-called Apostolic King, the Principality of Transylvania, governed by the traditionally Protestant princes, mostly from the Hungarian noble family of the Rákóczi and formally ruled by the Turkish sultans, and the Ottoman Empire. In that period, several Hungarian uprisings took place against the Catholic Habsburgs, during which the territory of the Munkács Eparchy became one of the main theatres of military operations. This situation was complicated by the fact that the bishop's residence came under the political jurisdiction of the Catholic king, while the Calvinist prince, in his capacity as local landlord of Munkács, supervised the election of the Byzantine rite bishop, and replaced him with a more obedient one as he pleased. So in 1678, for instance, there were three Uniate bishops appointed for the episcopal see: the first, the former Metropolitan of Paronaxia in the Aegean Sea, Theophanes Maurogordatos, nominated Administrator by the Hungarian Primate György (George) Szelepcsényi, the second the Ukrainian

bishop of Peremyšl, Ivan Malaxovskij, nominated by the Princess of Transylvania Zsófia (Sophia) Báthory, and the third, Josif Vološinovskij, expelled by the same princess, who fled to Poland. But in fact the administration of the eparchy was in the hands of the Orthodox hegumen of St. Nicholas Monastery in Munkács (Hodinka 1909, pp. 378-399).

In that troubled age, there emerged the names of the Greek-speaking bishops who occupied this very needy see during three decades, from 1678 with interruptions until 1706. Why are they worth mentioning? Two of them, Theophanes Maurogordatos and Raphael Gabrielopoli, lived in the Palace of the Propaganda near Piazza di Spagna, in Rome, for some years, and the third, Giuseppe de Camellis, spent his student years not far away, in the Collegio Greco. Three Greeks who may have met in the Urbs Aeterna, but probably never did, and whose lives led them to a distant and insignificant little town in Upper Hungary.

Why were they sent from Rome? The historical data may conceal a secret deal and some bold hypotheses may be made. Traditional Church historiography, mostly promoted by the proponents of the Roman Union, were enthusiastic about anyone who was converted from the Orthodox to the Catholic faith. They did not question the sincerity of the converts, and praised them automatically as heroes of the unity of the Churches, illuminated by the light of the Catholic faith which shone from the Rock of St. Peter. They believed uncritically in the self-praises written by those united to Rome, neglected any documents including even a hint of negative information, and rejected difamatory ones as shocking. The other reason for partial representation is that it is very difficult to follow the lives of our "heroes", because the documents concerning them are scattered over very different sources, such as the Propaganda Archives for instance, put under headings such as "Grecia, Greci, Romania (i.e. the Ottoman Empire), Arcipelago, Rutheni, Ungheria, Transylvania and Germania (because of the Apostolic Nunciature of Vienna)". The writings about Theophanes Maurogordatos appear in seven languages (Greek, Latin, Italian, German, Hungarian, French and English). From a methodological point of view the major problem is that these peoples were treated as participants of Greek, Ruthenian (Ukrainian) or Hungarian Church history, one part of their life separate from the other parts was classified into two different branches of national Church histories, and evaluated according to their respective standpoints.

So, on the evidence of the documents, we must confess that, instead of "historical hagiography", two of the above-mentioned bishops of Munkács were actually adventurers with weak morals for whom the direct deal was to gain more money. On the other hand, Giuseppe de Camellis was a sincere promoter of the Union, but like any child of his age, he did not hesitate to obtain armed assistance and punish all those responsible for an Orthodox riot of his clergy. Let's look very briefly at the curricula of our heroes.

Theophanes Maurogordatos (1627-1688).

Theophanes Maurogordatos was born in 1627 in Smyrna, and became Metropolitan of Paros and Naxos in 1667 (Baran 1961, pp. 115-124). Having had more than good relations with the Latin Archbishop of the island, he prepared a plot with his eight fellow-bishops against the Patriarch of Constantinople. On the advice of his Catholic friends, he left for Rome to acquire the money needed to realise their plan, and was converted there to the Catholic Church. The Cardinals of the Propaganda Fide could not support this project with the large sum of money needed to bribe the Grand Vizir to obtain his agreement, so his plans to be elected Patriarch failed. After returning from Constantinople to Rome in 1672 he realised that he could not live at the expense of the Holy See, so he set out on a trip around Europe in order to find a church benefice for himself. His finest feature was a long beard that convinced the Emperor Leopold I of Austria (1658-1705) that he led a devout life. The emperor subsequently appointed him Administrator of Munkács. He left Vienna alone, since his chaplain had fled, denouncing him to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide for having abused him sexually. (This is a major document¹ deliberately neglected by traditional pro-Unionist historiographers) (Laurent 1937, p. 194). In Munkács, Theophanes Maurogordatos discovered the desperate state of the diocese. He issued the first episcopal circular letter in Hungarian in 1678 for arranging the most urgent case of those priests who, contrary to church discipline, re-married after the death of their first wives (Hodinka 1911, no. 202, pp. 250-251). As we know, his efforts failed, but what was more important for him was that he failed to find a benefice. After five months of unsuccessful administration, he then left hurriedly for Vienna,

¹ *Sacra Congregatio De Propaganda Fide*, SC Greci dal 1622 al 1700, vol. 1, fol. 160r-163v.

and begged the Court for financial support. Compelled to remain in the imperial city because of both an epidemic and a siege by the Turks, he returned to Rome like a beggar in 1684. He applied to Queen Christine, then living in Rome, for help in obtaining a vacant episcopal see under Venetian rule on the Greek islands, but his efforts were unsuccessful (Arckenholtz 1760, p. 62). He died in 1688, leaving his debts to his niece.

Raphael Gabrielopoli (before 1640-after 1711).

The other adventurer, Raphael Gabrielopoli (Baran 1965, pp. 119-126), was born in the first half of the 17th century into a Ruthenian Orthodox family, but he never revealed the place of his birth. Alexander Baran would like to localise it in Bielorrussia, but not very convincingly. Gabrielopoli moved to Constantinople, and was ordained Metropolitan of Ancyra in Galatia in about 1680. Deprived of his see for unknown reasons, he turned to the West, and arrived in Rome in 1684, where he was converted to the Catholic Church and lived modestly at the expense of the Holy See. As we might say nowadays, when he noticed a job advertisement placed by the future Cardinal Kollonich, then Grand Chancellor of Hungary, seeking a Greek Orthodox bishop for the vacant see of Munkács who could speak the native language of this flock, Raphael applied for the position, which promised a better future and career. Probably he could not speak Ruthenian, but another dialect called "Illyrica" in Latin, but his condition was better than that of his predecessor, Theophanes Maurogordatos, who was completely ignorant of any Slavic language. He was nominated Administrator of Munkács by Kollonich at the end of 1687 and moved to his see where he acted as the head of the Greek Catholic clergy for only four months. He was then called back to Vienna by his ecclesiastical patron "propter certas magnas rationes" about which his vicar general, Porfiryj Kul'čyckyj did not dare to write. The reasons may have been his moral or financial failings. What could an unemployed bishop do in a case like this? Apply for another job of course. Raphael travelled to Polonia in order to obtain a better diocese in the Metropolitan province of Kiev from the king. Having failed, he turned to Moscow, but in Mohilev was arrested because for ordained priests for the Orthodox? First he was treated like a secret agent of the tsar, then released from prison and compelled to return to Rome in 1690. What he did there we do not know, but he was occasionally reported to the Sacred Congregation De Propaganda Fide for his scandalous behaviour. When the see of

Munkács became vacant in 1707, he tried to apply for it again, but without success. The last record concerning him dates back to 1711, when the papal financial sustentation was refused because he had not returned to his original episcopal see.

Giovanni Giuseppe de Camellis (1641-1706).

And now we can turn to the third bishop of Greek origin of Munkács who was a totally different character, and acted like a working hierarch for his Church for more than sixteen years. Giovanni de Camellis (Pekar 1984, pp. 374-418), the son of a Greek merchant, was born on the island of Chios in 1641 (Tsirpanlis 1980, p. 599). As a talented youth of twelve, he entered the Pontifical Greek College of St. Athanasius in Rome where at that time some students from the Kievan Metropolitan Province, known as "Ruthenians", were also studying. Here, the young Giovanni became a life-long friend of Kyprijan Žoxovs'kyj who eventually became the Metro-politan of Kiev (1674-1693) and promoted De Camellis' career in Rome. Giovanni was ordained a priest in 1666, at the age of 25. Bishop Jakiv Suša of Xolm tried to persuade him to join the Basilian Order and to work for the unification of the Ukrainian people, but the Sacred Congregation De Propaganda Fide denied him permission. De Camellis gained a Doctor's degree in Philosophy and Theology and was assigned to do missionary work among the Greek population of the region of Chimarra, located in the south-western part of modern Albania. He left Rome in 1668 and returned after four years of "having had to endure many hardships and perils on account of the hostile Turks, extreme poverty and famine, during which many people died from hunger, and the opposition and hatred of the Orthodox" (Borgia 1935, p. 161).

In Rome he joined the Ruthenian Order of St. Basil the Great, taking the religious name of Joseph. At that time his friend Kyprijan Žoxovs'kyj had already been named Coadjutor of the ailing Metropolitan Gabriel Kolenda of Kiev; because he needed a confident General Procurator, he probably advised De Camellis to become a Basilian monk. As soon as he was confirmed and took possession of his Metropolitan see, Žoxovs'kyj. appointed his Greek friend General Procurator of the Basilian Order in Rome in 1674, approved by the General Chapter. To show his gratitude, De Camellis dedicated his first book written in 1667, entitled "La vita divina",

to his new protector, Metropolitan Žoxovs'kyj. After his appointment as the Apostolic Vicar of Munkács, Bishop De Camellis left about 500 copies of his book in the residence of the General Procurator. But his successor, not knowing what to do with these books, sold them as scrap paper. Later De Camellis demanded compensation for his books, but in vain. The General Basilian Curia, headed by the Protoarchimandrite Stepan Martyškevyč (1679-1686), did not trust the Greek General Procurator, re-elected three times for this post, and handled its affairs through the Basilian students at the Greek College in Rome. In the long-lasting disputes between the Metropolitan of Kiev and the General Superior of the Basilian Order, De Camellis always took the side of Žoxovs'kyj. The feeling of insecurity caused by the behaviour of the Protoarchimandrite prompted Giovanni to look for a more reliable position in Rome. He applied for the office of Scriptor of the Greek language in the Vatican Library and obtained it in 1688. He compiled the Index of all the Greek manuscripts preserved at that time in the famous collections.

In the fall of 1689, Leopold Kollonich, Archbishop of Kalocsa and Grand Chancellor of the Hungarian Kingdom came to Rome to receive the cardinal's hat. He took upon himself the duty of providing a worthy bishop for the see of Munkács, and was not willing to reiterate the two previous failures in connection with the Greek incumbents. The decisive defeat of the Turkish army in 1687 gave Emperor Leopold I complete control over the entire territory of Hungary, which was once again forced to accept Habsburg rule. Cardinal Kollonich also intended to reassert absburg sovereignty over Subcarpathia as part of the Hungarian Crown. His words summed up his real intentions: „I will render Hungary first Catholic, then a beggar, and finally German.” On his arrival in Rome he contacted the Congregation De Propaganda which sincerely recommended Father De Camellis to him. The Greek monk became interested in more information about the Munkács see from the Cardinal who gave somewhat unrealistic information to him in order to impress his candidate (Hodinka 1911, no. 233, pp. 285-287). Kollonich stated that the diocese of Munkács consisted of 420 parishes, with some 400,000 faithful. That the bishop's residence would be at the Basilian monastery in Munkács, where at that time the intruder Bishop Methodius resided, but that he would be removed from the monastery. Kollonich would personally present De Camellis for the appointment. Therefore, in the future, De Camellis would be responsible only to him as to his Archbishop, and

would enjoy full episcopal authority over the faithful of his eparchy. His yearly salary would consist of 600 florins, besides the income of the monastery and additional 150 florins, which Kollonich would procure for him from the Emperor. His appointment would be for life, and, in case of some danger, De Camellis would always find a refuge in the nearby castle, which at that time was the strongest fortress in all of Hungary. After his confirmation by the Holy See, he would be ordained bishop in Rome.

With his Breve of November 5, 1689, Pope Alexander VIII appointed Giovanni Giuseppe de Camellis Titular Bishop of Sebaste and, at the same time, delegated him as Apostolic Vicar “for Greeks living in the Eparchy of Munkács and all other parts conquered by Hungary”. He was ordained by Archbishop Onuphrios Constantini of Debra at St. Athanasius Church of the Greek College in Rome, then left the Eternal City together with Cardinal Kollonich in the company of his secretary and interpreter, F. Adrian Košakovskij whom he needed because he spoke little or no Ruthenian. (Cardinal Kollonich perhaps reckoned that having belonged to the Ruthenian Basilian Order, De Camellis spoke the Slavonic language.) In Vienna, Bishop De Camellis was confirmed by Emperor Leopold I to the Munkács episcopal see, but the Rákóczi family, who were owners of the Munkács domain and had just converted to Catholicism, claimed for itself *ius patronatus* in the appointment of the bishop.

As he arrived in Munkács, the Administrator of the Rákóczi possessions, Baron Ferenc Klobusiczky, took him to the landlord's residence within the walls of the castle and there assigned him three rooms: one for himself, one for his secretary, and one for his valet, who had come with the bishop from Rome. De Camellis was to reside there, until his residence at the monastery became vacant. The next day, on 20th April 1690, he was installed at St. Nicholas Church of the Monastery near the city. First of all, he demanded public profession of the Catholic faith from all the monks, including Bishop Methodius Rakoveczky, whom he appointed Superior of the monastery as long as he was willing to cooperate with him. In order to request a similar profession of faith, he held twelve local synods in various districts of the eparchy and explained to the clergy what was expected of them (Hodinka 1911, no. 242, pp. 300-302). He promptly suspended from office all those priests who, after the death of their first wives, had re-married, contrary to church discipline. He could not help but notice that the majority of the clergy was concerned by his punishment, and

therefore he tried to achieve dispensations for them from the Sant'Ufficio in Rome, but in vain. Finally, he admitted that the whole future of the Union depended on the solution of this urgent problem, and settled it on his account by imposing a high fine. In order to assert his own jurisdiction, De Camellis also demanded that the priests remove from the altars in their churches all the old antimensia and replace them with those already consecrated and signed by him as the Bishop of Munkács. (The unique specimen of such an antimensation is conserved in the Collegio Greco in Rome along with a portrait of the newly ordained bishop). Bishop Methodius, in conspiracy with his partisan monks, conducted an anti-union campaign, trying to persuade the neighbouring clergy not to accept the jurisdiction of a foreign bishop, imposed on them by Rome. (In the act of union of Ungvár the third condition was the free election of their bishop by the clergy) (Hodinka 1911, no. 122, p.164). For this reason, De Camellis removed Methodius from his office as superior of St. Nicholas Monastery. The latter left Munkács with his party, and finally found his refuge in Halič, in the monastery of Perehinsko near Stryj. The spiritual leader of the Orthodox opposition was Michael Andrella, former Uniate priest and friend of the first Greek Catholic bishop, Parthen Petrovič. He wrote several treatises in Latin and his vernacular Slavonic against the Union, and branded De Camellis the Antichrist (Petrov 1932). The fight between the two parties lasted with alternating success until the death of Bishop Giovanni in 1706.

The Greek bishop had financial problems as well. When the two possessions of the Basilian Monastery, two small villages formerly controlled by the Rákóczi, were legally returned and placed under the administration of De Camellis, Cardinal Kollonich immediately reduced his annual support from 600 to 250 florins, while the Roman Catholic bishops were receiving 1200 florins per year. Having tried to establish his own financial security, the bishop did not forget the pitiful social and economic conditions of his clergy. During his pastoral visits he discovered their low intellectual and social standards. Despite the social equality hoped for by the acceptance of the church union, the priests were still treated by the landlords as their serfs, without any rights and privileges, and bound by servile work and heavy taxation to their patrons. Having served for many years in Rome as General Procurator, De Camellis had ample opportunity to defend the rights and privileges of the Greek Catholic clergy similarly abused by the Polish nobility and landlords. So with the support of Cardinal Kollonich he

succeeded, when Emperor Leopold issued a Decree of Emancipation in 1692 according to which all his clergy was released from the judicial authority of the local landlords, and enjoyed all the rights and privileges of the Latin Rite clergy. The landlords were reminded to properly endow each and every parish in the territory with their possessions, with a certain portion of land as benefice (Hodinka 1911, no. 268, pp. 347-350).

In 1698 he provided the clergy with a solid *Catechism*, compiled by himself in Latin, translated into vernacular Ruthenian by a certain priest from Halič, Ivan Kornycykj, and secured its publication in Nagyszombat (actually Trnava, Western Slovakia), where the Printing Shop at the University was equipped by Kollonich with Cyrillic characters in order to publish religious books for Ruthenians and Romanians, who still used the Cyrillic alphabet. One year later, in order to promote education among the faithful, he also published the *Bukvar jazyka Slovenskago*, which was probably an adaptation of a Kievan or Serbian edition by the same Father Kornycykj (Magocsi-Strumins'ky 1977, p. 301). The only contribution the bishop may have made were some Greek prayers, transcribed in Cyrillic letters and printed for the "children's exercise" at the end of the *Primer*.

In 1703, when Prince Ferenc (Francis) Rákóczi II, supported by the king of France and the tsar of Russia, initiated a new Hungarian uprising against the Habsburg dominion, the situation of Bishop De Camellis seemed to be unbearable. While the great majority of his flock was fighting for independence with Rákóczi, who therefore called the Ruthenians "gens fidelissima", the Greek bishop as a loyal subject of the Emperor left his residence and sought refuge under the protection of the Imperial army. When the Rákóczi troops occupied the entire territory of the Munkács Diocese, their commander ordered De Camellis to leave the Hungarian territory without delay, since he failed to make an oath of loyalty to the Prince. But the Bishop became sick, and in August of 1706 died at the hospice of the Minorite Friars of Eperjes (Prešov in Slovakia).

Conclusion.

It is perhaps a pity that we have to abandon our fine and seemingly brilliant hypotheses about the deliberate policy of the Sacred Congregation De Propaganda Fide of appointing Greek prelates for the see of Munkács. We have to realise that their succession was not only accidental or hazardous,

but the result of the very complicated situation of internal politics in Hungary, where a foreigner was better evaluated and welcomed for the episcopal see by the quarreling potentates than the native candidates. Of the three Greeks, De Camellis was unique in that he may have also been the best choice because of his ecclesiastical and educational background. He was accepted as a real partner by all sides: by Rome, the Emperor, the Primate, the local Latin bishop of Eger and the Prince of Transylvania. Nevertheless, there was one factor neglected by the politicians, whether ecclesiastical or not: his relation to his flock, who spoke mostly Ruthenian, which he himself was unable to do. His weak point was exploited by his Orthodox enemies and may have strengthened the resistance to the Union. His successor, Gennadius Bizánczi, though less talented, but born and raised in the diocese, was able to achieve greater success than the Greek scholar from Rome.

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