

TRANSYLVANIAN CATHOLICS AND THE PAPACY IN THE ERA OF THE *SYLLABUS ERRORUM*

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During the Revolution of 1848, Lajos Kossuth wrote optimistically that "Hungarians and Wallachians [i.e. Romanians] alike shall find their bright future only in fraternal union one with the other."¹ A half century later, another Protestant statesman of Hungary, István Tisza, asserted that Hungarians and Romanians, surrounded by Slavs, ought to join hands for their mutual survival.² Catholic compatriots of both nationalities, of course, shared a vision of Europe that had Rome at its center. For Roman and Greek Catholic nationalists of Transylvania, Hungarians and Romanians, this "fraternal union" offered both the benefits and the dangers of a foreign alliance: powerful support, but also the need to defend oneself against Protestant or Eastern Orthodox accusations of alienation from the true national interest. This theme was particularly strong during the heyday of ultramontanism, symbolized for citizens of Hungary by the Austrian Concordat of 1855, the list of doctrinal errors known as the *Syllabus Errorum* promulgated by Pius IX in 1864, and the definition of papal infallibility by the Vatican Council in 1871.

For Transylvanian Catholics, the crucial instruments of this relationship with Rome were their bishops, the Hungarian Lajos Haynald (1816–91) and the Romanian Alexandru Sterca-Șuluțiu (1794–1867). These striking personalities were similar in their social origin in the minor nobility and in their profession of faith, but different in most other respects. Haynald, a native of Nógrád County in northern Hungary, was a well-travelled and erudite theologian and botanist before becoming secretary of the Hungarian Primate at 30; Șuluțiu, on the other hand, was a long-time village priest and rural vicar who first visited Vienna from his native Transylvania in 1856. The two took possession of their episcopal sees only two years apart, Șuluțiu in 1850 and Haynald in 1852.³

Șuluțiu's first pastoral letter as spiritual leader of half of Transylvania's 1.2 million Romanians was addressed "to his clergy and the Roman [or Romanian] people" ("ad clerum suum, Populumque romanum"), asserting: "We are united not only by the communion of faith with the head of the Holy Roman

Apostolic Church, but also through ties of blood and nationality... The August Austrian House and the House of God, that is, the Roman Mother Church, are our only refuge and salvation!"⁴ Interpreting in a Roman sense the Romanian 1848ers' demand for the ecclesiastic autonomy and unity of the Romanians, he secured the approval of the Hungarian episcopate, the state, and finally the Holy See for the elevation of his see to a Metropolitanate with two new suffragan bishoprics in 1855, removing it from the authority of the Hungarian Primate. All parties were united, for the moment, in the desire to weaken the Romanians' gravitation toward the Orthodox Church and its coreligionists across the Carpathians. The Primate, János Scitovszky, later came to see this act, like the Concordat, as an Austrian attempt to weaken his own authority, but he could not openly oppose a measure he had endorsed repeatedly in 1850-2.⁵

Șuluțiu's Romanizing fervor did not extend to matters of church discipline, where he represented the orientalist wing of his church, rejecting all intrusions of western practices in matrimonial jurisdiction and synodal practices after 1855.⁶ Rome's misgivings about the deficient theological training of the new Romanian Metropolitan deepened as the canonical dispute sharpened. After travelling to Blaj (Balázsfalva) for the investment of Șuluțiu, the Apostolic Nuncio Michele Viale-Prelá reported that Bishop Haynald was his constant companion enroute. Haynald probably colored the Nuncio's description of the impoverished peasantry, in whom he found "not the smallest trace of civilization."⁷ When Viale's successor, Antonio De Luca, visited Blaj in 1858 for extended consultations on the canonical controversy (once again spending considerable time with Haynald), he reported that Șuluțiu repeatedly confused matters of doctrine with those of discipline, and was completely under the influence of his militant canon, Timotei Cipariu.⁸

Șuluțiu "the ultramontane" (as he was labelled indignantly by the Orthodox Bishop Andreiu Șaguna⁹) was certainly aware of the greater rapport that the more polished and sophisticated Bishop Haynald enjoyed with the Pope's envoys. The Uniate's unease in this regard is reflected in the private appeal he sent Haynald in March 1859, on the eve of the first of Haynald's two *ad limina* visits to the Holy See as bishop. Șuluțiu urged him to defend their "mutual Catholic interests" and take account of the oriental traditions that he, in his position, had a duty to defend.¹⁰ Șuluțiu, for his part, never made an *ad limina* visit, a fact lamented by the Papal curia.¹¹

Haynald's portrayal of their "mutual Catholic interests" was indeed at stake. His unusually detailed report on the state of his diocese, presented on May 2, 1859, culminated in the plea that his see be raised to the rank of an archdiocese. He supported this request in terms of the diocese's unique

historical role and its achievements in fighting Protestant heresy, the secessionist tendencies of the Romanians (despite the "faith, prudence, and moderation" of the members of the "Wallachian hierarchy"), and the interest of strengthening the Latin church and Hungarian population as the Habsburg monarchy's most loyal subjects. Furthermore, he added, "Transylvania is in reality separate from Hungary and its church, constituting a distinct body with regard to politics, nationalities, and religions."¹²

No action was taken on the request, despite a favorable response by both the Holy See and the Austrian government, in part because Haynald's archbishop opposed it, but even more because Hungary's political crisis and the role Haynald played in it soon overshadowed his proposal. At issue was the *de jure* (rather than *de facto*!) status of Transylvania. Baron József Eötvös wrote Haynald in November 1860 to ask that he give public support, as a councillor *ex officio* of the provincial government, to the Hungarian opposition's view that the union of Hungary and Transylvania, enacted in 1848, was still valid. Haynald's response was cautious: he agreed in principle, but added that in Transylvania "– the land of Protestant intolerance – the most justified Catholic activity will always be unpopular. The Reformed [i.e. Calvinists] are powerful, the Catholics willingly follow their lead."¹³

Only weeks later Haynald abandoned this caution, taking the public lead of the opposition in Transylvania in speeches at a conference of the provincial government, in the House of Magnates in Pest, and finally in a memorandum he delivered to the leading Habsburg official of Transylvania, Count Ferenc Nádasdy. Nádasdy appealed to Haynald's sentiments as a fellow Catholic and loyal subject, but the bishop responded with a clever allusion to the common French and Italian adversaries of Austria and the Pope: "The egotistical gentlemen of the *Umsturzpartei* on the Seine and the Dora fight against the gilded parchments and extant treaties; Austria was renowned for always seeking to protect them, and this [is] the duty of the government as well."¹⁴

Nuncio De Luca energetically supported the Austrian government's position in his increasingly indignant reports on Haynald's opposition to Austrian policy. Far from accepting the arguments in Haynald's memorandum to Nádasdy, he recommended to Rome that it seek the dismissal of Haynald from his civil functions. Although Papal Secretary of State Giacomo Antonelli conceded that Haynald's political activity might interfere with his religious responsibilities, he rejected De Luca's proposal.¹⁵

Neatly disregarding the Papal States' dispute with Piedmont concerning the Italian *risorgimento*, Cardinal Antonelli remarked loftily that "the Holy See, for whom all political troubles are naturally foreign, cannot intervene."¹⁶ Under the circumstances, either the ecclesiastic elevation or the public

reprimand of Haynald would have drawn the Holy See into a conflict whose outcome was uncertain. Haynald's representations were also having their effect in Rome.

Haynald set out to counter the unfavorable light in which the Nuncio and the government were placing him by filing a series of unfavorable reports on the "rude and uncultured" Greek Catholics' susceptibility to Orthodoxy. Without mentioning Şuluţiu by name, Haynald stated that the Romanian clergy were agitating against his own, raising illegitimate canonical issues, and exploiting appointments to the Cathedral Chapter for political ends. This line of attack was a fruitful one. Already in January, 1861, Antonelli instructed De Luca to transmit the Pope's dissatisfaction with Şuluţiu's repeated and unjustified complaints of "Latinization."¹⁷

Şuluţiu had meanwhile emerged as a key Romanian supporter of the new Austrian regime in Transylvania. He applauded the renewed Austrian guarantees of Transylvanian autonomy, and sought to mobilize his clergy against the Hungarian nobility. Within the church, he repeatedly presented the views of his more radical clergy concerning matrimony, the appointment of married clergy to canonries, and especially the holding of synods with a broad representative character. In the summer of 1861, Şuluţiu attended an Orthodox liturgy celebrated by Bishop Şaguna at the resort town of Vîlcele (Előpaták) in southern Transylvania. One of Haynald's clergy reported the incident to his bishop, and the report soon found its way into the press and as far as Rome. Forced to defend himself, Şuluţiu wrote in a Hungarian newspaper that the Orthodox clergy and sacraments were "good and valid," and common prayer could not be a sin.¹⁸ He complained to the Transylvanian Governor in 1862 that Haynald treated him as if he were his suffragan bishop, and asserted to another Romanian that Haynald was "the greatest enemy of my person and of our nation."¹⁹ The upshot of the affair was the decision of a Roman consistory to reprimand Şuluţiu for *communicatio in divinis cum haereticis et schismaticis* and various doctrinal errors.²⁰

Şuluţiu's politically motivated ecumenism was premature by a century. Several papal encyclicals had confirmed the Holy See's determination to preserve the peculiarities of the eastern rite, while denouncing irregularities practiced by the Orthodox and calling upon them to unite with Rome,²¹ but the centralizing tendencies of the current pontiff worked against any broad definition of the inviolable eastern church discipline. Rome not only rejected the canonical programme of Şuluţiu, but appointed as his suffragan in Oradea (Nagyvárad), and consecrated in Rome itself in 1863, a thoroughly ultramontane bishop, Iosif Papp-Szilágyi, who opposed Şuluţiu publicly.²²

The Pope's centralizing policy was most evident in his efforts to assemble his bishops in Rome and establish their personal loyalty to himself. From 1854

to 1867, the bishops in attendance at such periodic meetings rose steadily from 206 to 500.²³ The same purpose was served by the Pope's frequent condemnations of doctrinal error and political liberalism, both of which weakened the ties of the people to the source of correct teaching on the faith in Rome. The unpublicized agenda of the bishops' meeting in Rome in May, 1862 – formally meant to canonize a number of Japanese martyrs – was to debate a compilation of contemporary errors, the future *Syllabus of Errors*.

While the Romanian bishops declined their invitations to Rome, Haynald was one of those who assembled there. He utilized the occasion to continue the presentation of his report of 1859, which had been interrupted by the outbreak of war. He also played a prominent role in the meeting's official activities. When the bishops' debate on the draft *Syllabus* ended in deadlock, the two sides chose Haynald, who impressed them with his oratorical skill and the favor he had won in the Curia since 1859, as the head of the editorial commission that composed their address to the Pope. Haynald influenced the adoption of a more moderate version of the response to the Pope's allocution of June 9, *Maxima quidem*, that condemned liberalism and the subjection of bishops to the civil power in Italy.²⁴

Future historians may be able to shed more light on the role Haynald played in the formulation of this address and in the debate on the *Syllabus*. Fully half of the *Syllabus*, it should be noted, concerns philosophical and theological questions only indirectly related to politics. Overall, it is likely that Italian and West European events exercised the greatest impact on the evolution of the document released in December, 1864 from the variants of 1852 and 1862, but its repeated references to the interference of secular politics with the religious sphere also apply to the disputes concerning Haynald and Șulutiu that reached their height at the same time. The list of 61 errors submitted to the bishops in 1862, and the eighty contained in the *Syllabus* of 1864, both contained variants of the notion that bishops should be subject to the civil authorities. The chief difference between the earlier and the later list is the abandonment in 1864 of specific references to Italian politics, stressing instead fundamental principles. The *Syllabus* cites earlier papal statements where Pius IX had condemned the respective theses; and most of these documents were in fact commentaries on Italian events. But the relevance of Hungarian events is particularly evident in the condemnation of proposition 51, that "the secular government had the right of deposing bishops from their pastoral functions."²⁵ The most relevant documents, records for answering this question are preserved in the archives of the Holy Office, which are almost the last records of the Pontificate of Pius IX still closed to historical research.²⁶

After Haynald returned to Transylvania, his conflict with the Austrian authorities reached its height. 1863 was the year of political triumph for

Șuluțiu and Șaguna – leading the Romanians into the Transylvanian Diet and the central parliament – and defeat for Haynald, who after encouraging the Hungarians' decision to boycott the Diet was pressured to resign from his see, and finally did so in December 1863. The Holy See waited an extraordinarily long time to accept the resignation, until September 1864. This reluctance was both a reflection of the Pope's personal regard for Haynald, and a matter of principle felt strongly in light of the assault on ecclesiastic authority in Italy. When the matter was finally resolved, Haynald took up a post in one of the Vatican congregations.²⁷

Transylvania's experience of the First Vatican Council (1869–1870) provides a surprising epilogue upon which to conclude this story. Ultramontanism had provided opportunities for both Bishops Haynald and Șuluțiu to enhance their ecclesiastic autonomy, and indeed their political authority. Șuluțiu ultimately had a more satisfactory relationship with the state than with the Holy See, while for Haynald the situation was the reverse. In 1864 Austria nominated, and the Holy See eventually confirmed, the more politically reliable Mihály Fogarasy as Haynald's successor. Following the restoration of constitutionalism in Hungary in 1867, Haynald returned as an archbishop, while Șuluțiu's successor after his death was Ioan Vancea, a churchman he had earlier passed over with the remark that he was "too Roman."²⁸

The ultramontane past of Haynald, Papp-Szilágyi, and Vancea appeared to guarantee their support of Pius IX at the Vatican Council. In fact, Haynald had already incurred the Pope's displeasure by conveying the liberal Dualist governments' renunciation of the concordat. Haynald, Papp-Szilágyi, Vancea, and Fogarasy proceeded to provide most of the leadership in the Hungarian episcopate's opposition to Papal infallibility, arguing that it was contrary to oriental church law and that it would arouse an unfavorable response among Hungary's non-Catholics, both Protestants and Orthodox. Papp-Szilágyi had taken over his see only seven years earlier as an agent of ultramontane retrenchment, but in his condemnation of the papal draft on infallibility he went even further than Haynald and Fogarasy, asserting the document "would make a return of the oriental church to the holy union impossible for all time."²⁹ Thus it can be seen that while ultramontanism had divided Hungarian and Romanian churchmen between 1855 and 1864, it served to unite them in 1870. Vancea and Fogarasy would be among the very last bishops of Hungary to publish the Council's decree on Papal infallibility, in 1872 and 1874.³⁰

Notes

1. Quoted in Béla Borsi-Kálmán, *Hungarian Exiles and the Romanian National Movement, 1849–1867* (Highland Lakes, New Jersey: Atlantic Research and Publications, 1991), 153. One of the principal themes of this work is the evolution of Kossuth's thinking on Hungarian–Romanian confederation.
2. Gabor Vermes, *István Tisza. The Liberal Vision and Conservative Statecraft of a Magyar Nationalist* (New York: Columbia University Press; Boulder: East European Monographs, 1985), 66–67, 138–139.
3. Haynald has received more substantial biographical treatment: see József Kőhalmi-Klimstein, ed., *Vázlatok Haynald Lajos bibornok érsek életéből 1816–1889* (Pozsony: Stempfel, 1889), and Dénes Szittyay, *Haynald Lajos bíboros érsek élete* (Kalocsa: Jurcsó, 1915). On Şuluţiu, see James Niessen, "Metropolitan Alexandru Sterca-Şuluţiu in the National Movement," *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Historia* 32,2 (1987), 25–32. Many of the themes in this paper are presented in greater detail in my *Batling Bishops: Religion and Politics in Transylvania on the Eve of the Ausgleich* (Indiana University Ph. D. Dissertation, 1989).
4. The text of the Latin edition of the letter *Sermo pastoralis quem Illustrissimus ac Reverendissimus Dominus Alexander Sterka Sulutz de Kerpenyes... materno idiomate habuit anno 1851* (Blasii: Typis Seminarii Dioecesanii, 1852), is published with a partial Romanian and German translation in *Perspective* (Munich), Volume 6, Number 2(26), October–December 1984, 2–23.
5. Austrian records attach considerable importance to Scitovszky's early endorsement of the proposal; see "Protocoll der Conferenzen bezüglich der griechisch katolischen Dioecesen in Ungarn und Siebenbürgen rücksichtlich Errichtung zweier neuer Dioecesen und Reactionierung der bestandenen Metropolie von Alba Iulia (Karlsburg)," Wien, 18. November 1850, in Budapest, Hungarian National Archives, D4, bundle 63: Kath. C., folder 1854/6047. On this point, at least, the leading Hungarian and Romanian accounts are in agreement: Gabriel Adrianyi, *Die Stellung der ungarischen Kirche zum österreichischen Konkordate von 1855* (Roma: s.n., 1963), and Octavian Bârlea, *Metropolia Bisericii Române Unite proclamată în 1855 la Blaj*, published in book form as Volume 10, Numbers 37–38 (July–December 1987) of *Perspective*.
6. For an analysis of the dichotomy of easterners and westerners in the Romanian church, see my "Relatiile interconfesionale și procesul formării națiunii române în Transilvania", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj-Napoca* 31 (1992), 79–92, and "The Greek Catholic Church and the Romanian Nation in Transylvania," forthcoming in Niessen, ed., *Religious compromise, Political Salvation: the Greek Catholic Church and Nation-building in Eastern Europe* (Pittsburgh: Center for Russian and East European Studies/University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993; Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies, 1003), 47–64.
7. The reports of Cardinal Viale-Prelà, November 28, 1855 and undated, are published in Bârlea, pp. 390–400, 405–408, and the shorter of these in Lajos Lukács, *The Vatican and Hungary 1848–1878. Reports and Correspondence on Hungary of the Apostolic Nuncios in Vienna* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981), 480–484.
8. For an extensive account of the consultations, and many relevant documents, see John T. Filip, "La missione apostolica in Transilvania," *Societas Academica Dacoromania, Acta Historica* (Romae), Volume 8 (1968), 263–319.
9. Andreiu Şaguna, *Memorii din anii 1846–1871* (Sibiu: Tipografia Archidiecezană, 1923), 53, cited by Bârlea, 243.

10. Șuluțiu to Haynald, March 3, 1859, in Alba Iulia, Roman Catholic Diocesan Archives. 1859/1603 (Cat. 3). The letter is written in Șuluțiu's own hand, and lacks a chancery number.
11. Cardinal Ludovico Jacobini (Secretary of the Oriental Section of the Congregazione dei Propaganda Fide, later Nuncio in Vienna) to Mgr. Marino Marini, May 15, 1873, in the Vatican, Archivio degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Pos. 411, Fasc. 204.
12. The Latin text of the report, with revisions included in a new version submitted in 1862, is published with the editor's translation into French of the part referring to the archdiocese, in Ion Dumitriu-Snagov, *Le Saint-Siège et la Roumanie Moderne 1850-1866* (Roma: Universită Gregoriana Editrice, 1982), 402-464.
13. The correspondence is published in Szittyay, 68-70, and the letter of Haynald also in László Tóth, "Politika és egyházpolitika Haynald Lajos kiadatlan leveleiben," *Katolikus Szemle* 49, (1935), 476-477.
14. The signed and dated German text of Haynald's declaration of November 24, 1861 (the day he met with Nádasdy) is preserved in Budapest, Széchényi National Library. Ms 882, where it is mistakenly identified as a letter of Haynald to Eötvös. The letter's content, language, and form of address ("Euer Excellenz") support my judgement that this is Haynald's address to Nádasdy.
15. De Luca to Cardinal Antonelli, November 29, 1861, in Lukács, 548-551. As the Nuncio correctly noted in his letter, the Austrian Foreign Minister expressed a similar proposal in his letter to his ambassador. See Count Johann Bernhard von Rechberg to Alexander von Bach, November 29, in Adriányi, *Ungarn und as I. Vaticanum* (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1975), 391-292.
16. Antonelli's reply to De Luca of December 14 is in Lukács, 552-553.
17. Haynald to De Luca, January 4, 1861 (the longest of several published here), and Antonelli to De Luca, January 24, in Dumitriu-Snagov, 522-524, 525-530.
18. Șuluțiu, "Nyílttér," *Korunk*, September 17, 1862.
19. Șuluțiu, to Ludwig Folliot de Crenneville, March 1, 1862, in Alba Iulia, State Archives. Romanian Uniate Metropolitanate; General Papers, Protocol book. 1862/137; Șuluțiu to Dimitrie Moldovan, April 23, 1862, in Cluj, State Archives. Dimitrie Moldovan Papers, 314.
20. On this and many instances of Șuluțiu's difficulties with the Holy See: Ioan Filip, "II metropolită Alessandro Sterca Suluziu. Contribuție biografică," *Societas Academica Dacoromana, Acta Historica* 1 (1959), 83-99.
21. *Allatae sunt* (1755), *Ex Quo Primum* (1756), and *Amantissimus* (1862) are published in *The Papal Encyclicals 1740-1878*, ed. Claudia Carlen, I.H.M. (N.p.: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), 51-102, 363-367.
22. The new bishop, Iosif Papp-Szilágyi, was granted special "faculties" [not defined here], like his predecessor as bishop in Oradea, Vasile Erdeli; Cardinal Simeoni (of the Oriental Section of the Propaganda) to Alessandro Franchi, March 28, 1863. Vatican, Archivio degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari. Pos. 310, Fasc. 159.
23. Friedrich Heyer, *The Catholic Church from 1648 to 1870* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969), 185.
24. Ferenc Lönhart, "Olasz-úti jegyzetek," *Gyulafehérvári füzetek* 2 (1862), 189-255, especially 222. Lönhart was Haynald's *canonicus a latere*, who accompanied him on the journey to Rome. The text includes a Hungarian translation of *Maxima quidem* (a frequently cited source in the later Syllabus) and the bishops' address.
25. Haynald's personal papers include a printed copy of the 1862 version of the Syllabus, sent him in November, 1862: Budapest, Széchényi National Library, Fol. Hung. 1722. ff. 101-109. The authoritative Latin text of the *Syllabus Errorum* is available in Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (many editions), number

- 2901–2980. For an analysis that downplays the political significance of the *Syllabus*, see W. F. Hogan, "Syllabus of Errors," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 13:854–856.
26. Giacomo Martina S. J. is the author of the outstanding history of the *Syllabus*: "Osservazioni sulle varie redazioni del Sillabo," *Chiesa e Stato nell'Ottocento. Miscellanea in onore di P. Pirri*, ed. Aubert, Ghisalberti, Passerin d'Entrèves (Padua, 1962), II, 419–523. He reported that even he was denied access to the most important papers; personal communication, November, 1991.
27. The large dossier on Haynald's abdication in Vienna's Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (Administrative Registratur, F26 Bischöfe 1861–1869. Faszikel 26: Bischof Haynald, Abdankung als Bischof von Siebenbürgen) reveals the long and difficult negotiations between Vienna and Rome, which contributed significantly to the cooling of their relations in this period.
28. Nuncio Mariano Falcinelli-Mariacci to Antonelli, March 5, 1864, in Adriányi, *Ungarn und des I. Vaticanum*, 399.
29. *Ibid.*, 249–250; the paraphrase is by Adriányi.
30. *Ibid.*, 268, 381.