

Confesiune și promovare socială. Elita laică greco-catolică din Transilvania în disputa latinizării de la mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea

Abstract:

In March 1763 the Greek Catholic Bishop Petru Pavel Aaron addressed himself to Pope Clement XIII, accusing the proselytism of the Latin missionaries in relation to the faithful of the Church he shepherded. The documents preserved in the Archive of the "Propaganda Fide" Congregation, as well as those already edited from the Archive of the Roman Catholic Archbishopric of Transylvania allow to establish a typology of the conversions to the Latin rite accomplished amongst the Romanians in Transylvania. Those who had a minority status in mixed communities and those who married a Roman-Catholic, although frequently invoked by the missionaries, seem to reflect only exceptional cases. The most exposed to the attractions of the rite changing were in fact the lesser nobles, who filled posts in the local administration and for whom conversion meant better ways of social ascension. The present study aims at examining this reality starting from the particular case which stood at the origin of the Latinisation dispute. It is highly significant that Bishop's Aaron reaction came as a direct consequence to the rite changing of the daughter of Ioan Dragoș of Turmaș, the post office master in Alba Iulia. The complaint he sent to his Bishop is a convincing example of the level reached by the confessional identity consciousness among the Uniate laity élite in the seventh decade of the XVIIIth century. His emphasis on asserting the equality between the Roman and the Greek Catholics consonant to Christian principles evidences a decisive transformation in the perception over the collective rights, in defense of which the laity took a more active stance. Having as background the pressure originated in the Uniate Church, the Theresian reforms definitively paved the way for holding public offices to those members of the Romanian élite who came to understand social ascension as an attribute closely connected with affiliation to the Byzantine Catholicism.

Keywords: *inter-ritual relations; Latin missionaries; Romanian Uniate Church; confessional identity; Romanian nobility in Transylvania*