

**NAGY KORNÉL, LEMBERGBEN KEZDŐDÖTT.
AZ ÖRMÉNYKATOLIKUS EGYHÁZ SZÜLETÉSE
[IT BEGUN IN LEMBERG. THE BEGINNING OF THE ARMENIAN
CATHOLIC CHURCH]
NYÍREGYHÁZA: SZENT ATANÁZ GÖRÖGKATOLIKUS
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Kornél Nagy is a Senior Research Fellow of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, a renowned researcher of European Armenians and the Armenian Catholic Church in Transylvania. In this work, he examines when the establishment of the European Armenian Catholic Church can be dated on the basis of ecclesiastical and archival sources. The research focuses on the Armenian community of Lemberg and its gradual rapprochement with the Catholic Church.

In order to present the research findings, Nagy first presents the available sources, placing them in their historical context. Of particular importance are the Vatican archival sources, which provide a realistic picture of the demographic-religious relations in 17th-century Central-Eastern Europe, the internal divisions of the European Armenian community of the time, and its relations with the motherland under Turkish occupation.

To help the reader understand the settlement and Catholicization of the Armenians in Eastern Europe, the author briefly outlines the history of the first Christian nation, highlighting that even before the Turkish conquest, there was tension between Constantinople and the Armenians, not only for religious but also for ethno-social reasons. The rapprochement between the Armenians and the Catholic Church began in the first millennium, and then fluctuated in the following centuries. The author also points out that it was not only external invasions (Byzantines, Persians, Turks) that caused the westward migration of Armenians, but also internal divisions that accelerated the process.

The author then describes in detail the Armenian community of Lemberg before the Union. The city, now part of Ukraine, then part of the Polish principality, was a meeting point for different nationalities and religions, while at the same time

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Armenians engaged in trade were attracted by the city's vibrant economic life, where north-south and east-west trade routes met. Although the local population was not overwhelmingly welcoming to the Armenians, the princes provided them with the right legal conditions and trade benefits, and the Armenians contributed to the further development of Lviv. Religiously, they were able to preserve their Miaphysite Christianity, and ecclesiastically they remained under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Echmiadzin.

The author goes into detail about the ecclesiastical union of Archbishop Nikol Torosowitz in 1630-1635, showing the intertwining of personal and political interests, accompanied by simony and corruption, so that this attempt at unification failed in 1652, and therefore, according to Kornél Nagy, we cannot yet speak of the actual establishment of the Armenian Catholic Church. The next chapter reveals that Propaganda Fide took the cause of Armenian union into its own hands, which the author links to the founding of the Armenian College of Lemberg in 1663, which was intended to train a new Armenian Catholic clergy. After Torosowitz's death, the Holy See appointed Vardan Hunanean as Armenian Catholic bishop, but he moved to Armenia, and Deodatus Nersesowitz became the new candidate, appointed bishop in 1684. However, Hunanean became the Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Lemberg when he returned to the city.

In the following chapters, Kornél Nagy describes the Armenians from Moldavia and Transylvania, who were closely connected to the Lemberg centre. While the Moldovans adhered to the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Transylvanian adhered to the Union. An important role in this process was played by Oxendio Virziresco, who had studied in Italy and was commissioned by Propaganda Fide. The Transylvanian mission was a success, and the Armenians who settled there united with Rome under the authority of the Archbishop of Lemberg.

To sum up, Kornél Nagy concludes that the Armenian-Catholic union was not a specific event, but a process that took place in Lemberg. This city, with its diversity, was a meeting point for Eastern and Western Christianity, but also had a religious and commercial link with the Armenian homeland and Rome, thus providing the right conditions for the union to spread from there to other Armenian communities in Europe. Kornél Nagy's book is a great read both from a scholarly point of view and for the reader interested in the past, as it presents historical events in a thoroughly documented yet readable style. The author manages to place the subject of the Armenian Union in an appropriate historical-cultural context, thus enabling the reader to understand the process of the church events.