

LUCIAN TURCU, *Seeking the Good Shepherd: the appointment of Metropolitan Vasile Suci*

Abstract: The last year of the First World War was far from an insignificant time for the Uniate Church from Transylvania. With the passing of the last metropolitan in the first month of 1918, apart from being laden with the spiritual care of those suffering from the consequences of war, the Church was obligated to start its own internal struggle for the observance of its rights, even in times of affliction. Thus, immediately afterwards, the issue of succession on the metropolitan seat of Blaj became one of its most stringent priorities. According to its own rules, during the vacancy of the metropolitan seat, the supervision of the archbishopric's current affairs was transferred to the general vicar, an office which was given to canon Vasile Suci at the end of January 1918.

Our study attempted to offer a detailed image of the political and cultural context of the demising Austro-Hungarian Empire which constituted the background of the synod of election of one of the three candidates for the highest office in the hierarchy of the Romanian Uniate Church. The investigation considered both, the reaction of the lay and ecclesiastical Greek-Catholic elite towards the revamped project of creation of Hungarian Catholic autonomy on the territory of the Kingdom of St. Stephen, and the attitude of the central government towards the special situation of the Romanian Church in those troubled days. The study focused on several crucial issues, such as the canonic imprecisions, Adalbert Apponyi's instructions concerning the organization of the synod, the most pressing problems (and their solutions) formulated during this event, the composition and main views of the clergy participating at the synod, or the attitude of the Hungarian government towards the results of the election. The study has also presented briefly the indifferent attitude of the government from Bucharest towards the problems of the Greek-Catholic Romanians immediately after 1918.

Keywords: synod, election right, Adalbert Apponyi, Romanian Greek-Catholic Church, 1918.