

## **Document *Fidelis relatio* from 1693 and the Armenians' Church in Transylvania**

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This paper is dedicated to the Armenians' church-history in Transylvania, which aims at presenting the vicissitudes of the Armenians' church-union in Transylvania at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century with an example of the document called *Fidelis relatio* from 1693. With regards to methodology of this paper, it is mere critical analysis of manuscript sources kept in archives and libraries.

Generally, the archives in Hungary have been keeping just very few documents on the Armenians' church in Transylvania. The *Fidelis relatio* is an exception, which has proved the rule. This source emerged a year ago from the so-called Hevenesi's Collection (*Collectio Hevenesiana*) belonging to Library of the ELTE State University, Budapest. At the same time, *Fidelis relatio* itself is not an original manuscript document because it was copied and elaborated by Hungarian Jesuit fathers between 1694 and 1715. That is to say, their task, co-ordinated by Gábor Hevenesi S.J. and Márton Szentiványi S.J., was to collect systematically the historical sources on the churches and peoples existing in Hungary and Transylvania. Consequently, their work had an intention to develop the modern Hungarian historiography in the Counter-Reformation's period. Furthermore, the Jesuit fathers had made many copies of these sources on the basis of this intention, which bequeathed the posterity.

The author of document *Fidelis relatio* is unknown. Presumably, its birth coincides with the Jesuit fathers' activity in Transylvania. At the same time, the document is tightly related to Oxendio Virziresco, the Armenian-born Uniate Bishop in Transylvania. Moreover, it could be also supposed that Oxendio himself narrated the Armenians' history in Transylvania to an unknown Jesuit father/ or another ecclesiastical person in 1693 because the *Fidelis relatio* has decidedly reflected the bishop's viewpoint upon the Armenians' church history in Transylvania.

The document is divided into six lesser chapters. The *Fidelis relatio* describes the full church-history of the Armenians from their escape, caused by the religiously intolerant violations in Moldova and Podolia (Poland), to the scandalous case of faith's perfidiousness in Ebesfalva (Elisabethopolis), 1692. The value of the *Fidelis relatio* has helped to complete the important information on the pastoral activity led by Bishop Oxendio among the Armenians, which are being kept at the archives in Yerevan, Rome and Vatican City. Therefore, the *Fidelis relatio* should be regarded as the earliest chronologically source on the Armenians in Transylvania, summarising their history from the church union's point of view.