

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION THESES

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**The Impact of Anti-Jesuitism on the Reformed  
Identity Formation in the Seventeenth-Century  
Upper-Hungary**

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## I. The Aim of the Research

My research focused on the link between anti-Jesuitism and Reformed identity formation in the seventeenth-century Upper-Hungary. In my dissertation I examined how anti-Jesuit argumentation can be discovered in different texts, and how anti-Jesuitism as a phenomenon could play a decisive role in the formation of Reformed identity. Since the expansion of the Jesuits was extremely successful in the seventeenth-century Upper-Hungary, my chosen printings connected to Nagyszombat, Ungvár, Kassa and Sárospatak.

As these four settlements are particularly important from the perspective of Hungarian early modern confessionalization, in my research I tried to point out certain stages of the Reformed identity formation through the overview of the confessional tensions between Jesuits and Protestants in these cities and, of course, the textual and rhetorical analysis of the chosen printings. Analysing four texts (*Fides Iesv et Iesvitarvm, Catholicvs reformatvs, Az papistak közöt es mi közöttünk..., Felelet*) connected to Ungvár and translated or written by János Kecskeméti C., I primarily emphasised Kecskeméti C.'s *theological* anti-Jesuitism. I supposed that János Kecskeméti C.'s anti-Jesuitism was mainly linked to Ungvár and his pastoral activity between 1617 and 1620. As the first pastor of Ungvár Kecskeméti C. could probably play an important role in the life of the local Reformed Community.

Péter Alvinczi's *Defensio* did not attack the Society of Jesus on the base of theological arguments, as János Kecskeméti C. did, but *political* ones. The clear intention of Péter Alvinczi's political anti-Jesuitism was to create a negative image of the politically active Jesuits; primarily at the service of emotional arousal. In my text analysis of Alvinczi's *Defensio* I mainly tried to shed light on the state of so-called *Adelskonfessionalisierung* at the beginning of the 17th century in Upper-Hungary.

The *satirical* anti-Jesuit argumentation as a way of discrediting Jesuits with the help of negative emotions and laughter, is represented by two editions in my dissertation. Both of them (*Jesvita paterek titkai, Egy veres tromfosdi*)

presumably can be linked to István Czeglédi P., Reformed pastor of Kassa at the second half of the 17th century. Satirical modality sent by *Jesvita paterek titkai* and *Egy veres tromfosdi* could play an important role to make the general public aware of the dangers of Jesuit education, missions and also political activity of the Society of Jesus.

Compared with the 1610s and 1620s, the confessional structure of the general public and the position of the Jesuits in Upper-Hungary underwent serious transformations in the 1650s and 1560s. Based on these facts, I assumed that anti-Jesuitism as an integral part of Hungarian Reformed identity had a decisive impact on the process of Hungarian Reformed confessionalization.

## II. Texts and Research Methodology

*Fides Iesv et Iesvitravm*, as a representative piece of international anti-Jesuit writings, was translated into Hungarian by János Kecskeméti C. It was issued in Bárta in 1619, the year the Society of Jesus had to leave Upper-Hungary and flee from Prince Gábor Bethlen, György Rákóczi and Czech allied protestant forces. According to international bibliographical research, *Fides Iesv et Iesvitravm* has six Latin publications before Kecskeméti C.'s translation. His work based on the last one, a distinctly modified Latin edition issued in Oppenheim in 1610. As the first 17th century publication of *Fides Iesv et Iesvitarvm*, it was completed and probably edited by Imre Pécseli Király and his Hungarian fellows at the University of Heidelberg at the request of Máté Makai, reformed schoolmaster of Nagyszombat. By using previous editions, distinct structural modifications of the *Fides Iesv et Iesvitarvm* edited in Oppenheim were carried out the way in which the completed work could suit current needs of the polemics surrounding confessional process of Upper-Hungarian territories.

János Kecskeméti C.'s *Az papistak közöt es mi közöttünk vetelkedesre vettetet, harom fö articulusokról...* contains twenty-one polemical sermons on Baptism, the Lord's Supper and Antichrist. As an important product of Kecskeméti C.'s anti-Jesuit and polemical activity in Ungvár between 1617 and 1620, these sermons were later edited in Bárta in 1622. Since the first eleven sermons on the two Protestant sacraments are characterised by catechesis, I examined the use of this catechetical framework by shaping a truly reformed community of Ungvár. Secondly, to shed light on a possible stepping-stone in the process of Hungarian reformed confessionalization in the first decades of the 17th century. My assumption is primarily based on Kecskeméti C.'s didactical and polemical statements, in which he makes great efforts to build up a Reformed identity as a “true Christian” in his audience.

The first part of the edition expounds the Protestant doctrine of the two Sacraments by means of catechesis. In contrast, the second part on Antichrist is

a series of ten sermons commenting selected verses of Chapter 12 of *The Revelation*. These two different parts are joined by Kecskeméti C.’s intention of building a “true Christian” Reformed community in Ungvár. This ministerial effort could also point to an early stage of Hungarian Reformed confessionalization: the process in which Kecskeméti C. transmits basic knowledge of the two Sacraments by means of catechesis and distinguishes them from Catholic doctrine primarily propagated by the missionaries of the Jesuit college established in the neighbouring Homonna in 1615.

This catechetical work is completed in his ten commentaries on Antichrist by a call upon his audience to make an exact confession of their true and Reformed faith. This ministerial effort could be a crucial one in Ungvár where the Jesuits’ missions helped to popularize Tridentine Catholicism in order to convert Protestant habitants to Roman Catholicism.

In Kecskeméti C.’s Hungarian translation of *Catholicvs reformatvs* by William Perkins I mainly examined how János Kecskeméti C. used not just the text itself, but Perkins’s argumentative technique in his own *Felelet* and *Az papistak közöt es mi közöttünk*. In his *Felelet* written against the 13th chapter of Péter Pázmány’s *Kalauz* issued in 1613, I focused on the differences between protestant and catholic exegesis. In this research I tried to make clear, that these differences stressed by Kecskeméti C. could play an important role in the formation of Hungarian Reformed identity. Besides that, I also demonstrated Kecskeméti C.’s apocalyptic phrasing. This apocalyptic and, of course, mainly anti-Jesuit phrasing of Kecskeméti C.’s argumentation in general, as a characteristic feature of his works written or translated in Ungvár between 1617 and 1620, also defines János Kecskeméti C.’s pastoral activity. In my opinion, the main source of Kecskeméti C.’s apocalyptic anti-Jesuitism is the *Praefatio* of *Fides Iesv et Iesvitarvm*, written by Johann Marbach. It is important to note, that this apocalyptic anti-Jesuit approach can be found not just in his polemical sermons and his *Felelet*, but in his other translation, the originally anti-Catholic *Catholicvs reformatvs* by William Perkins. Thanks to János

Kecskeméti C.'s own *Preface* for his own translation, this originally anti-Catholic work gets a decisive anti-Jesuit undertow.

In the next chapter of my dissertation, I examined Péter Alvinczi's *Defensio*, one of his anonym political works. The *Defensio* focuses on the Jesuits extremely fallacious communication, which includes, at least in Alvinczi's interpretation, casuistry, equivocation (possibly mental reservation) and rhetorical probable. In the *Defensio*'s text Alvinczi names this misleading communication simply as lying. It is important to note, that Alvinczi's anti-Jesuitism is rather political, than theological. So, the effects of the Jesuits' deceptive communication are tied to political contents. The main aim of this Jesuit "lying", at least from the perspective Alvinczi, is to persuade and to convert the Hungarian nobility. In this sense this fallacious rhetoric is connected to the Hungarian early modern so-called "Adelskonfessionalisierung". In his *Defensio* Péter Alvinczi several times characterizes the member of the Society of Jesus as animals, at the service of demonisation. With the help of these images, he emphasises the diabolic origin of the politically active Society.

Regarding these considerations, in the *Defensio* I examined this kind of misleading communication of the Jesuits displayed by Péter Alvinczi. With the help of textual and rhetorical analysis, I tried to shed light how Alvinczi creates a general and extremely negative image of the Society of Jesus. It is also important to note, that Alvinczi's political anti-Jesuitism is a result of one of his sources, the Latin *Aphorismi doctrinae iesviatrvm*. This is a collection of sixteen Jesuit-aphorisms, in which the anonym collector declares that these aphorisms are originated from and written by the Jesuits' and what is more, clear evidence of their political presence. Alvinczi uses *Aphorismi doctrinae iesviatrvm* in his *Defensio* in an effective way to discredit the Hungarian Jesuits, including Péter Pázmány archbishop of Esztergom, and make the Hungarian nobility aware of the Jesuits dangerous and divisive political activity.

The last two chapters of my writing are dedicated to *Jesvita paterek titkai* and *Egy veres tromsfosdi*. Both printings supposedly are linked to István Czeglédi P., pastor of Kassa in the second half of the 17th century. *Jesvita*

*paterek titkai* as a satirical dialogue of a novice and a pater professor discredits the Jesuits with the help of satirical laughter and irony. In connection with *Jesvita paterek titkai* issued in Várad in 1657, the main purpose of my research was to indicate this satirical rhetoric in the chosen texts, and to provide a brief presentation of the anti-Jesuit arguments of the *Jesvita paterek titkai* as follows: the origin of Ignatius of Loyola and his apotheosis, blind obedience, papal omnipotence, keeping promises, seal of confession, and finally equivocation/mental reservation. One of my main hypotheses was, that the Hungarian translation of *Jesvita paterek titkai* can be linked not to Várad in Transylvania, but to Kassa and to István Czeglédi P., Reformed pastor of the Upper-Hungarian settlement. Based on the collected evidence, such as the massive Jesuit presence and the confessional tension between the newly founded Catholic and Reformed Church in Kassa in the 1650s, or Czeglédi P.'s typical satirical tone, might be convincing this supposition.

The last of my examined edition was the *Egy veres tromfosdi*. This polemical work against the Jesuit István Kis, who was one of the main rivals of the representatives of the Reformed Church in Sárospatak in the 1660s, is traditionally attributed to István Czeglédi P. During my text analysis, I tried to shed light on the dual structure of the publication, as well as on the supposed structural similarities with *Fides Iesv et Iesvitarvm*, and then I represented the satirical anti-Jesuit argumentation and rhetoric of István Czeglédi P. in the text of the *Egy veres tromfosdi*.

### III. Results of the Research

As far as I know, a comprehensive work has been not yet written in Hungarian about anti-Jesuitism and its impact on Reformed identity formation. My results maybe add some new information to the seventeenth-century Hungarian historyography of the Jesuits and also provide evidence to the literary significance of anti-Jesuitism.

In my dissertation I tried to stress the significance of anti-Jesuitism in the process of Reformed identity formation not just in the field of theology, but also in the field of politics. This Protestant anti-Jesuitism, as a general European phenomenon at the beginning of the 17th century, in Upper-Hungary shed light on different process. In Upper-Hungary the theological and political anti-Jesuit argumentation, according to János Kecskeméti C.'s and Alvinczi's works, appeared approximately at the same time. Furthermore, the appearance, long termed presence and more serious polemical activity of the Society of Jesus also can be placed at the beginning of the 17th century. However, in the dynamic of Northern-European anti-Jesuitism can observed different process, than in Upper-Hungary. The most important changes in the Northern-European anti-Jesuitism can be placed at the middle of the 1580's, where the theological and political anti-Jesuit argumentations diverged. On the one hand, it can be seen, that the genesis of the Northern-European anti-Jesuitism was a longer and slower process, on the other, it is quite clear, that a relatively well-shaped anti-Jesuit arsenal arrived in the Hungarian territories.

As I mentioned above, by the 1650s and 1560's the confessional structure of the general public and the position of the Jesuits in Upper-Hungary underwent serious transformations. I think, this changes could give a convincing answer to that question, why the *Jesvita paterek titkai* as a popular satirical dialogue issued in 1657, and why the *Fides Iesv et Iesvitarvm* as a serious theological work issued in 1619, at the beginning of the Hungarian Reformed confessionalization.

The chosen texts, I think, could represent in some cases the formation of Reformed identity and Reformed confessionalization. János Kecskeméti C.'s, Péter Alvinczi's and István Czeglédi P.'s works hopefully could indicate the variety of anti-Jesuit argumentation, and also its effects on Hungarian Reformed identity formation and Reformed confessionalization.

#### **IV. List of Publications Related to the Topic of the Dissertation**

SZOLNOKI Zsolt, „A *Mysteria patrvm iesvitarvm* szerzőségi kérdései”, in *Miskolci Egyetem Doktoranduszok Fóruma, Miskolc, 2016. november 17.: Bölcsészettudományi Kar szekciókiadványa*, szerk. MAJOR Ágnes és KÁLI Anita, 7–13 (Miskolc, Miskolci Egyetem Tudományos és Nemzetközi Rektorhelyettesi Titkárság, 2017).

SZOLNOKI Zsolt, „Loyolai Ignác »eredete« és »mennyei szenté változtatása« a *Jesvita paterek titkai* című nyomtatványban”, in *Tavaszi Szél 2017 Konferencia: Konferenciakötet II, Kar szekciókiadványa*, szerk. KERESZTES Gábor, 95–101 (Budapest, Doktoranduszok Országos Szövetsége [DOSz], 2017).

SZOLNOKI Zsolt, „Javaslat a *Jesvita paterek titkai* ismeretlen fordítójának személyére”, in *Reformatio nostra – Szellemi protestáns műhelyek: Tanulmányok*, szerk. GYULAI Éva és TASI Réka, 58–77 (Miskolc, MTA Miskolci Területi Bizottsága, 2018).

SZOLNOKI Zsolt, „Czeglédi P. István *Egy veres tromfosdit iádtzó...* című munkája és annak egyik lehetséges forrása”, in *Miskolci Egyetem Doktoranduszok Fóruma, Miskolc, 2017. november 30.: Bölcsészettudományi Kar szekciókiadványa*, szerk. SCHÄFFER Anett, 3–9 (Miskolc, Miskolci Egyetem, 2018).

SZOLNOKI Zsolt, „A katekézis szerepe Kecskeméti C. János ungvári prédkációiban: Egy »igaz vallású keresztyén« közösség kialakítására tett kísérlet?”, *Sárospataki Füzetek*, 3 (2018), 57–72.

SZOLNOKI Zsolt, „Kecskeméti C. János vitája a teljes átlényegülésről”, in *Eucharisztia és Úrvacsora a 16–18. századi Magyarországon*, szerk. SZELESTEI N. László, 287–300 (Budapest, MTA–PPKE Barokk Irodalom és Lelkiség Kutatócsoport, 2018).

SZOLNOKI Zsolt, „Az »igényre szabott« *Fides Iesv et Iesvitarvm?*”, *Egyháztörténeti Szemle*, 2 (2018), 3–21.

SZOLNOKI Zsolt, „Felekezetiesedés és egzegézis Kecskeméti C. János prédikációiban: Egy »igaz vallású keresztyén« közösség kialakítására tett kísérlet?”, *Sárospataki Füzetek*, 4 (2018), 135–152.

SZOLNOKI Zsolt, „Címlapok tükrében: Egy jezsuitaellenes kiadvány 17. századi sikertörténete”, *Partium: Irodalmi Művészeti Közéleti Folyóirat*, 3 (2019), 88–99.

SZOLNOKI Zsolt, „Egy jezsuitaellenes argumentum interkonfesszionális helyzetben”, in *Interkonfesszionalitás és irodalom a kora újkorban*, szerk. MÓRÉ Tünde és TASI Réka, Reciti konferenciakötetek 8, 115–127 (Budapest: reciti, 2020).