

## BOOK REVIEWS

A zászlós bárány nyomában. A magyar kálvinizmus 17. századi világa [Following the Flag-bearing Lamb. Hungarian Calvinism in the Seventeenth Century]. *Speculum Historiae Debreceniense* 6. By Dávid Csorba. Debrecen–Budapest: Kálvin János Kiadó, 2011. 230 pp.

The title of this volume of selected essays alludes to the coat of arms of Debrecen, a city with a remarkable culture and history intricately intertwined with the history of Hungarian Calvinism. Indeed, the ‘Calvinist Rome’ has born witness to the efforts of Hungarian Calvinist communities to (re)build and preserve their church, traditions and culture for the last several centuries. These essays not only acknowledge this fact, but overtly tend to impose this as a master narrative of Hungarian Calvinism. Thus the flag-bearing lamb is not simply a complex symbolical image, but a recurrent motif of the articles that gestures to their ultimate message: the early modern history and culture of Debrecen represents the quintessence of Hungarian Calvinism.

Whether this claim can be persuasively sustained or not remains, I believe, an open question. Still, the significance of the book, within the context of Hungarian scholarship on the culture and history of early modern Hungarian Calvinism, cannot be disputed. Furthermore, the particular attention that Csorba devotes to what he refers to as Neo-Calvinism, namely the connection between Calvinist orthodoxy and Puritan devotion, is a notable contribution to the interdisciplinary study of Hungarian Puritanism. Csorba’s sometimes debatable assertions notwithstanding, he has managed to articulate an alternative view of the devotional culture of Hungarian Puritanism that aptly complements interpretive attempts that have attempted to address some of the fixations of the existing scholarship. The so-called classic approach in the scholarship on the emergence and significance of Hungarian Puritanism has offered either a customary and biased narrative of ecclesiastical history<sup>1</sup> or a kind of obsolete

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1 Jenő Zoványi, *Puritánus mozgalmak a magyar református egyházban* [Puritan Movements in the Hungarian Reformed Church] (Budapest: Magyar Protestáns Irodalmi Társaság, 1911); László Makkai, *A magyar puritánusok harca a feudálisizmus ellen* [The Struggle of the Hungarian Puritans against Feudalism] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1952); József Bodonhelyi, *Az angol puritanizmus lelki élete és magyar hatásai* [The Spiritual Life of English Puritanism and its Influences on Hungary] (Debrecen: Pannonia Ny., 1942); István Ágoston, *A magyarországi puritanizmus gyökerei* [The Roots of Hungarian Puritanism] (Budapest: Kálvin Kiadó, 1997).

cultural history.<sup>2</sup> There have been very few attempts to take advantage of the innovations of any kind of social history.<sup>3</sup>

In this context, Csorba's selection of articles constitutes a refreshing reassessment of our understanding of what early modern Calvinism and Puritanism might have represented. He opted for a multidisciplinary approach, something that comes close to Burke's concept of cultural history,<sup>4</sup> and he combines the interpretive possibilities of literary criticism, ethnography, history and (unavoidably) theology. In addition, he used as sources not only texts, but various artifacts and buildings each of which is related to Debrecen. The major methodological innovation, which was also intended to function as a common denominator for the multidisciplinary approach and sources, was the focus on Debrecen and its confessional existence in early modern times. In the resulting narrative, structured in four major chapters, Csorba attempts to decipher the complexity of the period from 1661 to 1705 in order to exhibit some of the historical, social, cultural-confessional and theological developments within the distinguished Calvinist community of Debrecen.

The first chapter, a surprisingly short one, proposes a survey of the roles assumed by Calvinist priests in seventeenth-century Debrecen. Csorba asserts that the more or less coherent epoch from 1606 to 1711 should be divided into further sections in order to reveal the development of the identity patterns performed by Calvinist priests. Accordingly, he argues that the period from 1606 to 1657 corresponded with the age of legitimation, the difficult times from 1657 to 1664 coincided with the emergence of apocalypticism and the prophet-like preachers, the age of confessional conflicts covered the period of 1664–1681, the times of consolation lasted from 1681 to 1705, and finally, the last section from 1705 to 1711 was marked by the idea of confessional tolerance. Csorba's classification evidently attracts criticism, as these types of classifications are always problematic. Csorba tends to overestimate the significance of Debrecen as a city and a Calvinist community, and he ignores

2 Pál Berg, *Angol hatások tizenhetedik századi irodalmunkban* [English Influences on our Seventeenth-Century Literature] (Budapest: MNM Országos Széchényi Könyvtára, 1946).

3 Attila Molnár, *A "protestáns etika" Magyarországon* [The "Protestant Ethic" in Hungary] (Debrecen: Ethnica, 1994). For a survey of the secondary literature on Hungarian Puritanism see: Katalin Luffy, "Medgyesi Pál és a magyar puritanizmus. Historiográfiai áttekintés a kezdetektől az 1980-as évekig" [Pál Medgyesi and Hungarian Puritanism. Historiographical Survey from the Beginnings up to the End of the 1980s] in *Medgyesi Pál redivivus. Tanulmányok a 17. századi prédikátor életművéről*, ed. Gergely Tamás Fazakas and János Győri, (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem, Egyetemi és Nemzeti Könyvtár, 2008), 15–31.

4 Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2004).

the fact that the destiny of the Principality of Transylvania had a decisive influence on the life and security of Hungarian Calvinist communities, both in Transylvania and Habsburg Hungary. Thus Csorba's classification could be adapted to the chain of tragic events in Transylvania of the 1680s and 1690s. Moreover, the death of the last prince of Transylvania, the pious Mihály I Apafi (1660–1690), might have been interpreted by Hungarian Calvinists as the end of a period of welfare and security. This event, for instance, did not influence Csorba's classification at all. Consequently there is no significant reflection on the function of collective memory over the emergence of these identity patterns, allegedly performed by priests and ultimately by the Calvinist Church as well.

The second chapter entitled, *Following the Flag-bearing Lamb: the Symbols of Debrecen*, consists of articles dealing with the examination of artifacts, buildings, and most importantly symbols. Csorba's intention is to recreate narratives and use these unconventional sources to provide a different perspective from which to consider Calvinist devotional and spiritual life. His endeavor, an inventive and truly multidisciplinary one, traces interferences between texts, symbols, and artifacts that offer access to intimate details or new vantage points from which to assess individuals, institutions or historical events. Thus the church buildings, the coat of arms of Debrecen, the famous pipes, and other objects of everyday life stand as historical proof of a distinctive Calvinist way of life in early modern Debrecen. Though this chapter may seem like something of a digression, it has been incorporated well into Csorba's explanatory discourse, though not convincingly sustained with methodological arguments.

*The Cataclysms of Calvinist Identity* is the telling title of the fairly consistent third chapter, which echoes some of the assertions expressed in the first chapter. There is a certain ambiguity between the foci of the first and third chapters, as if the latter were revisiting some truth revealed in the opening chapter. Perhaps a different structuring of these writings, a possible rapprochement of the first and third chapters, might also have been an option. Still, one should give credit to the author for finding the best structure for this collection of articles. The writings in this section seem to follow strictly the particular narrative and classification, with its debatable sections exhibited in the first chapter. However, rather surprisingly Csorba hesitates to articulate theoretical arguments; he reduces his approach to textual analysis or the projection of some relevant contexts (Nadere reformatie, Puritanism, Apocalypticism). He simply fails to point out theoretical standpoints concerning identity and the

various cultural practices of representing, performing or fashioning a religious self in early modern culture.<sup>5</sup>

However, Csorba proposes relevant topics tied to outstanding historical events, for instance, the unfortunate military expedition against Poland (1657) or the persecution of protestant priests, the so-called *persecutio decennalis* (1670–1680). Consequently, he attempts to depict the prototype of the prophet or the martyr relying mostly on the textual analysis of sermons. Thus, powerful characters like Pál Medgyesi, one of the first Hungarian Puritans, or Jakab Cseh Csúzi are described as relevant cases of Calvinist self-fashioning. Unfortunately, in Csúzi's case Csorba decided to reconstruct Csúzi's *mentality* instead of his *mental world*, which is confusing and methodologically does not constitute an accurate claim.<sup>6</sup> The remaining two articles dealing with the early modern perception of comets or the discourse of Calvinist priests during the 'kuruc' rebellion, though they fit in the chronological frame previously set forth, do not bolster the central thesis of this section.

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5 Greenblatt's seminal book not only influenced the international scholarship on early modern Puritanism, but also had a lively reception in Hungary. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago–London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980). Greenblatt's concept was often applied to describe the process of shaping a religious identity in early modern Puritanism. See: Muriel McClendon, Joseph Ward, and Michael MacDonald (eds), *Protestant Identities. Religion, Society, Self-Fashioning in Post-Reformation England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Margo Todd, "Puritan Self-Fashioning: The Diary of Samuel Ward," *Journal of British Studies* 31 (1992): 236–64; John Martin, "Inventing Sincerity, Refashioning Prudence: The Discovery of the Individual in Renaissance Europe," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5. (1997): 1309–42. For the Hungarian reception and applications of the self-fashioning concept see: Zoltán Cseh, "Humanista énfarmálási technikák a Quattrocento tájékán és napjainkban" [Humanist Self-Fashioning Techniques in the Quattrocento and Today], *Jelenkor* 3 (2002): 321–28; Gergely Tamás Fazakas, "Az „árvaság” reprezentációja a kora újkorban: egy kulturális szerepminta értelmezési lehetőségei (Előtanulmány)" [The Representation of "Orphanhood" in the Early Modern Era: Interpretive Possibilities of a Cultural Role Model (preliminary study)], in *Cselekvő irodalom. Írások a hatvanéves Görömbei András tiszteletére* [The Agency of Literature. Studies Honoring the 60-year-old András Görömbei], ed. Zoltán Bertha and Andrea Ekler (Budapest: Magánkiadás, 2005), 99–114; Endre György Szőnyi, "Az énfarmálás petrarkista technikái Balassi Bálint és Philip Sidney költészetében" [Petrarchan Techniques of Self-Fashioning in the Poetry of Bálint Balassi and Philip Sidney], *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 103 (1999): 251–72; Zsombor Tóth, *A koronatanár: Bethlen Miklós* [Witness for the State: Miklós Bethlen] (Debrecen: Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, 2011), 147–92.

6 Csorba seems to confuse the term *mentality* with the term *mental world*. The reconstruction of a mentality relying on a single case is hardly possible. I believe he wanted to recreate the mental world of a Calvinist preacher. Amongst the many books dealing with this issue there are two classics worth mentioning: Alan Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin: an Essay in Historical Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Paul S. Seaver, *Wallington's World. A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985).

The last chapter, entitled *Late Puritan Print Culture*, is probably the most coherent and significant one. It offers a good example of Csorba's remarkable predisposition towards subtle textual analysis and his particular talent for reading and identifying rare sources. In his interpretations of sermons from homiletical and theological perspectives, he does not display such outstanding analytical skills. Here he convincingly investigates spectacular conundrums about a lost calendar from 1596, some unknown attempts to translate the Bible into Hungarian, and a mysterious sermon delivered in the Trinity Church. Furthermore, the case studies dealing with the ego-documents of Pál Ember and the devotional motivation behind Misztótfalusi's printing activity confirm Csorba's particular talent for understanding and fairly assessing the literacy of Puritan devotional culture.

Still, without ignoring the undeniably positive aspects of Csorba's effort in general, it is worth pointing out that some attempt to address the lack of methodological, historiographical and theoretical insights would have strengthened the coherence of this volume. The lack of methodological reflections on the use of sources, the applied scales of analysis, or the particular functions attributed to different interpretive contexts unfortunately somewhat diminishes the relevance of the poignant thematic challenges set forth by the author. However, the volume merits the attention of anyone who feels committed to the study of early modern Calvinist texts or undertakes any kind of research investigating the history, culture and social life of Hungarian Calvinists. No doubt Csorba's volume will become compulsory secondary literature.

Zsombor Tóth

Magánélet a régi Magyarországon [Private Life in Old Hungary].  
Magyar történelmi emlékek: Értekezések 2. By Katalin Péter. Budapest:  
MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet,  
2012. 180 pp.

Katalin Péter's name is certainly not unfamiliar to members of the international readership who take an interest in the history of the institution of the family in early modern East Central Europe. As a prominent scholar of Hungarian historiography, she has edited and written the introduction to a very important selection of essays addressing the question of childhood in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Hungary, which was also published in English.<sup>1</sup> Her continuing interest in the field was documented by the publication of her book on marriage in early modern Hungary<sup>2</sup> and numerous studies, eight of which are republished in this volume. Unlike the previous publications, which were focused on more specific fields, this volume addresses a wide variety of topics related to what the author defines as “private life” in the meaning attributed to it by the five-volume bestselling books edited by Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby: everything that is not connected to public life. Thus the reader finds analyses of female and male roles, attitudes towards childhood, and the specificities of the marriage market. Much as the range of topics is broad, the variety of social strata under scrutiny is also wide: one finds studies focusing on emotional contacts between aristocrats as well as members of peasant families.

The book begins with two studies addressing the question of gender roles in early modern Hungary, both of which include cases that contradict the broadly accepted image according to which early modern families, and especially those of the peasants, were dominated by the male head of the family, who left little scope of action for anyone else. The chapter entitled “The Independence of Women and Men in Society” presents various juridical documents regarding cases in which married women had approached the court, thereby displaying an initiative that was not allegedly their share according to the generally accepted paradigm of early modern family history. Building on the case of István Miskolczi Csulyak (1575–1645), a Calvinist preacher in Northeastern Hungary who taught his wife

1 Katalin Péter, ed., *Beloved Children: History of Aristocratic Childhood in Hungary in the Early Modern Age* (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2001).

2 Katalin Péter, *Házasság a régi Magyarországon: 16–17. század* [Marriage in Old Hungary: the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries] (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2008).

and later his daughters to read, Péter argues in the next chapter, “The Ideal of the Reading Woman in the Early Seventeenth Century”, that literacy also must have been much more widespread among women than is generally supposed.

The second and longest thematic segment of the book is made up of studies on the world of the aristocracy. In the chapter “What Were Princesses of Transylvania Like?” Péter addresses the question as to whether there was a tradition of fulfilling the social role of being the Transylvanian ruler’s wife. According to her, Zsuzsanna Lorántffy (ca 1600–1660), the wife of György I Rákóczi (1630–1648), was the first to fill this position with actual content and use her influence at court to promote her interest in theology, religious life and schooling, as well as being a strong emotional support for her husband. Whereas earlier princely consorts had not had the opportunity or personal motivation to give a clear form to their social role, the later ones merely attempted to follow in Zsuzsanna Lorántffy’s footsteps. Later, Péter devotes an individual chapter to this remarkable personality, her diverse activities and interests, as well as her feelings for the members of her family. The same biographical approach is used in presenting a “male counterpart”, Tamás Nádasdy (1498–1562), a man who had one of the brightest careers in sixteenth-century Hungary. The political career of this man, who came from the petty nobility but eventually ended up as the palatine of Hungary (and was thus the second most important man after the king), remains in the background in Péter’s account. She is more interested in Nádasdy’s ways of making himself liked, his manners and attitude towards the court and the *Respublica Litteraria* of his age, and also his marriage, which was extraordinarily successful, both from the perspective of his career and on the emotional level.<sup>3</sup>

The third segment of the book is dedicated to the history of the family as a social unit and the history of childhood. In the chapter entitled “On the Children of Serfs in Early Modern Hungary” Péter searches the rather scarce documentation illustrating early modern rural everyday life for traces of the serfs’ feelings for their own children and the value they attached to them, even during the period of a pregnancy. Citing a number of cases from juridical records each of which suggests that the children’s lives were generally highly valued even by members of the lower strata of society, she openly criticizes theories often found in international literature according to which the high level of infant

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3 This is the only study from the volume that is also available in English: “Imitatio Rei Publicae Litterariae: Count Tamás Nádasdy (1498–1562),” in *Republic of Letters, Humanism, Humanities*, ed. Marcell Sebők, Collegium Budapest Workshop Series 15 (Budapest: Collegium Budapest, 2005), 150–69.

mortality created a level of indifference towards children. The next chapter, "Love and Marriage East of the Hajnal Border," extends the inquiry to the feelings of members of married couples for each other, with a witty critique of the same functionalist interpretation of family life, according to which the early modern Eastern European family was merely a production unit the members of which expected little in the way of emotional investment or return. The most important exponents of this historiography, as well as its theoretical implications for an imagined geography of Eastern and Western Europe, are summarized in the last chapter, "On Family," thereby making clear the importance of the micro-level of family history to discussions of the macro-level of historical regions.

The last chapter makes perfectly clear that in spite of the long list of works that Péter regards as predecessors to her own research on private life, her approach to the topic is entirely different from that of earlier Hungarian historiography. These nineteenth and early twentieth-century historians hoped to put together a history of everyday life, using primarily the relatively rich documentation of aristocratic families, according to a method that could be labeled commonsensical: they were looking for phenomena with which they were familiar from their own experience. Péter's point of departure, especially in the case of the studies dedicated to peasants, is the theses presented in the classics of family history from the last fifty years, from the historical demography of John Hajnal to the syntheses of Jack Goody, Steven E. Ozment, Jean-Louis Flandrin or (closest in their field to the region of the author's interest) Michael Mitterauer and Reinhard Sieder.

These authors and their (in most cases) purely theoretical knowledge of the situation in the Eastern part of Europe, however, constitute only the source of questions, not the source of the knowledge itself. With a pinch (and in some cases considerably more) of irony, Péter contrasts the accounts of a family in which emotions allegedly play only a minor role and the frequent death of children leads to the sullen indifference of parents towards them with 'small facts' that she uncovered in the sources of the period. She is especially critical of the modernization theories built on these accounts, according to which the differences between the eastern and western parts of Europe (the borders of which are running, according to John Hajnal, between Saint Petersburg and Trieste) can be explained by demographic facts and differences in basic family structures. Her dilemma is aptly demonstrated by the beginning of the chapter entitled "On the Children of Serfs": in a court register we read that a certain peasant in Hungary in 1671 rocked his child's cradle. This source (which must

have escaped or simply not caught the attention of the earlier, “commonsensical” historiography) is rich with relevance in light of the fact that Simon Schama, writing about a similar contemporary finding in the Netherlands, interprets it as clear testimony to early Dutch modernity, a sign that due to the wealth of the region, a new model of parenting was emerging. Under the much poorer circumstances in Hungary, such a phenomenon should, according to the theory, be entirely out of place.

The studies presenting such ‘small facts’ repeatedly address the question of their relevance. Péter admits that the cases are few (and, due to a structural drawback of such edited volumes, some are repeated in various chapters), but she suggests that it would be statistically impossible that there would have been so few cases but at the same time they would have been the only ones to have survived the massive loss of sources that any scholar of early modern Hungary has to face. Furthermore, the (primarily) court documents from which these excerpts were taken offer very little indication that the details that Péter has selected are in any way unusual. In other words, the matter-of-fact style with which the details are narrated suggests that the people who recorded them did not consider them worthy of much comment, in contrast with, for instance, cases of child murder, which are clearly condemned and punished and thus (one can conclude) are considered a transgression of norms and outside common expectations regarding family life.

It is always these ‘small facts’ to which Péter gives priority, in contrast with the conclusions drawn on the basis of macro-historical facts. This can be demonstrated by her debate with the Swiss historical demographer, Arthur E. Imhof, whose monograph *The Worlds We Have Lost*, with its strong criticism of modernity, is also available in Hungarian translation and thus is relatively well-known among her primary audience. Imhof attempted to answer the question as to how society was able to deal with the high rate of infant mortality by adducing an interpretation based on theology: he suggested that early modern common people did not see the world simply within the framework of life on earth, but also considered the afterlife an integral part of it, thus death in this world actually had considerably less significance than it does nowadays. Péter convincingly shows the fragility of this interpretation, built on logical deduction, in light of sources that provide her with a great deal of data on husbands mourning their wives, parents going out of their way to find cures for their children, or even theologically educated noble women scolding their servants for having endangered the life of a peasant boy out of negligence.

Throughout the book, one finds outstanding examples of the author's creativity in her use of sources. Diaries, autobiographies and other ego-documents, which in a Western European context constitute the most widespread source for the history of private life, are scarce in Hungary and only available in relation to the social elite, i.e. aristocrats and members of various churches. Ironically enough, Péter uses an ego-document (the autobiographical account of István Miskolczi Csulyak in his *omniarium*) only once in the volume, to address not the career of the preacher himself, but rather the question of female literacy, which plays an insignificant role in the original narrative. Péter even attempts to provide a pool of statistical data on the basis of which the basic demographic facts of early modern Hungary could be established. Since in this period the classic source of demographic studies, the registers of births, marriages and deaths, were not yet in use (and the very few examples are so fragmentary that they yield no reliable data), the author set out to use data from court registers instead. A database was compiled, including 100 women, 307 men and 66 married couples, on the basis of which Péter addressed some of the generally accepted stereotypes regarding family structures east of the Hajnal border.

The pool admittedly remains too small to support any strong thesis, but it does raise the relevant question as to whether this situation could be changed if a large research group were to dedicate time and energy to the extraction of further data from similar court documentation preserved in local archives all over historical Hungary. In any case, Péter's database does yield some intriguing preliminary results (which are nevertheless also accepted only hypothetically by the author), such as the significantly lower ratio of the age group above fifty years among women than men, which may point to their lower life expectancy and thus their privileged position on the marriage market. While this remains a hypothesis, there are convincing results in other fields, such as the author's skepticism regarding the thesis according to which in the eastern part of Europe couples married at a very young age, almost as children. Even if she is unable to refute this statement on a quantitative basis (the pool of data on persons under eighteen is very small, given the nature of juridical records), some qualitative elements, such as the terminology used by the sources, make her argument convincing. She lists several examples indicating that in early modern Hungary men sixteen years of age were still referred to as children, and she also found no example of the use of the term "unmarried" for boys under eighteen, which suggests that they were not generally expected to marry under this age.

All in all, this collection of studies by Katalin Péter offers intriguing insights into the private lives of the inhabitants of early modern Hungary, as well as the discussions regarding them. The author's creativity in her use of sources and her critical assessment of the grand narratives of modernization theories through the prism of 'small facts' render *Private Life in Old Hungary* a thought-provoking read that masterfully meets the expectation placed on a historian: to bring his or her audience closer to a bygone reality.

Gábor Kármán

## Identitás és kultúra a török hódoltság korában

[Identity and Culture in the Age of Ottoman Rule in Hungary].

Edited by Pál Ács and Júlia Székely. Budapest: Balassi, 2012. 568 pp.

The meeting of the Renaissance-Baroque Research Group of the Institute for Literary Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences held in Esztergom in 2008 addressed the subject of “Identity and culture in the age of the Turkish occupation.” The topic of the conference could hardly be more current. Over the course of the past several decades an array of sources has become available in Hungarian (one thinks for instance of the autobiographic account of Georgius de Hungaria or the narrative of the life of Osman Aga of Temesvár),<sup>1</sup> both of which greatly enriched our understanding of the perceptions of Christian communities among Muslims and Muslim communities among Christians, and also provided further impetus for a more nuanced grasp of the motivations of the Other.

Several of the essays point out the contradictions in parallel historical narratives, noting also that the one-sided and monolingual (or in some cases bilingual) narrative traditions (first and foremost Latin and Hungarian) of the period of Ottoman and Hungarian coexistence offer only a limited grasp of the cultural and social events of the era. The legends of literary history always note Bálint Balassi’s (1554–1594) extensive knowledge of languages, and as this volume of essays also makes clear, six or seven languages were spoken in Buda at the time, where there was a constant dialogue at different levels between the various interpretive communities. This multilingualism is a feature of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Hungary that could be considered unique on a wider scale. It would be difficult to think of a European literary tradition in the seventeenth century in which an author would have been able to fashion a topical parallel of Lucan’s famous aphorism (*Coelo tegitur qui non habet urnam*) in Turkish without simply aiming to create the impression of something exotic among his readership, but in his prose treatise, the Virtuous Captain (Vitéz Hadnagy) the Hungarian author Miklós Zrínyi (1620–1664) does this: „Ja deulet basuma, ia güzgün desüme”. The contemporary reader of his famous epic poem, the *Siege of Sziget* (*Szigeti veszedelem*, 1651) not only would have known the

1 *Kimondhatatlan nyomorúság. Két emlékirat a 15–16. századi oszmán fogságról* [Unspeakable Misery. Two Memoires on Ottoman Captivity in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries], trans. by Erik Fügedi (Budapest: Európa, 1976); *Oszmán aga, A gyaurok rabságában – pasák és generálisok között* [In the Captivity of the Giaours – Between Pashas and Generals], trans. by László Jólész (Budapest: Balassi, 1996).

meaning of “hamalia” (amulet) or “csingia” (Turkish stringed instrument), but also would have had enough knowledge of Islamic legends to understand why the confession of prophet Ali was so important and why “zöldfíkár” (Zulfiqar, the never-dulling sword of Muhammad) was turned to dust by the mercy of God (Szigeti veszedelem 14, 66). And when Miklós Bethlen contemplates the existence of nothingness in his autobiography, which is an entirely apolitical, theoretical-linguistic problem, he considers the question, “what is the essence of nothing,” not only in Latin, German and Hungarian, but also in Turkish. This broad acceptance of Ottoman culture, an acceptance illustrated by the ability to append a relevant citation in Turkish to an idea expressed in Latin or Italian (whether scholastic or epical), created a unique opportunity for mutual influences to develop between the languages and the cultures.

The most important new aspect of the book is related to this: in this polyglot, culturally complex world one finds an array of collective and individual identities more diverse than anything Hungarian or even international scholarship has dealt with before. Among the essays that present collective identities, the contribution by Pál Fodor on changes in Ottoman-Turkish identities from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth is particularly worth mention. Relying primarily on historical sources, Fodor examines how the Osmanli identity came into being (and in how many languages), how it drew on eastern and western (“rumi,” Roman) sources, and how a historical past was fashioned, including the genealogy of the elite and a distinctive notion of historical mission. Historiographical sources are perhaps more suitable than all other kinds of sources in the study of processes of identity formation and self-definition because the historiography itself constitutes a deliberate reflection. Writers of history know that they are writing the past for posterity, and so they deliberately strive to recreate the tradition. In the Christian world one finds an example of this deliberate formation of tradition in the writings of the Humanists. The only essay in the volume to address this context is the contribution by Gergely Tóth, who examines the role played by the humanist Mátyás Bél in the formation of the piarist Humanist image of the patria in opposition to the Turks, who were seen as barbaric and perfidious, but also rich with exoticisms. This parallel between the Christian and Ottoman historiographical narratives (specifically, the intention to create a tradition) and the similarities in the tools that were employed in the service of this goal (fictive genealogies, religious sense of mission) indicate the importance of adopting a comparative perspective in the study of the formation of the image of the Turk in Hungarian humanist historiography in the period from the fifteenth century to the eighteenth.

A history of the formation of the collective identity of people or nations is a highly important field of research, of course, but so is the study of smaller regional communities in cases when narrative sources offer little insight into the meaning of collective identity. Éva Sz. Simon's essay offers an excellent example of this. Simon examines the demographical history of the villages of Zala on the basis of Turkish and Christian assessments of taxes, comparing them with personal renderings of accounts, which yield glimpses of individual fates. Of course in these cases one cannot avoid the methodological question: to what extent can one venture generalizations about a community on the basis of an individual identity that can be relatively clearly reconstructed or a clearly discernible personal motive. The concurrence of the conclusions based on statistics and the accounts of individual fates, however, quells this doubt.

From the perspective of questions involving collective identity, the migrants that Zsombor Tóth has made the focus of his inquiry constitute an unusual case. Drawing on anthropological descriptions, Tóth characterizes these migrants as members of a community with "liminal group consciousness." This liminality is characteristic of a common identity temporarily sustained by common interest, a common past, and common faith, an identity for which the acceptance of martyrdom was an important element among the exiles of Nicomedia. One of the important insights of the essay is that, alongside the acceptance of martyrdom, the maintenance of the community is only legitimized if the political and social status quo of the last minute before the moment of exile is preserved.

At the same time, one cannot neglect the fact that individual identity is always far more malleable than group identity and influenced by far more dynamic motivations than the identity consciousness of an entire ethnic group. This is indicated by the diversity of the essays on individual identities in the volume. Gabriella Erdélyi persuasively shows that marriage constituted the most important fixed point (particularly for women) in the personal system of values during the sixteenth-century anti-Turkish wars, even more important than religious identity. Pál Ács analyzes the formation of poet Pál Esterházy's identity (a process that spanned his entire life) from his early poem, the *Egy csudálatos ének* ("A miraculous song") and to his equestrian statue and stuffed crocodile that were put up at the end of his life. The case of Pál Esterházy was also unusual because (as one learns from Ács' essay) his self-representation, which was defined and even dictated by political circumstances, was as restrained at the end of his career (when the theater, as it were, of his gesture of identity formation, the erection of an equestrian statue inside his castle, remained an internal space) as it was at

the beginning, when he wrote a collection of poems intended only for a private reading. Zsuzsanna J. Újváry puts Miklós Esterházy's 1641 gesture of political self-representation in context using new archival sources. The very fact that the sources on which she draws are still in manuscript form aptly demonstrates that the border between public and private construction of identity in seventeenth-century Hungary is not at all self-evident.

The existence of two such divergent political and ideological systems in the Ottoman (Muslim) and Hungarian (Christian) worlds, worlds that coexisted and at the same time were in constant battle with each other, created a need for mediators. Gábor Kármán's essay introduces the reader to Jakab Harsányi Nagy, a translator for the Sublime Porte and the author of a Latin-Turkish language book. Péter Méhes writes about András Gálffy, Ádám Batthyány's spy in the town of Kiskomárom. Klára Jakó examines the role that the provinces of Moldova and Wallachia played as mediators between Transylvania and the Porte. She has assembled remarkably interesting data regarding the ways in which Latin and Hungarian were used as languages of diplomacy in fundamentally Orthodox regions where the Cyrillic alphabet prevailed. Coexistence also created opportunities for relationships to develop between the languages and the literary traditions. Imola Küllös and Ágnes Drosztnér examine common features among folk ballads from various literary traditions. Vilmos Voigt articulates again the fundamental principles of the study of related Hungarian and Turkish melodies. It is particularly interesting when, in the course of cross-cultural mediation, one community appropriates a symbol seen by the members of the other community as peculiar to their culture. István Csörsz Rumen offers an example of this in the case of a musical instrument, the Turkish pipe. In the nineteenth century the Turkish pipe, which during the period of occupation had been considered foreign, became an element of the national-romantic self-representation of the Hungarian nation.

One of the important insights one can glean from the essays is that alongside the intellectual community, physical distance can also play a significant role in the formation of individual identity, and from this perspective the state borders that are formed by our historical consciousness are easily relativized. As Klára Jakó demonstrates, the envoy's journey from Munkács (today Mukacheve in the Ukraine) to Alvinc (today Vințu de Jos in Romania) lasted six days, and the trip from Gyulafehérvár (now Alba Iulia in Romania) to Constantinople lasted seven, in no small part because of the conditions of the roads in Hungary (in one source one finds the complaint that from Máramaros "the road is truly

mean”). We can better understand why Gyulafehérvár was sometimes “closer” to Constantinople than Vienna or even Kassa (today Košice in Slovakia) if we take this question of distance (in space and time) into consideration.

The essay by Antal Molnár also addresses the definition of “space,” and Dániel Siptár writes on the actual physical reconquering in the eighteenth century of spaces intimately intertwined with intellectual and spiritual life, examining how the Franciscan and Jesuit orders reoccupied churches that in the period of Turkish occupation had been transformed into mosques. His analysis and the detailed description of the process of mental and sacral reoccupation are complemented by the insights offered by Balázs Sudár, who examines the earlier station in this history, i.e. the process of the transformation of Christian churches into Islamic places of prayer. Szabolcs Varga offers perhaps the best example of the historical mutability of the mental map. He makes insightful observations concerning the spread of Bosnian heroic epics. The cities of Eszék (today Osijek in Croatia), Kanizsa, and Mohács all figure unambiguously as parts of Bosnia in these texts. Indeed Mohács is depicted as the geographical and historical center of the Bosnian heroic epics, a genuine *lieu de mémoire*.

Sándor Bene presents the history of a communal concept of space that is both anachronistic and, given its mutability, could even be considered fictive. The definition of Illyria became an important question, particularly following the Christian reconquering of the region. In this context, Bene compares the image of Illyria of Luigi Fernando Marsigli (who was committed to the neo-stoic, absolutist-rationalist concept of the state, but showed a lifelong patriotism only for his native city of Bologna) with the illusionary mappings composed on the basis of a legendary past of Pavao Vitezović Ritter and György Rátkay’s expansive notion of the territory of Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia.

The other essays in the volume all address questions of identity formation and self-definition and the world of public representation, whether self-representation or representations of the enemy or the Other (Árpád Mikó, Erika Kiss, Ibolya Gerelyes, Emese Pásztor). An essay by three younger contributors to the volume examines representations of the Other, the enemy. Each of the three essays draws on sources that have been heretofore unfamiliar to Hungarian scholarship. Borbála Gulyás, for instance, presents the images of the Turks used in celebrations and ceremonies in the Habsburg court, adding important observations regarding how these depictions figure in the all’antica rendering in these games (which are essentially chivalric and medieval in their origins) and how the plots begin to acquire allegorical significance after 1570.

Steven J. Mock recently published a book<sup>2</sup> on how defeats were used by communities for their power in the formation of national identities. While the examples to which he refers are taken from the twentieth century (Israel, Serbia, Ghana), the observations he makes are relevant to the study of identity formation in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Hungary. If one seeks to offer a persuasive answer to the question as to why defeats are so important in the formation of national identity (one thinks of Mohács, Sziget, or even the Battle of Vezekény (today Vozokany in Slovakia), this is because historical consciousness, unlike other forms of commemorating the past (such as mythology), demands authenticity. Trauma, whether individual or communal, is always authentic. Trauma offers an unquestionably solid source for the formation of identity. It would be worth examining thoroughly what these defeats meant for Hungarian historical consciousness of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, how they can be narrated, and what theological, poetic, and political ideologies must be constructed to create a context in which their significance can be grasped. The volume also makes clear (in particular the extensive research work of Pál Fodor and Balázs Sudár) that we still know very little of the Ottoman-Turkish literature that was written in Hungary. Fodor's essay provides a point of departure for the study of what the Ottomans knew of the Christian faith, but it would be nice to learn a bit more about what they knew of the denominational conflicts of the Reformation and the extent to which they deliberately used the fault lines among people of the Christian faith for political gain. Péter Méhes offers an excellent example of how the Muslims at least took an interest in Hungarian history: the Sanjak-bey of Mohács went with eighteen of his mounted retinue to the home of Benedek Víg and asked him to translate the "Hungarian Bonfinius."

In recent decades international scholarly literature has devoted considerable attention to the study of the origins and elements of images of the enemy in humanistic and later national historiography throughout Europe. This volume constitutes an important contribution to our understanding of how the image of the other was formed and transformed in Hungary.

*Translated by Thomas Cooper*

Gábor Kiss Farkas

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2 Steven J. Mock, *Symbols of Defeat in the Construction of National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

A művelt arisztokrata: A magyarországi főnemesség olvasmányai a XVI-XVII. században [The Erudite Aristocrat: The Reading Materials of the Hungarian Aristocracy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries]. By István Monok. Budapest–Eger: Kossuth Kiadó–Eszterházy Károly Főiskola, 2012. 470 pp.

What kinds of books did an aristocrat read or at least browse through in Hungary in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? This book offers an answer to this question, providing, after a few short introductory chapters, 23 analyses of the books known to have been kept by 23 different aristocratic families.

The aristocracy has always been one of the focal points of interest among historians of Europe and in particular Central Europe in the early modern era, as is clearly illustrated by a plethora of comprehensive works and detailed monographs published in recent decades. I would mention the works of Lawrence Stone, Jonathan Dewald, and Petr Mat’ a, which analyze the educational, cultural, economic, and political strategies of the aristocracy of individual countries or the entire continent.<sup>1</sup> In the case of Hungary, in spite of the fact that the role of the aristocracy was by no means less significant than in other European countries, similar comprehensive works have not yet been published, although in recent years significant research has been underway, for instance in the field of the cultural world of the aristocracy.<sup>2</sup>

István Monok also approaches the subject from this perspective, the perspective of the history of reading. This interdisciplinary approach (which in German has come to be referred to as “Historische Leseforschung”) began to emerge in the 1970s. One of the intentions was to begin to go beyond traditional literary history by considering the book supply and book erudition of various

1 Lawrence Stone–Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540–1880* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Jonathan Dewald, *The European Nobility 1400–1800*, New Approaches to European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Petr Mat’ a, *Svět české aristokracie 1500–1700* (Prague: Nakl. Lidové noviny, 2004).

2 Recent Hungarian research is best represented by the following volumes: Katalin Péter, ed., *Beloved Children. History of Childhood in Hungary in the Early Modern Age* (Budapest: CEU, 2000); Nóra G. Etényi and Ildikó Horn, eds., *Idővel paloták... Magyar udvari kultúra a 16–17. században* [Palaces in Time... Hungarian Court Culture in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries] (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2005); Klára Papp–Levente Püski, eds., *Arisztokrata életpályák és életviszonyok* [Aristocratic Careers and Lifestyles], *Speculum Historiae Debreceniense*, 4 (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Történelmi Intézete, 2009); Anna Fundarkova–István Fazekas, eds., *Die ungarische Aristokratie und der Wiener Hof in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Forthcoming, Vienna: Ungarischen Geschichtswissenschaft, 2013).

ages from the perspective of the reader (see the works mentioned on pp.30-31). István Monok is one of the most prominent representatives of this approach in Hungary. As a librarian, college and university professor, and director of the National Széchenyi Library he has played an active role now for some 30 years in the collection, editing, and publication of sources relevant to the study of the history of reading in Hungary. He has also authored numerous articles on book erudition in Hungary in the early modern era. In 2010 he collected those articles that pertain to the reading habits of the aristocracy, to which he added some new chapters to make a monograph. This monograph, which Monok defended in 2011 as his academic doctoral dissertation, has now been published as a book. The preface to the book, which constitutes one of several introductory chapters, offers a discussion of how the terms in the title are to be understood in the case of “Hungary” (it refers to the Hungarian Kingdom, including Slavonia, but not the territories under Ottoman rule or the Transylvanian Principality and who can be considered an “aristocrat”. Monok does not give a detailed answer to the latter question, but rather refers to the conclusions of the research group headed by Katalin Péter.<sup>3</sup> It would have been preferable, in order to prevent misunderstandings, to have given a bit more attention to the precise meanings of this term or perhaps even to have included a short social-historical introduction, since in subsequent chapters the terms “noble” (“nemes”) and “aristocrat” (“főnemes”) are often used apparently interchangeably. One of the members of the committee that assessed the book as a doctoral dissertation made a similar mistake, contending (inaccurately) that the distinction between the aristocracy and the lesser nobility was foreign to society at the time and is insignificant from the perspective of cultural history. While a precise specification of what is meant by the term “aristocracy” (as the most prominent part of the nobility) no doubt is only possible on the basis of some consensus among historians,<sup>4</sup> in Hungary a clear legal distinction was drawn between the common nobility and the aristocracy as of the fifteenth century, and there is widespread consensus in Hungarian historiography that this legal difference was a reflection of an

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3 “A magyar arisztokrácia családi kapcsolatrendszere a 16–17. században” [The System of Family Networks of the Hungarian Aristocracy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries], 2006–2008, accessed May 29, 2013, <http://archivum.piarista.hu/arisztokrata>. – Here three aspects of public law were taken into consideration: highest office-bearers of the kingdom, aristocratic titles granted by the king, and personal invitations to the diet.

4 Petr Mat’á, *Svět české aristokracie*, 12–15.

actual social difference.<sup>5</sup> (An aristocrat was not a nobleman. As of 1553 every charter elevating someone to the status of baron included the text, “e coetu et numero nobilium eximendum, ... in numerum, coetumque baronum ... recepimus”). Furthermore it is unquestionably the case that the greater financial means enjoyed by the owners of castles and adjacent major estates, together with the broad networks and consequent social capital of national officials created cultural opportunities that were far more difficult to attain for other members of society and indeed were sometimes only within reach through ties to members of the aristocracy (on the mutual use of court libraries see pp.29–30). Thus aristocrats also played a key role in the field of culture.

The second part of the introduction addresses questions of interpretation. It touches, for instance, on geographical differences within the country (the disadvantageous condition of Transylvania), the lack of a prospering book trade (as a consequence of which even wealthy aristocrats were somewhat at the mercy of foreign book salesmen), and, simply, a widespread lack of practical usage of books. Knowledge of economics was not gleaned, in general, from books, nor for that matter was knowledge of schooling and education. Of the rich literature on education, for instance, only works of moral philosophy and *principum specula* (books containing instructions for rulers on various aspects of rule) made it to Hungary.

The next chapter examines the types of sources on reading and book history, first and foremost the various book lists, but also other kinds of data (such as letters, book recommendations, comments and marks of ownership in surviving books). The section on catalogues is particularly interesting (pp.38–41). These finding aids were clear signs of deliberate and systematic use of libraries and indeed themselves constitute important sources.

Regrettably only a few have survived. Only two collections of the era survive that comprise (complete with a contemporary catalogue) the library of a Hungarian aristocrat (or aristocratic family) in its entirety as of the seventeenth century (the books of Miklós Zrínyi in the Library of the University of Zagreb and the Esterházy library in Kismarton [Eisenstadt, Austria] and Moscow).

The last chapter of the introductory section addresses the influence of the book culture of the Hungarian royal court and the court of the Transylvanian Principality. The author captures the first only in the afterlife of *Bibliotheca*

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5 Cf. the entry “*nemes*” [noble] by János Kalmár in *Magyar művelődéstörténeti lexicon* [Encyclopedia of Hungarian Cultural History], ed. Péter Kőszeghy, vol. 8 (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2008), 159–62.

*Corviniana* (the fifteenth-century Renaissance library of King Matthias Corvinus in Buda). The (unsuccessful) attempts to reunite the dispersed collection (pp.48–51) became a symbol of the reunification of the country itself. Monk gives a brief summary of the history of the Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia, Romania) library of Transylvanian princes Gábor Bethlen and György I Rákóczi (pp.51–54), although this may have had little influence on the Hungarian aristocracy, since very few members of the aristocracy actually saw it. It might have been preferable to have examined the influence of the book culture of the *existing* (but not independent) Hungarian royal court of the Habsburgs in Vienna and Prague. However, according to the author, “Hungarian scholarship on cultural history has failed as of yet to provide a detailed study of ... the influence of the Royal Hungarian court of Prague and Vienna ... on the culture and cultural habits (and within this the habits pertaining to book collection and the support of books) of ... the aristocracy” (p.55). This is precisely why I had hoped for an overview at least as detailed as the one given of the Gyulafehérvár library. Furthermore, over the course of the past decade serious studies have been published on the cultural and social influence of the Habsburg court on Hungary, for instance with respect to music and the arts (Géza Galavics,<sup>6</sup> Petr Fidler,<sup>7</sup> Péter Király,<sup>8</sup> Géza Pálffy,<sup>9</sup> István Fazekas<sup>10</sup> and others).

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6 Géza Galavics, “The Hungarian Royal Court and Late Renaissance Art,” *Hungarian Studies* 10 no. 2 (1995): 307–32. Géza Galavics, “Niederländer in Wien – Auftraggeber aus Ungarn. Ein unbekanntes Modell für ein Altarbild des Rubens-Schülers Jan Thomas (1669),” *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 51 (2007): 209–23.

7 Petr Fidler, “Die Bautätigkeit der Pálffys im 17. Jahrhundert und der Umbau des Schlosses Bibersburg-Cervený Kamen,” *Arx* 27 (1994): 3, 213–36.

8 Péter Király, “Wolfgang Ebner levelei Batthyány Ádámnak (1643–1650)” [Ebner Wolfgang’s Correspondence with Ádám Batthyány (1643–1650)], *Magyar Zene* 39, no. 1 (2001): 85–99. Péter Király, “Wolfgang Ebner és Wendelin Hueber levele Esterházy Lászlónak” [Ebner Wolfgang’s and Hueber Wendelin’s Letter to László Esterházy], *Magyar Zene* 39, no. 4 (2001): 375–81.

9 Géza Pálffy, “Der Wiener Hof und die ungarischen Stände im 16. Jahrhundert,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 109, no. 3–4 (2001): 346–81. Géza Pálffy, “Hofwechsel und Einflussverlust. Der ungarische Adel am Hof der Jagiellonen und am Hof Ferdinands I,” in *Maria von Ungarn (1505–1558). Eine Renaissancefürstin*, eds. Martina Fuchs and Orsolya Réthelyi, Geschichte in der Epoche Karls V., 8 (Münster: Aschendorff, 2007), 245–60.

10 István Fazekas, “A Melith-fiúk bécsi tanulmányai 1630–1631-ben” [The Melith Boys’ Studies in Vienna in 1630–1631], in *Tanulmányok Szakály Ferenc emlékére* [Essays in Memory of Ferenc Szakály], eds. Pál Fodor, Géza Pálffy, István György Tóth (Budapest: Históriaantik, 2002), 139–58; István Fazekas, “Adalékok az ifjú Bocskai István bécsi udvarban eltöltött éveire” [Additional Material on the Years Spent in the Vienna Court by István Bocskai], *Studia Caroliensia* 7, no. 1 (2006): 73–85.

This is followed by the bulk of the book, which consists of a presentation of the collections of individual aristocrats (to the extent that the sources permit, of course). The analysis of the collections of 24 Hungarian families offers a profile of the reading culture of the contemporary Hungarian aristocracy. Most of them were educated and erudite, so a basic part of their collections was comprised of school books (classics of Antiquity) and the books that they had acquired during their travels abroad. (Protestants like Mihály Forgách, János Ostrosith and Imre Thurzó traveled to Wittenberg, while Catholics traveled to Italy and Bavaria.) The collections differed considerably in their size and content, but almost all of them contained books on religious question and religious debates, as well as works on Hungarian history (authors such as Bonfini and Istvánffy). Several aristocrats were quite deliberate in their acquisition of works pertaining to Hungarian history and culture (p.151, p.205). Miklós Zrínyi even made a separate group out of such works (which he named *Historici Pannoni et orientaliium*). Surviving exemplars permit us to venture the conclusion that they do not seem to have concerned themselves much with the exteriors of the books, but some used *ex libris* that were printed and pasted into the book and even *supralibros* that were impressed into the binding. The court libraries were almost always open collections, so in addition to close family members, friends and noble servants (*familiares*) also made use of them. In some cases, the practice of collecting books as additions to libraries was guided by a clear desire to promote culture and erudition, such as in the case of Boldizsár Batthyány, who collected books for the school in Németújvár (Güssing, Austria), or Zsigmond Rákóczi, who enriched the library of the college in Sárospatak. Almost every Hungarian aristocrat supported Church institutions, to which they also donated books. Imre Forgách, for instance, provided books for the Protestant school in Trencsén (Trenčín, Slovakia), Pál Pálffy and László Rákóczi for the Franciscans in Malacka (Malacky, Slovakia) and in Sebes (Nižná Šebastová, Slovakia), and György Illésházy for the Jesuits of Trencsén. Almost every Hungarian aristocrat had books dedicated to him by clerical or lay authors. A few of them even had printing presses in operation on their estates, and not only protestants, such as Zsigmond Rákóczi in Vizsoly in northeast Hungary, but also Catholics, such as Ferenc Nádasdy in Loretton on the Lajta river, today in Burgenland, Austria.

Although the genre of the sources (most of which are inventories, catalogues, and lists) may tempt one to offer little more than dry philological musings, the book is enjoyable from start to finish, and sometimes even amusing. Monok is not afraid of making subjective (but well-founded) statements of opinion.

For instance, regarding the book list of István Csáky (1699) he comments, “I expected to find a more lavish assortment of historical works, but a significant collection had been assembled in Szepesvár nonetheless” (p.257). He is really in his element when he begins to identify the books and sketch their cultural-historical backgrounds. He is careful to keep in mind that the book lists are just that, lists. They do not necessarily mean that the books themselves were read or even seen by the (alleged) owners. In many cases Monok persuasively demonstrates that the book lists did not actually belong to a layman aristocrat, but rather were the property of a church or a relative who was bishop (p.190, p.195).

Perhaps because of the conversational style of the text, the author uses some historical terms, such as “court,” incorrectly. The term court refers to a group of people who are in a direct relationship with the aristocrat, in other words his family, understood broadly. Thus one aristocrat can have only one “court.” (The Habsburg rulers also had only one court, whatever the number of kingdoms in which they may have ruled at a given time.) The mention of “the courts of Ádám Batthyány (Németújvár, Szalónak [Stadtschlaining, Austria])” is therefore misleading, as are such statements as “began to favor the court in Kismarton” (p.142) and “the court in Biccse [Bytča, Slovakia] in the Thurzó era” (p.163). Nor was it the case that “the first element of the court system as an institution was the organization of courtly education” (p.21). The court had many functions, and while in some cases education was unquestionably among them, in Hungary in the early modern era this was by no means the first priority. The most important task of the courts in Hungary was military service.

Nonetheless, István Monok’s book is not simply a valuable and even exemplary overview of the scholarship (launched largely by him) on the history of books and reading culture, but also constitutes an important contribution to a monograph still waiting to be written on the social history of the Hungarian aristocracy in the early modern era.

*Translated by Thomas Cooper*

András Koltai

Egyház és közösség a kora újkorban: A küküllői református egyházmegye 17–18. századi iratainak tükrében. [Church and Community in the Early Modern Era: the Calvinist Diocese of Küküllő as Reflected in its Records from the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries] Néprajzi Tanulmányok. By Réka Kiss. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2011. 300 pp.

It is not easy to offer clear answers to questions pertaining to disciplinary measures and punishments meted out by the Church in early modern Transylvania. These questions offer insights into some of the contradictory aspects of everyday religious life, since the cases that were dealt with by the Church and/or secular tribunals exemplify (as a kind of photonegative image of everyday piety) people's expectations concerning legal practice and the means of asserting community norms. The rulings and verdicts that Réka Kiss has made the subject of her inquiry offer vivid depictions of the motives behind civil legal cases in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Transylvania and the explanations of their religious underpinnings, not to mention the criminology of pastoral transgressions or explanations of "liberals" who sought to escape the punishment of the Church. Kiss' study strengthens the viewpoint according to which one can glean an understanding of the era not simply from the religious disputes or the correspondence of a few famous writers. Rather, as her study aptly illustrates, a confession, a ruling noted in a record of evidence, or even an *Urbarium* can offer new interpretive perspectives. In this case the historian is not assessing one principle or secular or religious maxim in comparison with another, but rather measuring the extent to which political or religious expectations are realized in everyday life. In this case, she assesses a Church law, which is in principle founded on ideals, in the context of its actual enforcement.

The book is divided into eight chapters. The first three chapters, which comprise roughly a third of the volume, are historical in nature and provide the necessary demographic, sociological, and ethnographical background information. The style is precise and energetic. Kiss offers a pithy summary of historical, ethnographical, and theological approaches adopted thus far. The sources for the three longest chapters (the fifth, sixth, and seventh, which together make up half of the book) are the diocesan documents of Küküllő that were preserved and published in part by Imola Küllős and in part by Dezső Buzogány, Sándor Ósz and Levente Tóth (records of partial synods and

visitation records, accounts, correspondence, etc.).<sup>1</sup> The titles of the chapters are taken from the various problems of Church discipline in question, as well as issues relating to marriages, ethical affairs concerning preachers, and the norms of the community. The last chapter examines the question as to how excommunication, as the last disciplinary measure in Church law, was actually implemented in practice.

The first chapter offers an overview of the history of the scholarship on the subject. The second presents the economic, legal, and religious history of the Kis-Küküllő region and the estates of the Apafi and Bethlen families. The question of discipline within the church has rarely been made the subject of study in Hungary, in contrast with scholarship in Western Europe. While English, French, German, and Swiss scholars of Protestantism have long debated the topics, methodologies, and wide spectrum of diverse conclusions, Kiss can rely on no similar sources or analyses concerning the situation in Hungary. In its assessments of sources from Transylvanian (and within Transylvania, the city of Kolozsvár, today Cluj in Romania) church archives that have been published over the course of the past fifteen years, recent scholarship has had to build largely on interpretations from the turn of the century or the interwar period. In part as a consequence of this, Kiss has accepted the role of mediator, beginning each individual chapter with an introduction of the history of scholarship on the subject, the use of terminology, and information regarding the sources, and then drawing comparisons with international trends. Only then does she begin her analyses of the questions she raises regarding church discipline. The reader finds stimulating micro-analyses of the early modern

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1 *Gyülekezeti élet és vallási szokások a Küküllői Református Egyházmegyében* [Congregational Life and Religious Customs in the Reformed Diocese of Küküllő], ed. Imola Küllős, Vallási néprajz 7 (Budapest: Református Egyház Teológiai Doktorok Kollégiumának Egyházi Néprajzi Szekciója, 1995); *A történelmi Küküllői Református Egyházmegye egyházközségeinek történeti katasztere* [The Historical Cadaster of the Parishes of the Reform Diocese of Historical Küküllő], 1648–1800, vols 4, ed. Dezső Buzogány, Sándor Előd Ósz, and Levente Tóth, Erdélyi Református Egyháztörténeti Adatok 1 (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület, 2008–11); *A hunyad-zarándi református egyházközségek történeti katasztere* [The Historical Cadaster of the Reform Parishes of Hunyad-Zaránd], 1608–1807, vols 3, ed. Dezső Buzogány and Sándor Előd Ósz, Erdélyi Református Egyháztörténeti Adatok 2 (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület, 2003–2007); *A Hunyad-zarándi Református Egyházmegye parciális zsinatainak végzése, 1686–1718, 1815–1820* [The Decrees of the Partial Synods of the Reform Parish of Hunyad-Zaránd, 1686–1718, 1815–1820], ed. Dezső Buzogány, Sándor Előd Ósz, and Levente Tóth, Erdélyi Református Egyháztörténeti Adatok 4 (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület, 2007); *A Küküllői Református Egyházmegye parciális zsinatainak végzése, 1638–1720* [The Decrees of the Partial Synods of the Reform Parish of Küküllő, 1638–1720], ed. Dezső Buzogány, Sándor Előd Ósz, and Levente Tóth, Erdélyi Református Egyháztörténeti Adatok 6 (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület, 2008).

model of weddings and marriage (which differs considerably from that of today), the history of church and secular legal structures in Hungary (which often intersected), and legal and practical changes in profanity and divorce, which can be discerned in the period dating from the time of Peter Melius (who served as Bishop of Debrecen from 1558 to 1572) to the eighteenth century. Specifically because she has adopted this approach, which shows due consideration for her readership, Kiss' book is something of a milestone for specialists in the field. As she raises questions, she acquaints her reader with the fundamental aspects of the history of the Reformation, both in Hungary and Transylvania, by providing information about the history of scholarship on the subject, and she always keeps pace with the international historical, ethnographical, and theological secondary literature.

The third chapter presents the history of church discipline in the Reformed Church from the Reformation to the eighteenth century. The fourth chapter complements this presentation with comparative statistical data. It touches on the history of the differences and divisions between the church tribunals and secular courts regarding matters of discipline and punishment, changes that took place in the interpretation of the principle of Presbyterianism, and the linguistic schematism and potential uses and limitations of the sources. At the end of the fourth chapter the author notes that in the case of Transylvanian Protestantism differences in the sheer numbers of sources are very significant in comparison with data on dioceses in Western Europe. While in the west one finds a rich array of sources dating from the sixteenth century, in the case of Transylvania one must wait until the eighteenth century to find anything comparable. Furthermore, not only does one sometimes find ten times as many sources in the west as in Hungary or Transylvania, these sources are also far more detailed and consistently organized. As administrative documents, the sources in the case of Hungary and Transylvania seem far more contingent and haphazard. The thematic difference is also interesting, as Kiss has illustrated with a table. In the cities of Nîmes or Geneva, for instance, questions regarding church discipline were raised (and committed to paper) more times in a single year than in the city of Ebesfalva (today Dumbrăveni, before 1930 Ibaşfalău in Romania) over the course of the entire period in question. They also were given a different order of importance in Emden (for instance) than they were in Sövényfalva (today Corneşti in Romania). An analysis of the Transylvanian data from the eighteenth century reveals that affairs related to marriage, scandals involving church officials, and transgressions of communal norms were considered the

greatest offences, though of these, affairs related to marriage were the most common, even among the cases addressed by the church tribunal.

I would add a few notes regarding the topics of the three longer chapters, the fifth, sixth, and seventh. The majority of matrimonial cases in the seventeenth century consist of issues pertaining to the making and breaking of marriages, that is engagement and divorce. These documents pertain to the broadest social layer, and the goal of the church authorities in general was arbitration. They had a variety of tools at their disposal, ranging from reprimands through refusals to dissolve the marital bond in question to fines. Perhaps not surprisingly, the language of complaints and accusations reflects the language of a kind of subculture and is rife with profanity, insinuation, and aspersion. Reasons for ending an engagement or dissolving a marriage included estrangement, differing physical or spiritual desires, and licentiousness (or allegations of licentiousness leveled against a woman accused of reveling in taverns, in other words a stereotype), though Church records from seventeenth-century Debrecen (for instance) are swarming with mention of indications of the use of magic or witchcraft (including possession by the devil, meddling by Gypsy sorcerers, slaves bought from the Turks, secret baptisms, etc.).<sup>2</sup> In other words, in comparison with the mild stories of village marriage and divorce that Kiss has uncovered through her study of the Küküllő sources, one finds, in the same period, a shockingly medieval urban world. In Gógánváralja (today Gogan Varolea in Romania) and Debrecen one discerns signs of folk piety, Protestant trends notwithstanding, and even references to the use of white and black magic. Thus a reader who finds Kiss' book an engaging inquiry will want to continue study by examining additional sources.

The affairs of preachers constitute 12 percent of the Küküllő sources, and other religious cases make up another 15 percent. Kiss has given due attention to the social status of the people who played significant roles in the church, their financial circumstances and incomes, and their rights and obligations as appointed representatives of the Church. She also provides a precise assessment of the motives behind the various decisions. She concludes (quite astutely) that often the archdeacons and visiting church officials ruled prudently and with

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2 Debreceni Református Egyházmegye közgyűlési jegyzőkönyvei [Assembly Records of the Reformed Diocese of Debrecen], see: A Tiszántúli Református Egyházkerület Levéltára [The Archive of the Reformed Diocese of the Trans-Tisza Region] (Debrecen), I. 31. a) 2. k. (1655–1737); Debreceni magisztrátusi jegyzőkönyvek [Magisterial Records of Debrecen], see: Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Levéltár [Hajdú-Bihar County Archive] (Debrecen), IV. A. 1011/a, 14–17. k. (1656–1670).

restraint, endeavoring through sentences of public penance, for instance, to bring the lost lamb (as it were) back into the fold. Kiss has shrewdly discerned possible interpretive tendencies in the seemingly schematic language of the ascertainments and the rulings, citing the opinions and assertions of both sides of a case and finding, in the dense Church records, explanations for the events.

One notes that in the eighteenth-century Küküllő sources one finds little trace of cases that had frequently surfaced in the Church records a century earlier, such as the question of devotional inclination (the opposition of Orthodox and Puritan, or over-zealous pietist). Given the historical and social context, other problems arose, such as debates regarding the scope of authority of given representatives of the church (between preacher and cantor) and the lure of local customs (the tension between economic practices and religious proscriptions, such as the proscription against working on Sundays). Most of the time the cases involved recidivists whose opposition to the administration of justice by the Church must have been difficult to subdue. For instance, the authorities struggled for some thirty years to discipline a couple, Mr. and Mrs. Kocsis from Balsavár apparently with little success, and the case of Mihály Kendi, who because of the lack of qualified people continued to serve as a member of the clergy in spite of the fact that he had been the cause of numerous scandals, also indicates the difficulties the Church had with the effective administration of discipline.

Kiss has made thorough use of the sources and established quite persuasively that even within the region there were varying models of discipline within the Church. As historians we have systematic records at our disposal from the seventeenth century (sources from the region west of the Tisza river and manuscripts from Debrecen) and the eighteenth century (for instance sources from the region west of the Tisza River, which were published by Dénes Dienes), and also sources from Transylvania (which were published by an active group of historians and theologians from Kolozsvár).<sup>3</sup> One can find ample confirmation of Kiss' contention according to which in the early modern period a model evolved in Hungarian Calvinist regions that differed significantly from the West European Calvinist models. This is true of other aspects of church institutions

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3 On the assembly records of the Reformed Diocese of Debrecen see the second footnote. Dénes Dienes, ed., *Református egyházlátogatási jegyzőkönyvek, 16–17. század* [Records of the Visitations of the Reformed Church, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries] (Budapest: Osiris, 2001). For the publications from Cluj see the first footnote.

and the practice of law in Transylvania and Royal Hungary, as English historians have already noted (such as Robert J. W. Evans and Graeme Murdock). In other words one arrives at entirely different conclusions if one studies the other sources according to the same approach, since the context in the case of the city of Debrecen, for instance, is entirely different in its social background and ethnology, and therefore in its unwritten laws and religious customs (in particular in a Presbyterian region west of the Tisza River). And one could also mention individual aspects and differences, since in some cases the emergence of the new model of the era of personalities is plainly evident in the notary's choice of subjects, the comments on particular cases, or the deliberations themselves (one thinks for instance of Bishop János Dadai or the administrative attitude of György Simon Bonyhai, a reformed bishop of Transylvania).

One can only fully grasp the significance of these church inquests and rulings if one considers them in comparison with the secular administration of justice. Let me offer an example of one such comparison. In Debrecen in the middle of the seventeenth century a thief who had also been convicted of murder was sentenced to have his hands cut off, his body flayed and broken on the wheel, and finally burnt at the stake on the main square of the city. This was all performed according to a theatrical ritual held where the crime had been committed and in the presence of the family members of the victim and accompanied by the sacred text of a public confession and repentance. In comparison, an unmarried woman who was pregnant was denounced by the preacher. Following this public denouncement, she had to sit on the stone of shame and was forbidden to take the place that she would have had in the Church in accordance with her social position for three weeks. She then had to perform public penance, which in the culture in which she lived may well have been comparable with spiritual torture. But by the eighteenth century the secular tribunals did not use the same medieval deterrents, and in tandem the Transylvanian Calvinist church order, which was facing increasing pressure from the Catholic Church and the Habsburg government, was unable to be as severe in its measures as it had been a century earlier. In other words, in the new historical context questions pertaining to disciplinary measures within the Church had to be dealt with differently, and this demanded wisdom and minimal use of the principle of subsidiarity. There were individuals who took advantage of the legal lacunae in this seemingly weak discipline and simply ignored the admonitions of the Church.

Réka Kiss' monograph offers a persuasive picture of the prevailing circumstances of Calvinist life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

and the gradual shifts in these circumstances from the evolving process of confessionalization until the Enlightenment. Using the records of diocesan synods and visitation records, she has conjured an image of a bygone world as seen from the perspective of church discipline, a frontier in scholarship on church history, legal history, and ethnographical history in Hungary in Transylvania.

*Translated by Thomas Cooper*

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