

The *Eastern European History Review* is an international and interdisciplinary annually online and open access peer-reviewed journal about studies on Central and Eastern Europe in the Modern Age (XV–XIX). The Journal is also the expression of the Study Center CESPoM (Centro Studi sull'età dei Sobieski e della Polonia Moderna – Center Study on the Age of Sobieski and Modern Poland) of the University of Tuscia, born in 1997.

It publishes articles with significant approaches and original interpretations in all research fields concerning Central and Eastern Europe, with specific attention to the History Sciences.

This special issue of *Eastern European History Review* addresses the complex and intense history of Christian-Ottoman relations in Central and Eastern Europe during the Early Modern Period. Tracing the salient moments and facts with battles, border issues, diplomacy and intelligence, the volume – with the participation of authors from different parts of Europe and Türkiye – constitutes an international opportunity to analyze topics that continually offer new study themes.

Central and South-Eastern Europe between the Christian world and the Ottoman world: conflicts, encounters and compromises (XVI–XVIII centuries), edited by the Turkish historian Canan Parmaksızoğlu Aksoy, is the result of research and scientific collaboration between the CESPoM Study Center and Vilmos Fraknói Vatican Historical Research Group (ELKH-PPKE-PTE).

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Edited by Canan Parmaksızoğlu Aksoy



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**CENTRAL AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE
BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN AND OTTOMAN WORLDS:
CONFLICTS, ENCOUNTERS AND COMPROMISES
(XVI–XVIII CENTURIES)**

Edited by
Canan Parmaksızoğlu Aksoy

Co-edited by
Katalin Nagy

Special Participation of
Vilmos Fraknói Vatican Historical Research Group (ELKH-PPKE-PTE)



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EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY REVIEW: LA RIVISTA

Il Comitato redazionale e scientifico è lieto di presentare al pubblico la rivista scientifica *Eastern European History Review*.

Con un carattere internazionale e interdisciplinare, una cadenza annuale e una fruibilità *open access* la rivista focalizza i propri interessi sulle dinamiche occorse nell'Europa Orientale durante tutta l'età moderna (XIV-XIX). *Eastern European History Review* è espressione del Centro Studi dell'Università della Tuscia CESPoM (Centro Studi sull'età dei Sobieski e della Polonia Moderna) nato nel 1997 per intuizione del Prof. Gaetano Platania, Direttore Emerito della Rivista.

L'iniziativa editoriale che presentiamo nasce dall'evidente mancanza in Italia di una rivista scientifica relativa alla storia dell'Europa centro-orientale in Età Moderna, nonostante la penisola abbia giocato un ruolo fondamentale per la Storia e la Cultura di una parte integrante del continente, a torto considerata come lontana e periferica.

Consapevoli di questo, il Comitato ha posto quale obiettivo primario della *Eastern European History Review* quello di offrire uno spazio di riflessione e di discussione su temi che appartengono alla storia dell'Europa centro-orientale, e insieme alle relazioni - politiche e culturali - che questa vasta area del Vecchio Continente ha avuto con l'occidente d'Europa, e l'Italia in particolare, incoraggiando il dialogo tra studiosi e esperti di settore, e tra differenti approcci della ricerca scientifica.

Il Comitato Redazionale e Scientifico

EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY REVIEW: THE JOURNAL

The Editorial and Scientific Board are proud delighted to present the *Eastern European History Review* under the aegis of Sette Città Editore.

The *Eastern European History Review* is an international and interdisciplinary annually online and open access peer-reviewed journal about studies on Central and Eastern Europe in the Modern Age (XIV-XIX). The Journal is also the expression of the Study Center CESPoM (Centro Studi sull'età dei Sobieski e della Polonia Moderna – Center Study on the Age of Sobieski and Modern Poland) of the University of Tuscia, born in 1997, from an idea of Prof. Gaetano Platania, today Director Emeritus of this journal.

It publishes articles with significant approaches and original interpretations in all research fields concerning Central and Eastern Europe, with specific attention to the History sciences.

The editorial initiative we present comes from the obvious lack of a journal, in Italy, concerning the history of Central and Eastern Europe during the Modern Age, this despite its fundamental role in the history and culture of that part of the continent, wrongly considered distant and peripheral.

Quite the contrary is true, in fact. Main objective of the journal is to create a space for reflection and discussion on topics pertaining to Central and Eastern Europe, but also relations with Continental Europe, encouraging dialogue between scholars and experts in the field, and between different approaches of scientific research.

The Editorial and Scientific Board

SUMMARY

Canan Parmaksızoğlu Aksoy <i>Introduction</i>	9
Vilmos Fraknói Vatican Historical Research Group (ELKH-PPKE-PTE) <i>Presentation</i>	13
Katalin Nagy, Giulio Merlani <i>Gregorio XIII e l'Europa orientale: la visita apostolica del vescovo di Stagno Bonifacio de Stefani</i>	13
Florin Nicolae Ardelean <i>Contested Borderlands: war and territorial disputes between Transylvania and the Ottoman Empire (1594-1595)</i>	29
Gabriel-Felician Croitoru <i>The borders between Wallachia and the Giurgiu Kaza, an area of conflict and cooperation on the Imperial Ottoman Danube limes</i>	43
Tamás Kruppa <i>The written and oral disputes of István Szántó (Arator)</i>	59
Gábor Nemes <i>Instead of Anti-Ottoman help an Anti-Imperial League papal nuncio Giovanni Francesco Capi's mission of 1526</i>	71
Adrian Magina <i>"Nos Christiani qui habitamus in hac urbe Temesuar". Christians and Ottomans in Timișoara in the second half of 16th century</i>	83
Livia Magina <i>"Novitates de turcis scribit": spies and news about ottomans on borders of Transylvania and Southern parts up to 1526</i>	97
Valentin Cseh <i>The collapse of the border fortress system against the Ottoman Empire between 1521 and 1527</i>	111

Tamás Fedeles <i>From the army of King Matthias to the service of God. A case study on the role of the apostolic penitentiary in the promotions of clerics in the time of King Matthias Corvinus</i>	139
Viktor Kanász <i>Nuncio Girolamo Martinengo's reports on the military events of 1552</i>	161
Ágnes Szalai <i>Conflicts of joint sovereignty on the border of the Principality of Transylvania and the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 17th century</i>	179
Piotr Chmiel <i>A third way. An attempt to reorient history of early modern Venetian/Italian connections with the Ottoman Empire and its borderlands</i>	199
Canan Parmaksızoğlu Aksoy <i>Events that took place in the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice: from the Cretan War (1645-1669) to the Alliance of 1684 according to Ottoman and Venetian sources</i>	215
Harun Tuncer <i>"News in papers are not that much credible!". Abdulhamid I and the efforts to follow the European press</i>	231
VARIA SECTION	
Michał Hirsch <i>The role of cardinal protectors of the Polish Crown in embassies of obedience in the 16th century – preparations for missions, ceremonies and diplomacy</i>	251
Bibliocard Csák Krisztina Csilla <i>I Barberini e l'Europa</i> , Acta Barberiana, vol. 5, edited by Tusor Péter and Boccolini, Alessandro. Viterbo: Sette Città, 2022.	277

INTRODUCTION

The advance of the Ottoman Empire in Europe in the Modern Age posed a threat to many European states. The conquest of Constantinople (later İstanbul) during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (the Conqueror) in the XV century, followed by the Otranto expedition and siege, the Ottoman advance in Central Europe during the reign of Sultan Suleyman I in the XVI century, particularly the Siege of Vienna, as well as the successes of Chief Admiral Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha in the Mediterranean and many other similar events generated a sense of anxiety and fear in Europe for centuries. As a matter of fact, the phrase *Mamma li Turchi!*, used by Italians even today in response to negative events, dates back to this historical Turkish threat and the negative feeling it generated, which has its roots in the XV and XVI centuries.

It is rather challenging to cover such a broad subject as the relations between the Ottoman Empire and European states in the Modern Age, especially between the 16th and 18th centuries, in an introduction. However, in order to understand the dynamics between the Ottoman Empire and the Christian world, it would be useful to go back a little further and give a brief overview of how the parties viewed each other as an introduction to the subject. Starting from the Late Middle Ages until the middle of the Modern Age, the East and the West, in other words, the two worlds comprised mostly of Muslims and Christians, were in constant interaction with each other in a relationship that alternated between wars and trade. However, the fear became a dominant emotion in this intense and dynamic relationship from the XV century onwards. Although the world order changed due to geographical discoveries, the main region where the conflict of control and domination took place was the Mediterranean and Central-Eastern Europe. On the one hand, there was the Western Christian world, which had entered a new era with the Thirty Years' War and the Peace of Westphalia, and on the other was the Ottoman Empire, which had conquered Byzantium and its culture. From another perspective, it can be deduced that the conflict between these two sides evolved from a clash of "civilizations" to a clash of "powers" and gained a stronger political character at least since the XVI century¹. At this point, it is necessary to underline the differences between Western historiography and Ottoman historiography. For a long time, contrary to what Western historiography suggests, the Ottoman Empire did not carry out its conquests with the aim of forcibly converting the peoples of the conquered regions to Islam, however mainly aimed to expand the borders of the Empire². The distinguished Turkish historian Professor Halil İnalcık provided in his works important information on Ottoman conquest policy. For example, how the Ottomans conquered the Christian Balkans and managed to establish themselves there for so long remain a historical question even today. According to the old theory, Ottoman rule was manifested by force and persecution and lasted

1 Franco Cardini, *Il Turco a Vienna. Storia del grande assedio del 1683* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2011), 4.

2 Marko Jacov, *L'Europa tra conquiste ottomane e leghe sante* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana), 255.

as a regime of exploitation under the control of a military class of Sipahi³. However, according to the current historical analysis derived from research based on Ottoman archive documents, the Ottoman Empire was able to persuade the local Christian populations to peace and reconciliation thanks to the principles of *istimalet*⁴ and *aman* which meant looking out for the people, especially non-Muslim subjects, and treating them with clemency. The Ottoman Empire always offered the opponent three chances to surrender, and if the offer was accepted, a sworn “ahdname”⁵ guaranteed the opponent’s security of life and property. These guarantees were rigorously implemented, and many conquests were accomplished by this way. In fact, speaking about the Balkans again, it is known that Orthodox Greeks and Slavs often viewed the Ottoman regime as a protector of their Church. In addition, one of the main reasons for the long-lasting Ottoman rule in the conquered lands was the Ottoman tax-land system. Unlike the old feudal system, this system guaranteed the peasant’s land use through the *mîrî* land (State owned land that was transferred to those who use the right of disposition) regime⁶.

The Ottomans have been called “Turks” by the Western world for centuries. In the Modern Age, fear for the “Turk” has manifested as activities and efforts of “marginalization”, “vilification” and therefore “disparagement”. Turks have been the main representative of the “other” for Europeans for centuries, from the very beginning of Muslim-Christian contact⁷. However, the Ottoman Empire was not only a source of fear for the Western world, but also a source of great curiosity and fascination. In the West, most literary scientific works were written against the Ottomans, who were described as “*infidel*”. Thus, for centuries, the Ottomans were not only unlikeable and feared by Europeans, but also appealing and attractive. In addition to being “foreigners” for historical and geographical reasons, their traditions became the focus of interest for researchers and scholars as they were

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- 3 The most distinguished group of the household cavalry troops in the Ottoman military system. Erhan Afyoncu, “Sipahi”, *DİA*, 37 (2009): 256-58.
 - 4 The dictionary meaning of “*istimâlet*” is «to predispose, to appeal, to win the heart». In Ottoman chronicles it meant: «to look after the people, especially non-Muslim subjects, and be lenient towards them». Treating the people of conquered places well, protecting them, ensuring the security of life and property against external enemies, granting freedom in religious matters, facilitating taxation are the main elements of Ottoman *istimâlet*. See: Mücteba İlgürel, “İstimalet”, *DİA*, 27 (2001): 362.
 - 5 A document issued by the order of the rulers to grant special rights to certain states, groups and individuals. See: Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu “Ahidname”, *DİA*, 1 (1988): 536-40.
 - 6 Halil İnalcık, *Doğu Batı, Makaleler II* (Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2008), 248, 96-110. On Ottoman provincial administration and the fief system, see also Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Klasik Çağ (1300-1600)*, trans. Ruşen Sezer (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1995), 108-23. The work was first published in English. See Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire, Classical Age (1300-1600)* (London: Nicholson Publishing, 1973).
 - 7 Mustafa Soykut, *Papalık ve Venedik Belgelerinde Avrupa’nın Birliği ve Osmanlı Devleti (1453-1683)* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2007), 17, 24.

close or neighbors. In short, many works depicting the Ottomans and providing information about them appeared in the XVI and XVII centuries⁸. In many of these works, when Western historiography tried to explain the success of Ottoman progress, the concepts such as “religious fanaticism”, “oppression”, “persecution” were used, contrary to the information given above⁹.

Today it is still evident that such images persist in Western historiography. However a significant effort in consulting Ottoman and Turkish sources by historians would lead to a more objective perspective on the complex relationships between the Ottoman and Christian worlds.

The issue of Eastern European History Review titled *Central and South-Eastern Europe between the Christian and Ottoman Worlds: conflicts, encounters and compromises (XVI-XVIII centuries)*, contains 14 articles on the topic. This issue presents articles by researchers from different countries such as Italy, Hungary, Romania, Poland and Türkiye and was prepared in collaboration with *Vilmos Fraknói Vatican Historical Research Group* (ELKH-PPKE-PTE).

I extend my sincere appreciation to the director of EEHR, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alessandro Boccolini for offering me the special editorship of this issue of the journal.

Dr. PhD. Canan Parmaksızoğlu Aksoy
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8 Giovanni Ricci, *Ossessione turca. In una retrovia cristiana dell'Europa moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), 41; Soykut, *Papalık ve Venedik Belgelerinde*, 19-24.

9 İncalcık, *Doğu Batı, Makaleler II*, 248.

THE VILMOS FRANKÓI VATICAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH GROUP (ELKH-PPKE-PTE)

The *Vilmos Fraknói Vatican Historical Research Group* of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Péter Pázmány Catholic University was established in the June of 2012 as the 'Impetus' Church History Research Group in the frame of the Church History Research Institute of the University founded by Rector Péter Erdő in 1999. It carries on independently the latter's publications (*Bibliotheca Historiae Ecclesiasticae Universitatis Catholicae de Petro Pázmány Nuncupatae*) and researches in Rome and in Vienna, with the involvement of academic and other funding sources. From 1st July 2017 onwards it performs its activity within the framework of the Supported Research Places Program of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences visualizing its goals and professional identity also in its name. The official name from 2022: ELKH-PPKE-PTE *Vilmos Fraknói Vatican Historical Research Group*.

Its examinations concentrate decisively on political, diplomatic, cultural and institutional history. Its priority task is the systematic publication and processing of sources that has been heavily neglected since the age of positivism. The Vatican collections serve as the primary place of research, completed by the relating material – primarily in thematic context – of the Hungarian and Vienna archives and manuscript collections. Its publications provide space to the results of revealing of sources and historiographic works according to their scholarly profile (*Collectanea Textuum et Studiorum*), and separately to the Hungarian researches in the Vatican due to its particular importance (*Collectanea Vaticana Hungariae*). The long-term aim of the research institute is to serve as the professional framework of the establishment and efficient operation of an independent Hungarian institute of history in Rome of purely scientific nature. Owing to its academic background it pays special attention to the education of the future historian generation, to the engagement of students in certain phases of its work.

The main international cooperative partners are: Università della Tuscia (CESPoM-Centro Studi sull'Età dei Sobieski e della Polonia Moderna), Universität Wien (Institut für Historische Theologie), Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rom, Università Pontificia Gregoriana (Facoltà di Storia e Beni Culturali della Chiesa), Archivio Apostolico Vaticano. The relevant common publications are published by Edizioni Setta Città and Duncker & Humblot

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THE WRITTEN AND ORAL DISPUTES OF ISTVÁN SZÁNTÓ (ARATOR)

ABSTRACT

In reviewing the activities of the Jesuit István Szántó (Arator), I would like to explore the very first steps of the Catholic renewal movement in Transylvania and of the recatholization process that found political support in princely power in the wake of the promulgation of the decrees of the Council of Trent. I must note, however, that my analysis of the religious dispute taking place in Nagyvárad (Grosswardein, Oradea) goes beyond merely giving an account of the specific event and aims to shed light on the spiritual horizon that so succinctly characterized Szántó, the main protagonist of the dispute.

KEYWORDS: Jesuit István Szántó; Transylvania; Nagyvárad; Religious dispute; King Stephen Báthory of Poland.

In reviewing the activities of the Jesuit István Szántó (Arator), I would like to explore the very first steps of the Catholic renewal movement in Transylvania and of the recatholization process that found political support in princely power in the wake of the promulgation of the decrees of the Council of Trent¹. I must note, however, that my analysis of the religious dispute taking place in Nagyvárad (Grosswardein, Oradea) goes beyond merely giving an account of the specific event and aims to shed light on the spiritual horizon that so succinctly characterized Szántó, the main protagonist of the dispute.

In 1571, Stephen Báthory ascended to the throne of the Principality of Transylvania, and in 1576 he was crowned King of Poland. His programme as a ruler focused on the recatholization of the principality and on the war against the Ottomans, and with the crushing of the coup staged by Transylvanian pretender Gáspár Bekes and the prosecution of Ferenc Dávid, the leader of Transylvanian antitrinitarianism, the road was finally paved for the implementation of that programme². It was in

1 On Szántó, cf. Vilmos Fraknói, "Egy magyar jezsuita a XVI. században", *Katholikus Szemle*, 1 (1887): 385-433; Kálmán Tímár, "Szántó Arator István irodalmi tervei", *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 40/1 (1930): 34-42, 161-74; István Szántó (Arator), *Confutatio Alcorani*, ed. Lázár István Dávid (Szeged: JATE Press, 1992), 8-10; Dénes Szittyai, "Szántó (Arator) István S.J. (1540-1612) élete és munkássága", *Magyar Egyháztörténeti Vázlatok*, 6/3-4 (1994): 5-35; Csaba Szilágyi, "Szántó Arator István mint a Missio Transylvanica szervezője", in *A magyar jezsuiták küldetése a kezdetektől napjainkig* (Piliscsaba: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 2006), 131-41; Ead., "Szántó (Arator) István erdélyi és partiumi működése", *Történelmi Szemle*, 44/3-4 (2002): 255-92.

2 Antal Pirnát, *Die Ideologie der Siebenbürger Antitrinitarier in den 1570er Jahren*,

this context that in 1579 Stephen Báthory called in the Society of Jesus³. At the time, the Jesuits had but a few Hungarian members; the majority of those arriving to the Principality of Transylvania represented a wide variety of nationalities and mother tongues. Although with such few members the order could only establish a single mission in Nagyvárad, the city still played a key role in more than one aspect, for example, in terms of political representation, as the city was under the patronage of the Báthorys. One of Hungary's most popular saints, King Ladislaus I of the House of Árpád, was buried here. His sepulchre was a place of pilgrimage. Another king of Hungary, Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387-1437) also found his resting place here. The life-size statues of three Hungarian royal saints (Saint Stephen, Saint Emeric, and Saint Ladislaus) were outstanding achievements of the International Gothic in Hungary⁴, however, Ottoman troops occupying the city in 1660 destroyed them in religious fervour as monuments of idolatry. The country having been riven into three parts – 1. Royal Hungary, which remained under Habsburg rule; 2. Ottoman Hungary; 3. Principality of Transylvania – Nagyvárad occupied a geopolitically significant location right at the triple border, both defending the roads leading to the Kingdom of Hungary and blocking further Ottoman expansion in Hungary, which also granted it key strategic importance. Last but not least, the city was home to a Catholic community of several thousand⁵.

By this period of time, Nagyvárad – a city with strong Catholic ecclesiastical traditions and a significant population of believers professing Catholicism – was already overwhelmingly Protestant as a result of the Reformation. In 1584, it became the venue of a religious dispute between Calvinists and Jesuits⁶. On the following pages, I will give an account of the religious dispute held in Nagyvárad. However, before delving into the events, I believe it is important to take a closer look at the main protagonist of the dispute, one of the first Hungarian Jesuits, István Szántó (Arator), his personality, his spirituality, his historical perspective, and, in that light, his attitude towards Protestantism⁷.

Szántó belonged to the very first generation of Hungarian Jesuits. In 1560, at the age of 21, he joined the Society of Jesus in Rome, where he served as the confessor of the Hungarian pilgrims from 1575. However, we know more of his activities concerning the establishment of the Collegium Hungaricum in Rome. Setting up this institution

trans. Edith Roth (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1961), Mihály Balázs, *Early Transylvanian Antitrinitarianism (1566-1571). From Servet to Palaeologus* (Baden-Baden: Bouxviller, 1996).

- 3 Lucian Persi, *Le missioni gesuite in Transilvania e Moldavia nel Seicento* (Cluj-Napoca: EFES, 1998).
- 4 Jolán Balogh, *Varadinum. Várad vára*, vol. I-II (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982).
- 5 Tamás Kruppa, "Nagyvárad jelentősége a Báthoryak művelődés és valláspolitikájában", *Századok*, 139/4 (2005): 945-68.
- 6 For the documents: Ladislaus Lukács S.J., ed., *Monumenta Antiquae Hungariae*, vol. II (Romae: Institutum Historicum SJ, 1976), 741-48.
- 7 On this topic, cf. Tamás Kruppa, *Tradíció és propaganda keresztútján. Fejezetek Báthory Zsigmond udvarának kultúrájából* (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2015).

interfered with the interests of various circles. The Habsburgs did not welcome a seminary churning out priests and, inevitably, laying down the foundations for an independent Jesuit province in Hungary. Not to mention the fact that the cause of the Collegium found a supporter in King Stephen Báthory of Poland, a great rival of the Habsburgs, who also aspired to the throne of Hungary. The Habsburgs found Báthory's aspirations especially alarming because even though it was the Habsburg dynasty that occupied Saint Stephen's throne, the Hungarian nobility supported Báthory. They saw the Habsburgs as foreign rulers; in the person of the Polish king, however, Hungarians would have had a sovereign from within the ranks of the nation. The project of the Collegium Hungaricum also ran against the interests of the Hungarian clergy, which had serious misgivings about Jesuit expansion in the country, especially as Szántó intended to secure the Santo Stefano Rotondo and its revenues for the Collegium Hungaricum, which was at the hands of the Pauline Fathers at the time⁸. In this struggle, Hungary's clergy sided with the Pauline Fathers. Szántó was no match for all those vested interests and was doomed to fail eventually. Just a few months after it was established, the Collegium Hungaricum merged with the Collegium Germanicum (which from then on was known as the Collegium Germanicum et Hungaricum) while the pope ordered Szántó, under threat of anathema, to refrain from any further activities dedicated to the cause⁹. The fact that Szántó was an admirer of the Polish king is clearly reflected in the letters he wrote him back in Rome, while as the confessor of the Hungarian pilgrims. In those letters, he recommended that the king, whom he did not personally know, follow the examples of the royal and princely saints of the House of Árpád (namely Saint Stephen, Saint Emeric, and Saint Ladislaus) as well as of the Polish Kings Saint Stanislaus, Saint Casimir, and Władysław I, and Hungary's Matthias Corvinus. In the eyes of the Hungarians – and, therefore, of Szántó – the Árpáds and the Hunyadis represented the ideal of a nation under the rule of its own national royalty, with Szántó expecting Báthory to rid Hungary of both Habsburg and Ottoman rule.

Further proof of Szántó's patriotism is his aspiration to locate Magna Hungaria, the ancient homeland of Hungarians. In a letter dated on February 16, 1606 he wrote that the accession of Tsar Pseudo-Demetrius I to the Russian throne opened an opportunity for finding the ancient Hungarian homeland. The idea had occurred to him back during the time when, commissioned by Stephen Báthory, he had been researching historical sources on Hungarian and Polish history in the Vatican Library, and had them copied¹⁰. It must have been around this time

8 Documents of the Pauline monastery published in Lorenz Weinrich, ed., *Hungarici monasterii ordinis Sancti Pauli primi Heremitaie de urbe Roma instrumenta et priorum registra* (Roma-Budapest: Római Magyar Akadémia Fraknói Vilmos Történeti Intézet Magyar Egyháztörténeti Enciklopédia Munkaközösség, 1999); on the conflict, cf. IX.

9 Bitskey, István, *Il collegio Germanico-Ungarico di Roma: contributo alla storia della cultura ungherese in età barocca* (Roma: Viella, 1996), 33-43. For the documents themselves, cf. Ladislaus Lukács S.J., ed., *Monumenta Antiquae Hungariae*, vol. I (Romae: Institutum Historicum SJ, 1969), passim.

10 Lukács, *Monumenta*, vol. I, 672-73.

that he ran into Ricardus' account of the expedition led by Friar Julian. Back in 1236, King Béla IV of Hungary had sent out Dominican friars to locate the ancient Hungarian homeland. Friar Julian's account of his journey was also used by famous Franciscan traveller Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck. The report survives in *Liber Censuum*, a record of the financial claims of the papacy, along with other information considered to be of utmost importance¹¹.

Szántó's thinking is a curious amalgam of his ideal of a nation under a sovereign from within its own ranks and his anti-Habsburg sentiments and xenophobia, especially his anti-German attitude. In his oration written to the pope in support of the Collegium Hungaricum in Rome, he asked the Holy Father not to commingle Hungarian pilgrims with foreign nationals, and especially not with Germans because, as he wrote, the two nations harbour an inborn hatred (*naturali quomodo odium*) for one another, such hatred often being the cause of the frequent wars between the two peoples¹². Once he left home, and not long after he settled in Transylvania (1579), he also had a skirmish with his Polish superiors. When the Collegium Hungaricum, which, as I mentioned above, would have been the core institution of a Hungarian Jesuit province in its own right, was merged into the Collegium Germanicum, and Szántó – who had been quite vocal on the issue on several occasions – was silenced under the threat of anathema, Báthory decided to send Jesuits to the Transylvanian principality under the aegis of the Polish province of the order. As a natural consequence, the members of the Jesuit mission operated under Polish control, along with all other members of the order, whether they were Hungarians or of any other nationality. While in his letters to General Claudio Acquaviva, Szántó only swung broad accusations at Polish rector Jakub Wujek criticising his activities; there is little, if any, doubt that the animosity between the Jesuits was rooted in ethnic conflicts. In his letter to the provincial superior,

11 For an extract of Szántó's letter, cf. Mihály Balázs, Tamás Kruppa, et al., eds., *Jezsuita Okmánytár. Erdélyt és Magyarországot érintő iratok 1601-1606*, vol. I/2 (Szeged: JATE Press, 1995), 544-45. On Riccardo's report, cf. Lukács, *Monumenta* vol. I, 627. On accounts of the journeys made by Friar Julian, Plano Carpin and William of Rubruck and on other reports and correspondence, cf. György Györffy, ed., *Julianus barát és napkelet fölfedezése* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Kiadó, 1986).

12 Lukács, *Monumenta*, vol. I, 647. For Hungarian representatives of the major intellectual and spiritual renewal movements emerging at the end of the Middle Ages, namely humanism and devotio moderna, the terms *natio hungarica* and *patria* did not exclusively refer to the nobility but in fact included the entirety of Hungarian society, whose members were interconnected by strong ties of blood kinship. Based on shared ethnicity and kinship, this understanding of the concept of nation led to the Biblically based idea that Hungarians were the chosen people. In his sermon delivered on the day of Saint Ladislaus of the House of Árpád, Franciscan author of widespread Western European renown Osvát Laskai (Osvaldus Lasco) described this community as follows: King Ladislaus was our flesh and bone (*os nostrum caro nostra*). These ties overwrite even the Christian command of love, for even the Holy King killed Christians, and Germans for example, to defend his Hungarians and his homeland. Cf. *Sermones de sanctis... biga salutis* (1502), XLIX. sermo, RIIIr.

Szántó explained that members of any given nation will only follow the orders of the leaders of their own nationality¹³, and in fact used the same language in writing about the Polish as he had used earlier to write about Germans. He believed that Transylvania should be under the management of Hungarian superiors: What would happen, he asks, if the superior were German in Spain or Polish in Italy?

Szántó's historical perspective was also shaped in accordance with his concepts of a nation under its own national sovereign and his general xenophobia. Just like his Protestant contemporaries, Szántó also raised questions – in his case, from the Catholic standpoint – about what caused the failure of the Kingdom of Hungary and how God could allow the Kingdom of Hungary to come under the yoke of Ottoman rule. Szántó attributed Hungary's failure not to the actions or omissions of Hungarians but to heretics and foreign rule. At first glance, his opinion hardly strikes one as all that original. Heresy was frequently quoted as the root of all evil. Where, in my opinion, Szántó was indeed original is that he also blamed foreigners, in effect acquitting Hungarians, at least to some extent, of their sins, after all, both foreign rule and heresy are attributable to external causes: Hungary's own heretics had been mislead (or, to use the modern term, "brainwashed") by foreigners; consequently, they bear less of the guilt for the rape of Hungaria – the allegorical female, the last bastion of Christianity – than foreigners: the heresy of Lutheranism came from Germany, that of Calvinism from France, while Miguel Serveto hailed from Spain. On top of all this, even though after the Battle of Mohács Hungarians elected a legitimate national ruler from within their own ranks, Archduke Ferdinand (later Ferdinand I of Hungary) asserted his hereditary right and ascended to the throne of the country, splitting the nation into two factions. The struggle between those political factions was incessantly quoted by Hungarian contemporaries as one of the main causes of Hungary's failure and, as far as we understand today, it was indeed a factor in the country's Ottoman occupation. However, Szántó saw this division as a result of external, foreign intervention. In this context, it is very interesting to see how he distinguishes between Transylvanian Hungarians, whom he defines as free people not subjected to German rule (*ungari transylvanienses*) and living in peace under Ottoman rule on the one hand, and, on the other hand, their Hungarian compatriots subject to Habsburg rule. The latter had to fight a ruthless war against the Turks up until 1568, shedding their precious blood in vain just because they had elected foreign rulers to lead them (referencing Ferdinand and Maximilian of the Habsburg House)¹⁴.

For Szántó, Hungarians were a chosen people, one worthy of a unique status among all the nations of Christendom on account of its piety and saints. For him, the fact that Hungary played a role as the last bastion of Christianity against the Ottomans was a sure sign of this chosenness. For sure, he must have seen Nagyvárád itself as a lesser, regional propugnaculum or bulwark. In 1571, the fortress and the city, as well as the castle district, were under the command of Christopher Báthory, the brother of Prince Stephen Báthory of Transylvania. Christopher held this office until 1576, when he replaced his brother as the Prince of Transylvania after the

13 «naturale est ut unaquaeque natio magis erga suam afficiatu»: Lukács, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 176-77.

14 Lukács, *Monumenta*, vol. I, 723-24.

latter left for Poland as the new king of the country. From then, the fortress came under the command of János Ghiczy, a trusted follower of the Polish king. Under the supervision of Christopher Báthory, fortification works continued; however, his deeds of gift, in which he granted support to the Nagyvárád school as well as to the Saint Giles church, attest to the fact that he also tried to strengthen the Catholic community in the city. In one of the deeds, he quotes his own religious piety as the reason behind his act. As we can see, Christopher tried to improve the position of his own denomination, although he was not at all aggressive about it¹⁵. There is no trace of any resentment on behalf of the Calvinist community of Nagyvárád concerning his actions, which may be a result of the tacit deal between the city's Calvinists community and its new political leadership.

66

Historical sources dedicate much more attention to religious life under the rule of Ghiczy as the Governor of Nagyvárád. Even though the rich correspondence of the order, published by Jesuit historian László Lukács, is undoubtedly somewhat partial and often even tendentious in its reporting on the events and protagonists of the era, it still portrays the Governor of Nagyvárád as a man who may be a heretic, but a heretic with a degree of willingness to help (today we would say he demonstrated integrity in his actions). When members of the Society of Jesus arrived to the city in 1579, he received them with special attention. Similarly, when Báthory's Jesuit diplomat, Antonio Possevino¹⁶ came to town in 1583, Ghiczy, leading an illustrious cortege, received him right outside the city's gate. One year later, he was equally welcoming to Polish provincial Joannes Campano. The superior made it a point to mention that, with a view to the period of Lent, hardly any meat was served; that conversations around the table frequently revolved around matters of religions; and that when he left town, Ghiczy's senior officers and dozens of noblemen escorted him partway home. However, this attention did not focus on the order and its members but instead on the king – for hurling defiance at the king would have surely been a hazardous venture. With the support of the Prince of Transylvania behind them, the Jesuits planned to establish two schools. Campano did not fail to note that because of its location, Nagyvárád could serve well as a bridgehead from which to expand to Hungary. By writing his letter, he intended to promote the cause of the Catholic community of Nagyvárád; the Catholics had approached General Claudio Acquaviva asking him to do everything in his power to ensure that the king establishes a college in the city as soon as possible, especially with a view to the fact that the city had been without priests for over twenty years. This step certainly threatened Calvinist positions; in the light of the Jesuits' school projects, the cordial relations must have been little more than a mere façade. In

15 Tamás Kruppa, "Die Religionspolitik der Báthorys in den 1580er Jahren. Ein Versuch zur Verhinderung der protestantischen Religionspraxis (1579–1581)", in *Radical reformation. Die Unitarier in Siebenbürgen*, eds. von Ulrich A. Wien, Juliane Brandt and András F. Balogh (Köln-Weimar-Wien: Böhlau, 2012), 143–50.

16 On Possevino, cf. Vilmos Fraknói, "Egy jezsuita diplomata hazánkban", *Katholikus Szemle*, 16 (1902): 85–607, 685–707, 796–811; Jan Joseph Santich, *Missio Moscovitica: the role of the Jesuits in the westernization of Russia 1582–1689* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 85–111.

April 1584, Ghiczy finally committed himself by facilitating a dispute between the representatives of the two denominations. Szántó was a central figure in the polemics; back in 1580, he had already attracted attention in Nagyvárad by the aggressive overtones of his approach. At that time, Christopher Báthory intervened and had him removed from the city¹⁷.

His return was facilitated by the fact that because of his frail health, his fellow Jesuit, György Törös, was unable to cater for the needs of his flock single-handedly. From this point on, my account of the events will be based on Szántó's report. Prior to the dispute, Szántó's superior, the Jesuit Provincial of Transylvania, Ferdinand Capeci visited Nagyvárad on April 17. The next day, speaking in the presence of the Governor, Capeci asked two questions of Calvinist preacher Péter Beregszászi (Berexasius), who was present in person: one about Easter, and one about appealing to the saints for help. Hence, the dispute was provoked by the Jesuits. Beregszászi, who, according to the account, acted confused and remained silent, called in all his fellow preachers from around town. The Governor had no intention to authorise the dispute because of the royal ban on anything even similar to a dispute; however, according to Szántó, the Calvinist preachers did not intend to leave such provocation without an answer¹⁸. The colourful account of the dispute is richly interwoven with Biblical analogies and combinations of the number 3. The Calvinist preacher, Beregszászi put forth 30 theses of faith; allegedly, 303 Calvinist preachers gathered together and, led by Superintendent Máté Gönczi, launched an attack against Szántó, who, throughout three entire days, withstood the offensive on his own – for, according to the report, his fellow Jesuit Capeci had to return to Kolozsvár (Klausenburg, Cluj-Napoca) because of certain machinations of the Kolozsvár heretics. Written in a colourful Biblical style, the report details how Szántó – a single sheep among the wolves, finding himself much in the same situation as Christ among the Pharisees – fended off one attack after another for three entire days, offering his responses to each of the above 30 theses of faith item by item. Beregszászi attempted to interrupt Szántó as he launched into the – surprise, surprise – third item, but he failed. Seeing that he was not up to par with the Jesuit, he enlisted all the other preachers, who also failed to achieve any success. Beregszászi then addressed the masses who gathered around to witness the dispute, and did so in their mother tongue, Hungarian. This effort also failed as Szántó switched to Hungarian and went on¹⁹. This deserves emphasis – and in fact it is duly emphasized in the report – because one of the most important Protestant accusations hurled at the Jesuit order coming to Transylvania and Hungary, and in fact one of the most commonly raised Catholic argument against Jesuit operations in Hungary, was that the members of the order did not speak Hungarian and therefore could not communicate with their flock, who wanted to hear mass in their mother tongue. In light of the above, it is hardly a miracle that this part of the dispute, which started at 11 in the morning, happened to last until exactly 3 o'clock

17 Lukács, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 76.

18 Lukács, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 745.

19 Lukács, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 744-45.

in the afternoon²⁰.

The second day brought no relief to the populous Calvinist camp either. To quote Szántó's own phrase, they struggled in the web of arguments for three times three, that is, a total of nine hours. As it is only to be expected by now, the turning point came on the third day: when they saw that Szántó, turning their own arms against them, spoke in the vernacular and only quoted the Bible, they switched tactics and started to cite papal bulls in an effort to prove that the pope's followers considered him God on earth, wherefore they were guilty of idolatry. Szántó's performance peaked on this last day – even though the participants themselves had no idea that the dispute would soon be discontinued – when, as he claims, he brought three of the preachers back to the Catholic Church. Frustrating the expectations of his opponents, Szántó abstained entirely from quoting bulls or prayer books, and, instead referencing theologians, relied only on the text of the Holy Scripture²¹. In other words, he did not employ the usual arsenal of Catholic religious debaters (ecclesiastical traditions, papal and Council decrees) but instead applied, in effect, Luther's *sola scriptura* doctrine²². His Calvinist opponents, on the other hand, desperate to prove that Szántó was guilty of idolatry and that the pope was the Antichrist himself, broke their habit of quoting the Scripture in all religious disputes and instead pulled out a variety of other written documents. In a sense, the parties switched roles, provided of course that Szántó's account of the events is reliable. Overall, he suggests having claimed victory over the Protestants by turning their own weapons against them while forcing them to adopt the Catholic debating method. His approach completely confused the Protestants. On top of it all, Szántó, using clever tactics, at some point stopped talking to the Protestant preachers explaining their positions alternating between Latin and Hungarian, and started addressing the citizens of Nagyvárad directly, who did not understand Latin. And they paid him due respect: for, even though Szántó was all alone in the middle of the maddening cacophony and, as he humbly admits, he occasionally used rather harsh words, they knew he was telling the truth. Then again, as he suggests, it could not have transpired in any other way, given that while he cited the Scripture, the preachers and their disciples were kicking up dust like unbridled horses and jackasses. Already during the second day, Szántó commented that the Calvinists, since they acted like horses and jackasses, had better be led to the stables or to the threshing barn. Even their church – which the Jesuit claimed the Calvinists had built at the site of a demolished Catholic church – befitted them.

On the third and final day of the heated debate, János Ghiczy, the Calvinist Governor of Nagyvárad, who was the patron of the religious dispute, appeared at the venue and, citing a letter he had received from Báthory, put an end to the dispute, banning the organization of any similar spiritual battles in the future²³. Szántó claimed that it was the Calvinists who, seeing that they were about to lose,

20 Lukács, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 746.

21 Lukács, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 746, 747.

22 Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought. The Age of Reformation*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3-12.

23 Lukács, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 748.

coaxed the king into adopting this decision; however, this is obviously not true as the dispute was clearly provoked by the Jesuits, something even Szántó admitted to eventually. Unfortunately, the king's letter does not survive; then again, the claims made by the Jesuit are clearly tendentious: it is hard to believe the statement that Báthory wrote his letter in defence of the Calvinists because they were allegedly unable to defeat their opponent; in fact, Szántó contradicts himself in his account of the events when he writes that the group of Nagyvárád citizens witnessing the dispute were aware of the fact that Szántó himself enjoyed the protection of the king and that both the Governor and the Calvinist preachers feared him. In light of this, it is only obvious that terminating the dispute favoured the Jesuits because this gave them the chance to spin the event as a victory. I can only guess what Szántó's intention was with this dispute beyond mere provocation: it may have been a mere demonstration of force through which he meant to encourage the Catholics and, in turn, to intimidate the Calvinists of Nagyvárád. As I mentioned before, Governor János Ghiczy initially did not authorise the dispute in the light of the royal ban, but eventually he did accept the challenge and allowed the debate to take place. This was clearly beyond his scope of competence: organizing a religious dispute does not fit in very well with the tasks of a Governor. Whatever the intentions may have been on either side, the up until then decent relations the order maintained with Ghiczy swiftly deteriorated. Just one year later, Báthory appointed Ghiczy Governor of Transylvania, whereby he lost any direct influence over religious life in Nagyvárád²⁴. It is not unrealistic to assume that the unrest provoked by the religious dispute was one of the reasons for his replacement. From this time on, any mention of him in Jesuit documents was rather negative. The Jesuits saw him as the primary obstacle of their further successes in the capital of the principality and in the Gyulafehérvár (Weissenburg, Alba Iulia) court. In fact, the Jesuits received news of his death in 1588 with malicious contentment. We might add that his removal and eventual death did not manage to defuse the situation in Nagyvárád; a few years later, during the Long Turkish War (1593-1606), this tension between the religious denominations escalated into armed conflicts claiming multiple lives²⁵. To conclude this paper, may I summarize the two main lessons learned: 1. The religious dispute of Nagyvárád is a rare and therefore important moment of the Protestant-Catholic confrontation not only in the ecclesiastical history of Transylvania but also in that of Hungary. The dispute is a prime example of how post-Tridentinum Catholicism – in our case, the Jesuit order – learned to use some of the tools that had played a key role in the success of Protestantism including the realisation of the importance of the mother tongue or the literal interpretation of the Holy Scripture²⁶. Szántó's account of the events is also the first in a series of works written in Hungary and Transylvania in the Catholic spirit dedicated to fight the war against Protestantism wielding the very weapons that belong to the spiritual arsenal of the Protestants. 2. Not only did the erudition of the Jesuit who

24 Kruppa, "Nagyvárád jelentősége", 952.

25 Kruppa, "Nagyvárád jelentősége", 961-63.

26 Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *La Controriforma. Il mondo del rinnovamento cattolico (1540-1770)*, trans. Elena Bonora (Bologna: Mulino, 2001).

deployed this spiritual arsenal in the religious dispute of Nagyvárad encompass certain Humanistic elements but it also incorporated the ideals of *devotio moderna*, the religious reform movement represented by two internationally known authors of Hungary's Late Middle Ages, Pelbartus Ladislaus of Temesvár and Osvát Laskai (Osvaldus Lasco). It fused into an amalgam with one of the forms of late medieval patriotism, which found a mutual platform with the topos that was later phrased by the Protestants, according to which Hungary was struggling from the grip of two pagans that of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire.

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72

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