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THE WRITTEN AND ORAL DISPUTES OF ISTVÁN SZÁNTÓ (ARATOR)

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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 Trent[1]. 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 programme[2]. 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 Jesus[3]. 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 Hungary[4], 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 thousand[5].

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 Jesuits[6]. 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 Protestantism[7].

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 vallás-politikájában", *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 time[8]. 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 cause[9].

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 copied[10]. It must have been around this time

8 Documents of the Pauline monastery published in Lorenz Weinrich, ed., *Hungarici monasterii ordinis Sancti Pauli primi Heremitae 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 importance[11].

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 peoples[12]. 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 nationality[13], 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 Nagyvárad 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 Nagyvárad 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 it[15]. There is no trace of any resentment on behalf of the Calvinist community of Nagyvárad concerning his actions, which may be a result of the tacit deal between the city's Calvinists community and its new political leadership.

Historical sources dedicate much more attention to religious life under the rule of Ghiczy as the Governor of Nagyvárad. 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 Nagyvárad 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 Possevino[16] 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, Nagyvárad 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 Nagyvárad; 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 *Radicale 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 city[17].

His return was facilitated by the fact that because of his frail health, his fellow Jesuit, György Tőrös, 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 answer[18]. 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 on[19]. 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 afternoon[20].
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 Scripture[21]. 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* doctrine[22]. 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 future[23]. 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 Nagyvárad 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 Nagyvárad. 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 Nagyvárad[24]. 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 Nagyvárad; a few years later, during the Long Turkish War (1593-1606), this tension between the religious denominations escalated into armed conflicts claiming multiple lives[25].

To conclude this paper, may I summarize the two main lessons learned: 1. The religious dispute of Nagyvárad 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 Scripture[26]. 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, "Nagyvárad jelentősége", 952.

25 Kruppa, "Nagyvárad 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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