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'CAMPUS AD FIDEI CATHOLICAE INSEMINATIONEM'  
CATHOLIC RENEWAL IN THE DIOCESE OF EGER  
IN THE LAST THREE DECADES OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Theses of PhD Dissertation

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## I. *The Subject and Purpose of Research*

The theory of confessionalization was one of the most productive historical paradigms in the last decades. The thesis put forward by Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling focused on the formation of the early modern Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist confessions. They pointed out the parallel phenomena, and through that they raised new questions, relevant for both church- and social history. But from the 1990s more and more criticism has been voiced against this thesis. I emphasized two of these criticisms in my dissertation. One of the criticisms entailed, that the thesis of confessionalization enhanced too much the role of the state, and had a top-down perspective. Another criticism missed the microhistorical researches on the role of local communities. Andreas Holzem suggested therefore, that the efforts from above and the needs from below should be examined together, in the triangle of state, church and local community. He examined how the different intentions strengthened, extinguished or modified each other.

That became one of the main questions of my dissertation, which concentrated on the history of the Bishopric of Eger at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The use of the thesis of confessionalization, with a view on its criticism, is not impossible in the Hungarian researches either, as it has been proven in the last years by a few Hungarian studies. The thesis was described firstly in Hungarian historiography by Péter Tusor. About the confessionalization and its critiques Gábor Kármán wrote in details. The first monograph was written by Antal Molnár, who used the viewpoints of the thesis in his research on the ecclesiastical institutions of the Ottoman-occupied territories of the diocese of Eger. His results proved, that the thesis can be used on the Hungarian sources as well, but the confessional changes can be examined mostly through the investigation of the structures and activity of ecclesiastical institutions. In the last years Szabolcs Varga and Zoltán Gózszy examined the issue in the Diocese of Pécs in the post-Ottoman period. They emphasized, that the criticism about the significance of local communities is also right in Hungary. They found, that the local communities were able to connect into the process of the renewal, which had began in the early-18<sup>th</sup> century, and were also able to voice their demands opposite the efforts from above.

At the beginning of the period I examined, in 1671 the Jesuit Superior General wrote to the Austrian Provincial, that he understood, the Upper-Hungary is a good place for the implanting of the Catholic faith (*'...campus ad fidei catholicae insemminationem'*). But the region was predominantly Protestant, especially the free royal cities led by Lutherans, so it was hard for the Catholic Church to regain that territory. The Catholic Church in Upper-Hungary was represented first of all by the Bishops of Eger, whose diocese covered thirteen

counties and partly fell under Ottoman rule, and partly under Habsburg rule. The ancient bishopric seat, Eger was occupied by the Ottomans in 1596, henceforth the bishops held their seat in Jászó (now Jasov, Slovakia) and Kassa (Košice, Slovakia). The Protestant estates in Upper-Hungary enjoyed the support of the Protestant princes of Transylvania, first and foremost Gábor Bethlen and György Rákóczi I. Besides a large Orthodox population also lived in the diocese.

The renewal of the diocese started in the 1630s. Bishop Imre Lósy held a synod in Jászó in 1635, which unambiguously connected to the synodal movement began by Péter Pázmány, Archbishop of Esztergom. The *ad limina* report of Bishop György Lippay sent to the Holy See around 1640 not just described the hard circumstances of the diocese, but also suggested solutions. First of all the problem of the lack of priests had to be resolved, therefore the bishop suggested the foundation of schools and a seminary. The foundations of Bishop Benedek Kisdy in the 1650s (secondary school, academy, seminary) set that course. But just the political changes opened the way for the reorganization of the parish network, and for the Counter-Reformation. After the fall of the Wesselényi-movement against the Habsburgs in the 1670 the Habsburg Court began a new policy of centralization, for this they needed the support of the Catholic Church. But the Catholic Church also needed the support of the state for regain the positions lost during the Reformation. Of course that cooperation of church and state was not without problems, but that was the ground of the Counter-Reformation after 1670.

The dissertation focuses on the three decades after 1670, and follows the statement of Hubert Jedin about the double-faced early modern Catholicism: its soul was the Catholic Reform, and its body was the Counter-Reformation. I examined the renewal of the Diocese of Eger from a double perspective, the intentions, the needs from below and above, and I concentrated how the different levels of church and government authorities, and the communities participated in this process.

## II. The Methodology and Sources of the Examination

I divide the sources into two groups: ecclesiastical and secular sources. The most important church collection would be the Archiepiscopal Archive of Eger, but it is nowadays really scattered. After the diocese raised into archdiocese in 1804, and its territory were divided into the dioceses of Kassa and Szatmár (now Satu Mare, Romania), parts of the archival materials were delivered to the new dioceses. Therefore I took researches in Kassa/Košice, in the Archiepiscopal Archive of Košice also, where I looked through the

sources on the parishes of Kassa and Eperjes (now Prešov, Slovakia). During the socialist period, parts of the Diocesan Archive of Satu Mare were delivered into the Romanian National Archives, thus further research is required there. But was very important, the Diocesan Archive hold the sources of the Conventual Franciscan Friary of Nagybánya (now Baia Mare, Romania) from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Economic Archive of the Archdiocese of Eger, as well the private- and authenticational archive of the Chapter of Eger are held in the Hungarian National Archive - Archive of Heves County. Here I did researches in the jurisdictional books of the diocese, and in the private- and authentic registers of the chapter.

Besides the Conventual Franciscan Friary of Nagybánya the other important sources of religious orders were the Jesuit archives. I have carried out researches in the Hungarian National Archive for the Jesuit Mission of Nagybánya, while the *Historia Domus* of the Jesuits of Eger can be found in the Archiepiscopal Archive of Eger, and the *Diarium* of the Jesuits of Kassa is held by the Manuscript Collection of the University Library in Budapest. I looked through the Jesuit annuals from 1670–1699 in the Austrian National Library in Vienna, and in the Jesuit Archive (*Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*) in Rome.

Besides the Jesuit archive I have researched in the Archive of Propaganda Fide in Rome, which was really important not just for the reports of the missionaries, but also for the connection between the bishops and the Holy See. In the Vatican Secret Archives (*Archivio Segreto Vaticano*) I looked through the processes of the papal confirmation of the bishops. I got the photocopies of sources about the resettlement of Dominicans in Kassa held in the central archive of the order in Rome from Viliam Stefan Dóci OP, Prior of the Dominican Friary of Vienna.

From the documents of the secular authorities the most important was the archive of the Chamber of Szepes, which gave the main source-collection of my dissertation. But I also did researches in the archive of the Hungarian Chamber (Hungarian National Archive) and in the archive of the Court Chamber (Austrian State Archive). Beside the chamber archives I examined the documents of the Hungarian Chancellery, which became more and more important authority, mostly after 1690. It was necessary to learn about the decision-making process, and what was the role of the different levels of the administration. I completed these sources with researches in family archives, especially the correspondence of Count István Csáky, royal judge in the archive of the Csáky family (Hungarian National Archive). I used also documents from the municipal archive of Kassa from the 1670-1680s.

The period I examined in my dissertation starts with 1670, the beginning of the time of Bishop Ferenc Lénárd Szegedy and the fall of the Wesselényi-conspiracy. The end of the

period was 1699, when the new bishop, István Telekesy settled back to the ancient seat in Eger, and the Treaty of Karlowitz/Karlóca (now Sremski Karlovci, Serbia) ended the Great Turkish War. The large territory of the diocese justified that I examined in detail just three cities. Kassa was not just the seat of the diocese, but it was the most important city of the entire region, where from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century a Catholic centre had emerged. Nagybánya was on the border of the Principality of Transylvania and the Kingdom of Hungary. It was a city with a Calvinist majority, without Catholic background. Eger was liberated from 91 years long Ottoman rule in 1687, and although the bishops just returned there in 1699, it became a bishopric seat without a bishop.

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters, four thematic chapters and three studies about the three cities. In the first chapter I looked through on the historiography and the history of the diocese between 1596–1670. In the second chapter I examined the ecclesiastical and secular characters of the renewal of the diocese. In the next chapter I described the main fields of the Catholic Reform and Counter-Reformation. Then I examined the three cities in three chapters. In the last chapter I summed up the major results compared with other examples from Hungary, the Habsburg Monarchy and the Holy Roman Empire.

### III. *Major results*

I examined the process of the renewal from the side of Catholic Reform, Counter-Reformation and the triangle of the state, the church and the local communities. In the church administration I discussed as new source the instruction of the bishop from 1649, which is out of the examined period, but gave the most important guidelines for the General Vicar. It became the most important office in the administration of the diocese, and it was filled by usually the Provost of the Chapter. The chapter also had an important role to defend the ecclesiastical rights, and to administrate the ecclesiastical tribunal, the Bishopric Episcopal See. But probably at the end of the century there was a crisis within the chapter. The process against Miklós Krucsay, the lector prebend in 1697 shed some light on personal conflicts in the chapter. Probably therefore a new constitution of the chapter became necessary, which likewise 1697 was begun discussed, but presumably was not confirmed by the bishop. The bishop had an important role to reconcile these conflicts, because most of the prebend had gotten into the chapter thanks to their personal ties to the bishops (episcopal court chaplains, previous diocesan connections). The life of the prebend István Jósa proved, that the chapter also had connection with the anti-Habsburg rebels, the so called *kuruc*

soldiers. It also helps the deconstruction of the stereotypical view of pro-Habsburg Catholics, and anti-Habsburg Protestants.

Although the instruction of 1649 ordered a strict control of the parish priests through archdeacons, we don't have a source of a general canonical visitation. This lack means a great problem in the examination of the parish priests. The General Vicar had an important role in the control over the training of the priests. The exams before the ordainment and the nomination in a parish went in the presence of the General Vicar. The examination of the activity of the priest seminary in Kassa, the so called Kisdianum, brought also new results. It turned out, that the Jesuits were unable to hold the full theology courses, which caused a conflict with the bishop. There was another conflict between the bishop and the Chamber of Szepes about the nomination of the parish priests and the patron rights. On the other hand the role of the Chamber was really important, because the parish priest needed the financial support, when the Protestant communities denied to pay the salaries. Without this support the Catholic priests would hardly have been able to stay in their office. Because of the lack of the parish priests the periods between the grades of the ordainment were shortened with the papal permission sent on the bishops' request. The sextons, the clerks, the schoolmasters helped in the parish administration, and in the leading cities chaplains also appeared. A special institution of the period was the so called *licenciatus*, the educated layman, who carried out some ecclesiastical service with the permission of the bishop.

Due to the lack of the parish priests the religious order had a very important role in this period. The bishops sent request to the Holy See for more missionaries. The Holy See forwarded these requests to the generals of the religious orders, who ordered the provincials to send more friars to Upper-Hungary. The missions reached places, where the diocese was unable to send parish priests, and what is more the religious orders accepted parish's administration too. The missions were able to strengthen the Catholic confessional identity of sporadic Catholic groups. Because of their leading role in education and their political ties the Jesuits had a very important role beside the Paulines, the Franciscans and the Conventual Franciscans. The foundation of religious confraternities (Marian Congregations, Confraternities of Agony of Christ, Confraternities of the Cord), the sermons on native languages were also very important part of the religious orders' activity. At the end of the century new orders settled to the diocese: the Servite Friars, the Dominican Friars and the Ursuline nuns. But there were sometimes conflicts between the orders: in Nagybánya between Jesuits and Conventual Franciscans, in Eger between Franciscans and Conventual Franciscans. The king and bishop had leading role in the reconciliation of these conflicts.

At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the idea of the union with the Orthodox Church strengthened. The stances of the Greek Catholic Diocese of Munkács (now Mukacheve, Ukraine) became more stable after the nomination of József János De Camillis into the Greek Catholic Episcopal See in 1690. But already in this time further problems appeared between Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic priests about church administration and other issues over authority. On the other hand the Greek Catholics enjoyed the support of the Roman Catholic Church and the government against Protestants in local conflicts (e.g. the building of a Greek Catholic church in Szatmárnémeti). The weeping of the Black Madonna icon in Máriapócs in 1696 became a symbol of the community of Greek and Roman Catholics. The negotiations about a union with Protestants were an exciting, but unsuccessful attempt of Cristobal Rojas y Spinola, Bishop of Wiener Neustadt at the beginnings of the 1690s. In the background there was rather political intentions, and neither the Protestants, nor the Catholics supported the idea. The negotiations had one round in Kassa also, and the opinion of György Fenesy, Bishop of Eger is known, but he approached the question very carefully and he had reservations about the idea.

The first step of the Counter-Reformation began after 1670 was the occupation of the churches. I examined particularly the construction of Catholic sacred spaces in the recaptured Protestant churches, how these spaces featured in Catholic liturgy. Beside Protestant churches secular buildings, which lost their sacred function during Reformation regained the religious character. In Eger the Catholic Church began to use the mosques as churches.

In the occupation of the churches the local Protestant magistrates meant the greatest difficulty. Therefore the Catholicisation of the magistrates was very important for the church and for the state also. The state was able to increase her influence over the cities, while the church swept away another impediment. The local parish priests, priors represented the state during the local elections, when the chamber was not able to delegate an officer. Initially the lack of suitable Catholic burgesses was also a problem, therefore officials of the chamber were elected into the magistrates, but sometimes unsuitable ones were also able to get in. For the excluded Protestant elite had no other choice, but the conversion to Catholic faith, if they wanted to keep their existence. We see this phenomenon on other fields of the city life: the guilds were forced to elect Catholic leaders, and they had to participate the Catholic feasts and ceremonies. The counties' Protestant nobles also had to convert to keep their leading positions. But after the formation of a Catholic elite, the confessional viewpoints were changed with economic and eligibility criteria.

Side by side with the recapturing of the churches the persecution of the Protestant preachers also began. The highlight of the persecutions was the notorious galley-slave trial in 1674. About its historical background the new results proved, that initially the Habsburg Court did not support the idea of the massive persecution. The Court finally made the way for a trial at the autumn of 1673 in connection with the punishment of the Protestant free royal cities. After 1674 the phenomenon of secret Protestant worship (*cryptoprotestantism*) and the intention to hold the Protestant soldiers in the border-fortresses on the loyalty of the Habsburg ruler forced the Court on concessions. These finally led to the religious laws accepted on the Diet of 1681 in Sopron. But the different Protestant and Catholic interpretations of the laws made necessary to delegate a Committee of Religious Affairs under the presidency of Count István Csáky. The activity of the committee was unknown till now. I compared the functioning of the committee with the royal instruction to the committee, and with the royal decree of 1691, the so called Explanatio Leopoldina. That shed more light on the ecclesiastical policy in the last decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The distribution of the churches, the limited permission of Protestant worship, the distinction between private and public worship indicated the beginnings of a confessional consolidation. Both the Catholic and the Protestant communities required this consolidation after the years of a religious civil war and the Great Turkish War.

In the triangle of the state, the church and the community the relation of the community and the parish priest founded on the system of service and compensation. If any trouble arised in this relation, it caused conflict. In most cases the parish priests complained about the not suitable payment, while the communities turned to superior levels because of troubles in the liturgy and in the services, or when the parish priests were unable to fulfill the needs of communities. The superior forum could be secular, first of all the Chamber of Szepes, or on ecclesiastical side the General Vicar. The communities learned gradually how they can enforce their interest, what arguments should be used on different forums.

The most stout resistance against parish priests and Catholic expansion appeared on the level of the local Protestant communities. The congregations denied the payment to parish priests, they neglected the Catholic liturgy, and through secret worships and relations to the rebel kuruc armies they resisted against the growing influence of the Catholic Church and the government. But as the Principality of Transylvania weakened, and the existential ground of the Protestant communities and individuals was eliminated, they were compelled to make concessions and to accept the presence of Catholic institutions.

In the relation between the church and the government the most important local participant was the Chamber of Szepes. It was the part of a government structure, where the decision-making had different levels (Hungarian Chamber, Court Chamber), and also another authorities participated in it (War Council, Gubernium, Hungarian Chancellery). So the requests arrived from local ecclesiastical and governmental representatives arranged on different levels of the authorities. Similar requests in a great number or the important cases reached the highest levels: to the Court and the king, or through the nuncio to the Holy See. This structure basically grounded on cooperation, but that wasn't without conflicts. The issues with patron right, or the intersections of secular and ecclesiastical authority (e.g. episcopal testaments, ecclesiastical incomes) caused conflicts. The local conflicts through the different levels of the authorities demanded the resolution of the highest levels (e.g. the Court and the nuncio, or the Court and the Archbishop of Esztergom). But the support of the church was also very important for the government, as the church requested the support of the state for the Catholic expansion. The different levels had different attitudes. The higher levels didn't support always the anti-Protestant suggestions of the Chamber of Szepes, while the War Council represented a moderate attitude because of political and military causes, and intended to pull out itself from the local religious conflicts.

On the whole we can point out, that minimum program, which was drawn in 1673 by Bishop Ferenc Lénárd Szegedy to reorganize the parishes in the most important free royal cities, was realized until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. But the reorganization of the entire parish-network was a longer process, which waited for the bishops of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

#### IV. Published Papers

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