

Reformations in Hungary in the Age of the Ottoman Conquest



Academic Studies

52



Refo500 Academic Studies

Edited by
Herman J. Selderhuis

In Co-operation with
Christopher B. Brown (Boston), Günter Frank (Bretten),
Bruce Gordon (New Haven), Barbara Mahlmann-Bauer (Bern),
Tarald Rasmussen (Oslo), Violet Soen (Leuven),
Zsombor Tóth (Budapest), Günther Wassilowsky (Linz),
Siegfried Westphal (Osnabrück).

Volume 52

Pál Ács

Reformations in Hungary in the Age of the Ottoman Conquest

With 28 Figures

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek:
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data available online: <http://dnb.de>.

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Typesetting: 3w+p, Rimpär
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com

ISSN 2197-0165
ISBN 978-3-647-57084-6

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Acknowledgements

This collection of interrelated studies reappraising the intellectual fabric of the Reformation movement in Hungary represents a personal and a collective international endeavour. The Institute for Literary Studies, Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (RCH, HAS) hosted my research and contributed to the increasing international interest for the culture and literature of the Renaissance and the Reformation in Hungary. I wish to thank Robert John Weston Evans (Oxford), Wilhelm Kühlmann (Heidelberg), and Martin Elsky (New York), who helped me in the 1990s to conduct research in many archives and libraries abroad. Various scholarships (Wolfenbüttel, HAB; Florence, Villa I Tatti; Heidelberg, Germanistisches Seminar; Edinburgh, IASH; Wassenaar, NIAS) have made it possible for me to join different European workshops of Renaissance and Reformation studies. Major opportunities were presented to me through invitations by Nicolette Mout (Leiden), Hans Trapman (The Hague), Howard Hotson (Oxford), Howard Louthan (Minneapolis, Minnesota), Graeme Murdock (Dublin), Arnoud Visser (Utrecht), Mikael Bøgh Rasmussen (Copenhagen), Peter Opitz (Zürich), Herbert Karner (Vienna), Vladimír Urbanek (Prague), Ingrid Ciulisová (Bratislava), Michał Dziewulski (Cracow), Adelin Charles Fiorato and Paul Gradwohl (Paris), Alberto Melloni (Bologna), Evelin Wetter and Robert Born (Leipzig), Martin Mulsow (Gotha), Gerard Wiegers (Amsterdam) to contribute to their research projects, participate in their conferences, and publish my studies (the earlier versions of the chapters of the present volume) in the journals and books edited by them. I owe much to the truly beneficial cooperation with Tijana Krstić and Robyn D. Radway (Central European University, Budapest). I am grateful to Nil Palabiyik (Manchester) for her constructive comments in the field of Ottoman cultural history. I enjoyed very successful cooperation with the Esterházy Foundation (Eisenstadt). I cannot conclude without mentioning the productive conversations I have had with my friends and colleagues in Budapest, Gábor Almási, Farkas Gábor Kiss, and Balázs Trencsényi. A special thanks is due to Herman Selderhuis, director of the Refo500 international platform, for his beneficial assistance and wide-ranging support.

The completion of this volume would have been impossible without the magnanimous aid of Vera Gyárfás (Budapest), who oversaw the English adaptation of most chapters, and Emese Czintos (Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca), who carefully read through the entire book and made many valuable suggestions. I am also grateful to the Central European University for the support in the native language proofing of the book, which Christopher Wendt has performed very attentively.

Abbreviations

- ADB – Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie.
- BHA – Bibliotheca Hungarica Antiqua. Book series, Budapest.
- BHL – Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis. 2 vols. Subsidia hagiographica 6. Bruxelles: Socii Bollandiani, 1949.
- CAAC – Klose, Wolfgang. *Corpus Alborum Amicorum. Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Stammbücher des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1988.
- CR – Corpus Reformatorum.
- CWE – *Collected Works of Erasmus*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- ELTE – Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem [Eötvös Loránd University], Budapest.
- Encyclopaedia Iranica* – *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Online edition, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/>.
- Encyclopaedia Judaica* – *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007.
- Encyclopaedia of Islam*² – *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Second edition. Ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W. P. Heinrichs. Leiden: Brill. Online edition, available at <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy-ub.rug.nl/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2>.
- Encyclopaedia of Islam*³ – *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. THREE. Ed. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson. Leiden: Brill. Online edition, available at <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy-ub.rug.nl/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3>.
- LB – Leclerc, Jean, ed. *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Opera Omnia*. Leiden: Pieter van der Aa, 1703–1706.
- LThK – *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*. Ed. Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner. 14 vols. Herder: Freiburg im Breisgau, 1956–1968.
- MNL OL – Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár. Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives], Budapest.
- MTA – Magyar Tudományos Akadémia [Hungarian Academy of Sciences], Budapest.
- NDB – Neue Deutsche Biographie.
- NySz – Szarvas, Gábor and Simonyi, Zsigmond, eds. *Magyar Nyelvtörténeti Szótár a legrégebb nyelvm emlékektől a nyelvújításig* [Historical dictionary of the Hungarian language from the oldest surviving Hungarian texts to the neology]. Budapest: Hornyánszky Viktor, 1890–1893. 3 vols.

- ÖStA, HHStA – Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv.
- PG – *Patrologia Graeca*. Ed. Jacques Paul Migne. 161 vols. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1857–1866.
- PÖM – Pázmány, Péter. *Összes munkái* [The complete works of Péter Pázmány]. Vol. 1–7. Budapest: Királyi Magyar Tudományegyetem, 1894–1905.
- RMKT XVI, vol. 1. – *Régi Magyar Költők Tára. XVI. századbeli költők művei. Első kötet, 1527–1546* [Repertory of ancient Hungarian poetry. 16th century, vol. 1, 1527–1546]. Ed. Áron Szilády. Budapest: MTA, 1880.
- RMKT XVI, vol. 4. – *Régi Magyar Költők Tára. XVI. századbeli költők művei. Negyedik kötet. 1547–1560* [Repertory of ancient Hungarian poetry. 16th century, vol. 4. 1547–1560]. Ed. Áron Szilády. Budapest: MTA, 1886.
- RMKT XVI, vol. 5. – *Régi Magyar Költők tára. XVI. századbeli magyar költők művei. Ötödik kötet, 1545–1549* [Repertory of ancient Hungarian poetry. 16th century, vol. 5. 1545–1549]. Ed. Áron Szilády. Budapest: MTA, 1896.
- RMKT XVI, vol. 7. – *Régi Magyar Költők tára. XVI. századbeli magyar költők művei. Hetedik kötet, 1566–1577* [Repertory of ancient Hungarian poetry. 16th century, vol. 7. 1566–1577]. Ed. Lajos Dézsi. Budapest: 1930.
- RMKT XVI, vol. 9. – *Régi Magyar Költők Tára. XVI. századbeli magyar költők művei. Kilencedik kötet 1567–1577* [Repertory of ancient Hungarian poetry. 16th century, vol. 9. 1567–1577]. Ed. Béla Varjas and others. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990.
- RMKT XVI, vol. 11. – *Régi Magyar Költők Tára. XVI. századbeli költők művei. Tizenegyedik kötet. Az 1580-as évek költészete* [Repertory of ancient Hungarian poetry. 16th century, vol. 11. The poetry of the 1580's]. Ed. Pál Ács. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó–Orex Kiadó, 1999.
- RMKT XVI, vol. 13/A. – *Régi Magyar Költők Tára. XVI. századbeli költők művei. Bogáti Fazakas Miklós históriás énekei és bibliai parafrázisai* [Repertory of ancient Hungarian poetry. 16th century, vol. 13/A. Histories in verse and Biblical paraphrases by Miklós Bogáti Fazakas]. Ed. Pál Ács, Géza Szentmártoni Szabó, Balázs Pap, and others. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2018.
- RMKT XVII, vol. 3. – *Régi Magyar Költők Tára. 17. század. 3. kötet. Szerelmi és lakodalmi versek* [Repertory of ancient Hungarian poetry. 17th century. Vol. 3. Wedding songs and love poems]. Ed. Béla Stoll. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1961.
- RMKT XVII, vol. 6. – *Régi Magyar Költők Tára. 17. század. 6. kötet. Szenci Molnár Albert költői művei* [Repertory of ancient Hungarian poetry. 17th century. Vol. 6. Poetic works of Albert Szenci Molnár]. Ed. Béla Stoll. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971.
- RMKT XVII, vol. 12. – *Régi Magyar Költők Tára. 17. század. 12. kötet* [Repertory of ancient Hungarian poetry. 17th century. Vol. 12]. Ed. Imre Varga and others. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1987.
- RMNy – *Régi Magyarországi Nyomtatványok* [Repertory of early Hungarian printed books]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, vol. 1–4, 1971–2012.
- RPHA – *Répertoire de la poésie hongroise ancienne*, ed. Iván Horváth, vol 1–2. Paris: Nouvel Object, 1992.
- SZTE – Szegedi Tudományegyetem (University of Szeged).

Introduction

Early modern Europeans held sharply different views of divided Hungary. Many thought of Hungary as a distant land inhabited by barbarians, while others maintained it was a “bulwark of Christianity” lying at the boundary of East and West, the defender of Western Christendom against the Ottoman threat. As the medieval Kingdom of Hungary collapsed and the country was split into three parts after the 1526 Battle of Mohács, learned European men followed Hungarian events “with fear and trembling”. Hungary was perceived as an apocalyptic battlefield where the forces of Christ and the Antichrist clashed. The onset of the Reformation in Hungary was contemporaneous with these dramatic events. Hungary’s military failure and the Reformation were related to each other already in contemporary times. European followers of religious renewal saw this war-torn country also as a battlefield in an abstract sense. The Ottoman Empire, which split the territory of Hungary into pieces by occupying its south-central part, had an unquestioned political, mental and spiritual influence on the ways religion and culture developed. “It is not the word of the Gospel that lures the Turks to Hungary, but the immense idolatry and other monstrosities that have been going on for ages,” writes Melanchthon in his commentary on the *Book of Daniel*. Luther and Melanchthon, as well as their Hungarian disciples, were well aware that Hungarian Reformation movements gained their true meaning in relation to challenges posed by the Ottoman occupation.

★

The chapters of the present volume discuss various aspects of the cultural and literary history of the hundred years that followed the battle of Mohács and the onset of the Reformation. The phenomena under review will be placed into the special Ottoman context of the Hungarian Reformation almost without exception. Even before the Protestant Reformation had any major influence, Erasmus’s Hungarian disciples, translating the New Testament into Hungarian according to the Erasmian version of the Bible, carried out kinds of spiritual

reform. Hungarians who suffered Ottoman attacks identified themselves with an Erasmian interpretation of Christian martyrologies. In line with the historical perspective of Wittenberg reformers, some Protestant authors and sympathisers were convinced that Ottoman destruction was a punishment for the sins of Hungarians. Other Protestant authors rejected the veneration of saints and of the Virgin Mary because these had failed to protect the country against the Ottomans.

Clearly, there are two sides to every story. The Reformation spread more easily and freely in the area under Ottoman occupation and in the Principality of Transylvania (a vassal state of the Porte) than in the Kingdom of Hungary under Habsburg rule. Radical trends of Protestantism, Antitrinitarianism and Szekler Sabbatarianism soon started to flourish in Ottoman-occupied Hungary and Transylvania.

The Ottoman presence was not merely in name, and it could mean the co-existence of Ottoman bureaucrats and soldiers with the indigenous population even on the village level. Several chapters discuss the culture of occupied areas, the fascinating ways Christians came to terms with Muslim authorities, and how Muslims and Christians co-existed. The stories of renegades converting from Christianity to the Muslim faith, travellers reaching the far end of the Ottoman Empire and Persia, and Christian scholars digging deep into Oriental studies allow us a glimpse into the world of Islam in particular ways. They contribute to a less biased and more positive image of the Ottomans, as opposed to the image of the “archenemy of Christianity”. Such transcultural Ottoman activity, which led to the concept of the “good Turk,” was later embraced by Enlightenment philosophers such as Voltaire and Lessing.

Just as some chapters discuss the culture of the Reformation in an Ottoman context, so are Ottomans placed into a Protestant framework. While influential renegade politicians and interpreters (dragomans) came to be involved in debates of Hungarian Protestants both in the occupied areas and Istanbul, Hungarian Protestant poets showed a keen interest in the fate of Christian Hungarians converting to Islam. At the same time, Protestant scholars, studying the history of the Ottoman Empire, also played key roles in missionary campaigns, taking the ideas of the Reformation to the Balkans.

*

If we look at the map of Hungary (fig. 1) in the time of the Ottoman occupation, we see important land and water routes reaching in all directions. These roads were not only used for military and commercial purposes, but also for the everyday circulation of intellectual goods. The works of famous Western European Reformers arrived in Ottoman Hungary with a speed that sometimes surpassed

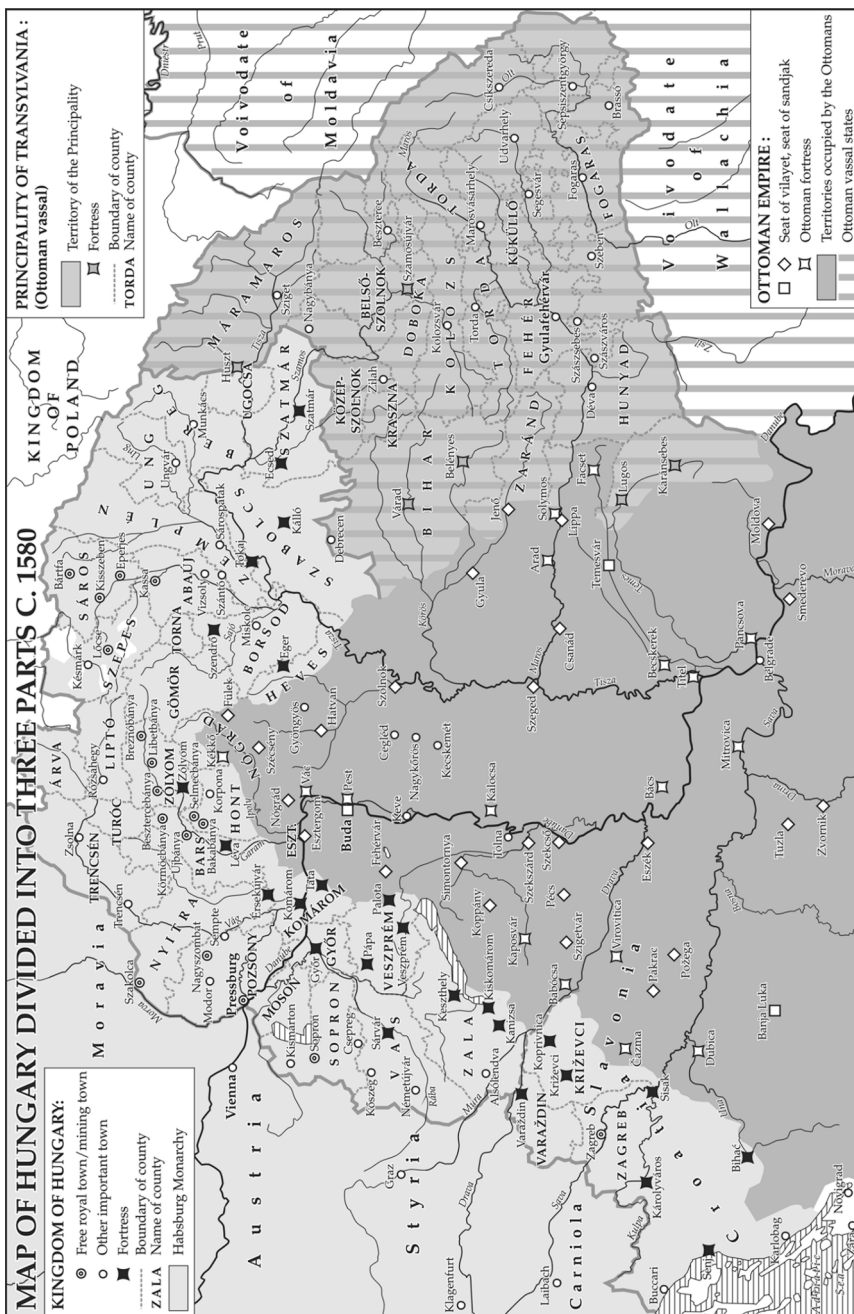


Fig. 1: Map of Hungary in the second half of the 16th century.

modern postal services, while the books of Hungarian Protestant authors were published by major Western European publishing houses. Despite the Ottoman conquest and political fragmentation, Hungary formed a cultural unit. Books printed in different parts of the country were read everywhere. “If–like the Greeks – we have lost control over most of the territory of our country [...], we should at least dedicate our language, history and literature to immortality,” writes a 16th century Hungarian humanist. The educated *beys* of Ottoman fortresses ordered books from Vienna; German and Greek renegades living in Istanbul read the works of Ottoman converts of Hungarian origin. In terms of language and ethnicity, the opposing garrisons at the Hungarian–Ottoman border were neither purely Hungarian nor Turkish – the enemies often shared the same Southern Slavic language. In the small market towns of Ottoman Hungary, Hungarians, Serbs, Croats, Italians and Turks often lived side by side. There were also ethnic Greeks, Romanians, Slovaks, Gypsies, Jews, Germans, Italians, Flemish and Poles among them, as well as speakers of different languages and adepts of different religions, including Eastern Orthodox Christians, all who knew each other well.

The culture of the early modern Hungarian Reformation is extremely manifold and multi-layered. Historical documents such as theological, political and literary works and pieces of art formed an interpretive, unified whole in the self-representation of the era. Two interlinked ideas define this ideological and cultural diversity. One is the idea of Europeanness, of being tied to Christian Europe. The specific aspects of the Hungarian Reformation gain significance only when compared to Europe, when seen in a European context. All the subjects discussed here, from the interpretation of the psalms through the Protestant critique of the cult of saints to the theory of soul-sleeping, belong to Europe’s common culture. This is valid for the Erasmian movement, the Protestant Reformation and the so-called Catholic Reformation alike.

The other unifying idea is in the concept of Reformation itself. The Reformation, despite its constant ideological fragmentation, sought universalism in all its branches. It was *re-formatio* in the original sense of the word; that is, restoration, an attempt to restore a bygone perfection imagined to be ideal. This was the only point in which all Reformation movements of the era agreed on, including the Catholic Reformation, which is discussed in the last chapters of the book.

*

I must admit that I love the period I study, and I may tend to idealize life in the 16th and 17th centuries. Of course, I know that this age is not better or worse than any other. These were harsh and cruel times in which chopped heads hung from

the walls of Ottoman and Christian fortresses as war trophies, and religious opponents would often describe each other as devils springing straight out of hell. We can nonetheless affirm that people living in the age of the Ottoman period of Hungary were quite receptive of each other. The often cruel and violent debaters – Catholics and Protestants, Christians and Muslims – had studied each other's works for years and lived close to each other also in a spiritual sense. There were lively and intricate commercial relations between the Christian world and Ottoman Hungary. This was not friendship, but a sense of connection. *Fides* – in the original Latin sense, this word does not mean only faith, but also trust and honesty. In early modern times, the word was still used in its original sense. We cannot yet talk about religious tolerance in this period in the modern sense. Still, there was a flourishing diversity of religious communities that existed side by side under different conditions and circumstances and mostly accepted each other in their diversity. During the one hundred years' period discussed here, the Hungarian Reformation hardly had any martyrs. Islam also allowed the free religious practice of both Christians and Jews. A basic comparison with other places in Europe helps to understand the idiosyncratic nature of this pre-tolerance state of mind.

*

Now, as I let my book go, I am aware that the framework or perspective I am offering here will almost immediately become out-dated – and this is the way it should be, as every author composing the last word of a book must face the fact that his or her work, sooner rather than later, will become obsolete. All historical works unavoidably wear out. Neither memory nor scholarship may reconstruct the times of yore as they “really” took place, not only because there never existed a unified and undivided “reality”. Although all books are by the past, they can never leave their own present. Our image of bygone times only registers the moment of the creation of that image. History is nothing, but the past seen from the present.

Part One: Erasmian Challenges

Chapter 1: Erasmus and the Hungarian Intellectuals of the 16th Century

Several excellent studies have already dealt with the influence Erasmus had on the life of the Hungarian humanist intellectuals of the 16th century.¹ Thorough analyses treat the significant role Erasmus played in the evolution of the “lingua vulgaris” of Hungarian literature, meaning the Erasmian spirit infiltrating the autonomous Hungarian literary endeavours arising out of the framework of monastic culture, wishing to be free from the tight ecclesiastic control.² Presently I can only attempt to sum up and systematise these Erasmian literary programmes – with special attention paid to their inherent connections points, similarities and differences.

There is no way here to consider all the European humanist intellectuals who conveyed the ideas of Erasmian humanism to the various groups of Hungarian writers of the 16th century. However, at times I will mention the foreign masters and professors of the Hungarian Erasmians, who planted the thoughts of Erasmus in the Hungarian students educated – in the absence of a university in Hungary – at Cracow, Vienna or Wittenberg.³ This system of international

1 Imre Trencsényi-Waldapfel, *Erasmus és magyar barátai* (Budapest: Officina, 1941); Rabán Gerézdi, “Érasme et la Hongrie,” in *Littérature hongroise, littérature européenne, études de littérature comparée*, ed. István Sötér and Ottó Süpek (Budapest: Académie des Sciences, 1964), 129–154; Tibor Kardos, “L’esprit d’Érasme en Hongrie,” in *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia: Douzième Stage International D’Études Humanistes*, Tours, 1968. De Pétrarque à Descartes 24, ed. Jean-Claude Margolin (Paris: Vrin, 1972), vol. 1, 187–216; Ágnes Ritoók-Szalay, “Erasmus und die ungarischen Intellektuellen des 16. Jahrhunderts,” in *Erasmus und Europa*, ed. August Buck. Wolfenbütteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissanceforschung 7 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988), 111–128; István Bartók, “Erasmus hatása,” in *MAMÚL*, vol. 2, 348–352.

2 József Turóczi-Trostler, “A magyar nyelv felfedezése. Két tanulmány az európai és a magyar humanizmus kapcsolatáról” in idem, *Magyar irodalom – világirodalom* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1961), vol. 1, 17–72; Pál Ács, “A magyar irodalmi nyelv két elmélete: az erasmista és a Balassi-követő,” in idem, *‘Az idő ósága.’ Történetiség és történetiszemlélet a régi magyar irodalomban* (Budapest: Osiris, 2001), 13–31.

3 Jacqueline Glomski, *Patronage and humanist literature in the age of the Jagiellons. Court and career in the writings of Rudolf Agricola Junior, Valentin Eck, and Leonard Cox*. Erasmus Studies 16 (Toronto: University Press, 2007); Ágnes Juhász-Ormsby, “Leonard Cox and the

connections is only being uncovered in its actual depth in the light of recent studies conducted by Hungarian Erasmus scholars in the field of the history of ideas, rhetoric and poetry.

The consecutive phases of Hungarian Erasmianism are usually grouped around three topics – especially characteristic of the individual periods. In this view the early period dealt with humanist philology, in the second phase theology and ethics gained preeminence, while the third or late phase was mainly characterised by an interest in “*philosophia sacra*”. If we concentrate more on the activities of Erasmians writing in Hungarian, we can see that these topics are present from the beginning in all of the literary programmes and create a coherent logical unit.

It is well known that the philological, theological and philosophical writings of Erasmus were already around in the libraries of Hungarian humanists previously to the battle of Mohács (1526) – marking a borderline in terms of history and literary history as well. A copy of the *Adagia*, which played an ever so important part in the creation of Hungarian philology appeared in Hungary in the 1510s.⁴ The *New Testament* translations of Erasmus, that gave inspiration to a whole series of Hungarian translations of the Bible, were usually in the hands of Hungarian humanists in the year of their publication: the first publication of the *Novum Testamentum graeca et latine* in 1516 was used in Sopron,⁵ the volume of the *Paraphrasis in epistolas apostolicas* published in 1523 was bound in leather in Hungary around the year of its publication,⁶ while the volume of the *Paraphrases in Novum Testamentum* published in 1524 was owned by Miklós Petri, canon of Veszprém, in the year of its publication.⁷ It is the widely held opinion of researchers of the Hungarian Erasmus-reception that Erasmus’s works most valued by the posterity – and the most original ones – that is, the *Laus Stultitiae* and the *Colloquia*, were hardly known to the Hungarian reader.⁸ A letter of Celio Calcagnini in which the Erasmian of Ferrara relates that he had sent a copy of the

Erasmian circles of early sixteenth-century England,” in *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Upsaliensis*, ed. Alejandro Coroleu and Domenico Defilippis (Leiden, Brill, 2012); Farkas Gábor Kiss, “Az első, részben magyar nyelvű nyomtatvány. Melancthon: Elementa Latinae grammaticae, Krakkó, Vietor, 1526,” in *MONOKgraphia. Tanulmányok Monok István 60. születésnapjára*, ed. Attila Verék and Edina Zvara (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó), 2016, 375–379.

4 Ottó Kelényi B., *Egy magyar humanista glosszái Erasmus Adagijához* (Budapest: Fővárosi Könyvtár, 1939).

5 See the chapter *The reception of Erasmianism in Hungary and the contexts of the Erasmian programme* in this volume.

6 Éva Sz. Koroknay, *Magyar reneszánsz könyvkötések. Cahiers d’histoire de l’art* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1973), 65.

7 Edith Hoffmann, *Régi magyar bibliofilek*, ed. Tünde Wehli (Budapest: MTA Művészettörténeti Kutatóintézet, 1992), 285.

8 Rabán Gerézdi, “Egy magyar humanizmus-történeten margójára,” in idem, *Janus Panoniuştól Balassi Bálintig. Tanulmányok* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1968), 193–196.

1518 new publication of the *Laus Stultitiae* to his friend, Ferenc Perényi, Bishop of Várad (Nagyvárad, today Oradea, Romania), an excellent humanist who later died on the battlefield of Mohács, may not refute, only slightly modify this opinion.⁹ Tamás Pelei – canon of Gyulafehérvár (today Alba Iulia, Romania) – betrays a rather comprehensive knowledge of the works of Erasmus. He provided plenty of hand-written notes to his copy of *Adagia* bought in Buda in 1515. It is apparent from his notes that he was equally familiar with the *Familiarum colloquiorum formulae*, the *Enchiridion militis Christiani* and the *Paraphrasis super epistolas Paulinas* – proving that he was well versed in all three above mentioned Erasmian topics.¹⁰

By the time the really influential works of Erasmus were published, humanism in Hungary was over its peak: the poetry of Janus Pannonius, the historical works of Antonio Bonfini and the establishment of the world-famous Bibliotheca Corvina, all belonged to the humanism of the previous 15th century, to the history of the Renaissance court of King Matthias Corvinus.¹¹ No wonder that Erasmus working at the workshop of Aldus Manutius in Venice considered Hungary as the place where the important and good quality manuscripts essential for philological studies could be purchased for good money.¹² During the coming decades Erasmus conversed with his Hungarian friends who were familiar with the newest trends in humanism through personal contacts and especially via correspondence that connected and bound together the great family of humanists. From among these friends I shall only mention Jacobus Piso, the excellent poet. They met in Rome in 1509. Their relationship began when Piso, accidentally coming across a bundle of Erasmus' original letters at a bookseller's in Rome, bought and presented these to the master. This gesture made Erasmus realise the literary value of his letters and that he should take more care of them.¹³

Of course it was the humanism of the age of King Matthias Corvinus and the Jagiellonians which created a well-founded basis for the Hungarian reception of Erasmian intellectuality.

9 Trencsényi-Waldapfel, *Erasmus és magyar barátai*, 56–57; cf. József Huszti, “Celio Calcagnini in Ungheria,” *Corvina*: 2 (1922): fasc. 3, 57–71; 3 (1922): fasc. 6, 60–69.

10 Kelényi, *Egy magyar humanista glosszái*, 44.

11 László Szörényi, “Introduzione alla recente storiografia sul rinascimento in Ungheria,” in *Italy & Hungary. Humanism and art in the early Renaissance*. Acts of an International Conference Florence, Villa I Tatti, 6–8 June 2007, ed. Péter Farbaky and Louis A. Waldman (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2011), 45–53.

12 Rabán Gerézdi, “Aldus Manutius magyar barátai,” in Gerézdi, *Janus Pannoniustól Balassi Bálintig*, 204–266.

13 Trencsényi-Waldapfel, *Erasmus és magyar barátai*, 20; on Jacobus Piso see László Jankovits, “Jacobus Piso, a Hungarian humanist in Rome,” in Farbaky–Waldmann (eds.), *Italy & Hungary*, 217–226.

The influence of Erasmus can be traced in three consecutive periods of the vernacular Hungarian literature of the 16th century: first, in the critical thoughts of Hungarian Erasmians working on the translation and propagation of the vernacular Bible; later on, in the literary and aesthetic theory of the spreading Protestant humanism; and finally, in the late Renaissance period of the turn of the 16th and 17th century, in the *œuvre* of the Stoic intellectuals attracted by the ideas of Justus Lipsius.

Indeed, the above literary programmes interpreted the ideas of Erasmus in different ways, always emphasising the thoughts serving their aims. Nevertheless, the Erasmians translating the Bible, the Protestant writers and the Stoic intellectuals all enjoyed dealing with the problems of the literary language, the interpretation of the Bible from a humanist viewpoint and the philosophical foundations of Christianity.

“I for myself, would prefer all women to read the Gospel and the letters of Saint Paul. And they should be translated to all possible languages” – Erasmus says in the *Paraclesis*.¹⁴ Actually there were three Hungarian writers who followed this advice in the second half of the 1530s.

The first follower of Erasmus writing in Hungarian was Benedek Komjáti.¹⁵ He published the Hungarian translation of the epistles of Saint Paul in Cracow in 1533, which was the first book to be printed in Hungarian. Although he did not refer to Erasmus by name, he was working from his translation, took the introductions to the epistles from him and also incorporated the commentaries of Erasmus in his translated text. However crude and timid these trials were, Komjáti’s literary achievement cannot be denied.

Gábor Pesti – an intellectual belonging to the circles of the royal chancellery – can take credit for the wholesale development of the Erasmian literary programme. He studied at the University of Vienna where he established good contact with the Erasmian – anti-Lutheran – circle of professors, especially with Johannes Alexander Brassicanus.¹⁶ He published two books in Hungarian in Vienna in 1536: the *Fables of Aesop*¹⁷ and the *New Testament*.¹⁸ He translated the fables of the Greek Aesop into simple, clear vernacular – taking the advice of Erasmus concerning the educational usefulness of the “*poetarum fabulae*”. Two

14 LB, vol. V, 142 E–F, 140 B–C.

15 See the chapter *The reception of Erasmianism in Hungary and the contexts of the Erasmian programme* in this volume.

16 Pál Ács, “Pesti Gábor,” in MAMŰL, vol. 9, 145–149.

17 *Aesopi phrygis fabulae*, Gabriele Pannonio Pethino interprete (Vienna: Singrenius, 1536), and ed. Pál Ács (Budapest: Magvető, 1980).

18 *Novum Testamentum seu quattuor evangeliorum volumina lingua Hungarica donata*, Gabriele Pannonio Pethino interprete (Vienna: Singrenius, 1536), and facsimile ed. Péter Kőszeghy, epilogue Ildikó Hubert. BHA 34 (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2002).

years later Gábor Pesti published also in Vienna his dictionary of six languages.¹⁹ Although this collection of words – *Nomenclatura sex linguarum* – follows the tradition of the glossaries compiled at the end of the Middle Ages, it is much richer than those were. Pesti provided Hungarian interpretations to a dictionary of five languages published in Nuremberg.

The most talented and most influential representative of Hungarian Erasmianism was János Sylvester.²⁰ He was the one who established Hungarian linguistics and literary studies. At the University of Cracow from 1527 onwards he belonged to the circle of the English Erasmian Leonard Cox,²¹ while later in Wittenberg, he became the student of Philip Melancthon.²² On returning to Hungary in 1534, he entered the service of one of the richest aristocrats, Tamás Nádasdy.²³ He organised his Bible translation workshop on the estate of his patron in Sárvár-Újsziget.²⁴ Parallel to translating the New Testament, he also studied the grammatical system of the Hungarian language. His work entitled *Grammatica Hungarolatina*, which is the first descriptive grammar book of the Hungarian language, was published in 1539.²⁵ When dealing with the phonetic structure of Hungarian, he also made use of his knowledge of Hebrew.²⁶ Recent research renders it possible that this Hungarian grammar book had an effect on the famous German grammar of Marcus Crodellius – the *Grammatica Latinogermanica*.²⁷ The complete translation of the New Testament published by János Sylvester in 1541 closely follows the translation and commentaries by Erasmus.²⁸ While working on his translation, Sylvester realised that the Hun-

19 *Nomenclatura sex linguarum. Latinae, Italicae, Gallicae, Bohemicae, Hungaricae et Germanicae... Per Gabrielem Pannonium Pesthinum* (Vienna: Singrenius, 1538), and facsimile ed. József Molnár. *Fontes ad Historiam Linguarum Populorumque Uraliensium* 2 (Budapest: ELTE, 1975).

20 István Bartók, 'Nem egyéb, hanem magyar poézis.' *Sylvester János nyelv- és irodalom-szemlélete európai és magyar összefüggésekben* (Budapest: Universitas, 2007).

21 Farkas Gábor Kiss, "Sylvester János első verse," *Magyar Könyvszemle* 132 (2016): 72–74.

22 Juhász-Ormsby, "Leonard Cox."

23 On Tamás Nádasdy see the chapter *Alvise Gritti and Tamás Nádasdy* in this volume.

24 János Balázs, *Sylvester János és kora* (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1958), 160–165.

25 Ioannes Sylvester, *Grammatica Hungarolatina* (Sárvár-Újsziget: Abádi, 1539), and ed. István Bartók. *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Medii Recentisque Aevorum. Series Nova* 15 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó–Argumentum, 2006).

26 Róbert Dán, *Humanizmus, reformáció, antitrinitarizmus és a héber nyelv Magyarországon. Humanizmus és reformáció* 2 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1973), 37–46.

27 Bartók, 'Nem egyéb, hanem magyar poézis,' 96–99.

28 János Sylvester, *Új Testamentum* (Sárvár-Újsziget, Abádi, 1541), and facsimile edition and epilogue Béla Varjas. BHA 1 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1960). New facsimile edition and complementary study Edina Zvara. Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó–MTA Könyvtár és Információs Központ, 2017.