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**Geleji Katona István's Sermons: Text Creation, Theological and Rhetorical
Questions in *Váltság titka***

SUMMARY

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Keywords: Geleji Katona István, *Váltság titka*, *Titkok titka*, (orthodox) sermon, perikopa system, preliminary speeches, homiletics debate, orthodox theory, puritan practice, rhetorical constructions, homiletics principles, examples, biblical metaphors, polemics, polemics character.

Contents:

The basis of my thesis is Geleji Katona István's sermon volume, i.e. his book bearing the title *Váltság titka* and consisting of three volumes containing the speeches focusing on the seven major religious holidays within one liturgical year. Presenting the volume containing a total number of 228 sermons is a great challenge since the short descriptions mentioned in this volume are full of repeated and traditional structures, greatly concentrated by Tarnóc Márton, when characterizing this piece of art as a 'thick sermon volume', the reading of which creates in the reader the impression of a 'great and grey rock.' One of the reasons for this sermon volume not being researched in detail or included in any studies for decades could lie in the many traditional attributes used. The PhD Thesis hereto is an attempt of explanation with the main purpose of examining the aforementioned volume from a philological, theological, rhetorical, biblical and hermeneutical point of view.

In the following parts I would like to present the most important findings of this thesis.

At the beginning of my thesis I presented the results of the previous researches carried out by Geleji Katona and the antecedents of the researches mentioned. Furthermore, I also presented the results and the notes concerning this research, because these results and notes focused also on various aspects and questions to be examined (Chapter 1). Based on the double task fulfilled by the bishop acting as a writer it can be stated without any doubt, that from a professional and personal point of view there are rather negative than positive evaluations concerning him. Many times the quotations from his rich work are mentioned without context and without context examination. The different fields of science have not focused so far on his works. It has been proved that my thesis is an important part of the process started with Heltai János, and which reinstates the author to his rightful place in literature history. By using the methodology applied I fill in the previous researches with the research hereto, since there are only a few and superficial studies focusing on Geleji Katona's works - this justifies and proves the need for further studies.

The summary of research history is followed by the sketching, refinement and filling in of Geleji Katon's résumé (Chapter 2). The observations mentioned in the encyclopedias and the autobiographical notes in the *Praeconium evangelicum* facilitated the transformation of his career, defined the milestones of his studies and his activities as a priest and later as a bishop. These pieces of information were of significant help in the understanding of the sermons, as presented by Geleji Katona. His activities as a writer and his entire work indicate the vastness of his activities and works during his life: Beside the theological questions he also focused on aspects concerning the church and discipline, he wrote several letters and expressed his opinions in case of administrative aspects, and decisions. While researching the third volume of *Váltság titka* I found no information worth to be mentioned. Since these texts had not been printed it is safe to assume that they got lost or were destroyed.

The third chapter examines the theological background which defined the preacher's entire oeuvre. One of the main chapters of my thesis focuses on presenting the characteristics of orthodoxy and puritanism, as theological trend. These characteristics were presented based on the homiletic debates between Geleji Katona and Medgyesi. The theoretical analyses were ignored. After text analysis and after deriving the corresponding conclusions it became clear which preacher was orthodox and which was puritan. The analysis of debate conclusions highlighted that in the specialized literature the principles of orthodoxy and puritanism are clearly separated. Subject of the debates were the sermons with significant contents and forms, these illustrated the characteristics of the theological background systems and highlighted the facts that the aims were the same, only the way of implementation differed.

The fourth chapter of my thesis reveals the literary inheritance of Geleji Katona István, starting with the description of the three volumes of his work entitled *Váltság titka*. The volumes presented resulted in a complex collection containing not only the sermons spoken on different holidays of the liturgical year, but also sermons independent from any holidays, and presented on any religious service. Following the comparative analysis of the *Váltság titka's* three dedicated prologues and introduction such information were identified which are absolutely necessary for understanding not only the volumes, but also of the author's entire work. The titles clearly indicate the genre, the content and the members of the noble families acting as protectors and mentioned in the references. I. Rákóczi György, Lorántffy Zsuzsánna, II. Rákóczi György were not only protectors but also leading cultural and religious figures. For the people contemporary with the author the people mentioned in

the Holy Bible were examples to follow. Therefore, the fact that such people are mentioned is not only a formal and mandatory part of the references, but is also morally ennobling. The text highlights not only the aspects of glory and humbleness, but also the peoples' thoughts about the literature of their time. This can be used as starting point for rebuilding the homiletics debate between Geleji Katona and Medgyesi. The analysis of the *Titkok titka* volume and its introduction indicated that in case of Geleji Katona each work focuses on the same aim, i.e. to support the protestants and orthodox in their faith.

The fifth chapter of my paper focuses on the orthodox elements of the sermon. By starting with the sermon's general definition it became clear that the purpose of the orthodox sermon is to teach: later this aspect became a scientific argument of the *docere*. It is characterized by the concept of static Word and by the separating of the *explicatio* and the *applicatio*. The analysis concerning the practical implementing of homiletics principles indicated that the text and the topic/aim designation fulfill the requirements of the orthodox sermon. However, concerning the speech design criteria, the highlighted six aspects were more comprehensive, and consisted of several secondary units. However, its purpose is not to intimidate the public, but to facilitate clarity and direction. Hence, the selected subject and the selected structure aim at teaching. All this is filled in by a strong polemic voice focusing on inner development, thereby using the outer boundaries as limits.

The last and the most comprehensive chapter of my thesis focuses on the rhetorical-biblical-hermeneutic analysis of sermons. The first chapter focuses on analyzing the ways Geleji Katona uses examples, this analysis being based on the exodium of the first subsection. In case of subject matter, structure, vocabulary and style, the comparative analysis revealed not only similarities, but differences as well. Consequently, a separation occurred in case of ancient history, the author's narrative style, the biblical quotes and the examples consisting of proverbiums. Due to the concentration on the Holy Bible, the biblical examples played the main role. The examples used for teaching purposes are not only *docere* instruments, but also have a *movere* function. The preacher has a vast knowledge not only in the field of ancient stories but also in the field of his native language.

The analysis of the *Nagy-és Kis-karatsonra* sermons is part of the second subsection and during the analysis mentioned it became clear that within the texts the structure, the defined goals and the various stories support the orthodox aspect, also highlighted by the educational parts of the speeches. The careful reading of the text also highlighted that the

sermons mentioned in the *Vigasztaló* (Consolation) sections also focus on social sensitivity. The theoretical parts of the sermon are interrupted by prayers, indicating the need for subjectivity, spirituality and for focusing on the physical needs as well. The detailed information on the social habits, and the pieces of advice on children's education are based on life experience. Science versus emotions and faith - these are signs of piety, an aspect present in case of puritanism as well. Therefore, orthodoxy and puritanism may get closer also through the works of Geleji Katona-as well. However, the accent lies only in difference. The researches indicate that the works of Geleji Katona need to be reevaluated from several points of view. This section of my thesis aims at becoming part of this initiative.

The third subsection of the thesis hereto focuses on the amount of metaphors, on the system thereof and on their usage depending on the subject matter: The Christ metaphor, the metaphors referring to the devil and the metaphors referring to the church. All these aspects were key-elements of the speeches, they were present in all three volumes, but had various meanings, depending on the volume's message. In many cases they were used as arguments and became polemic instruments.

The final subsection is dedicated to the polemic analysis of the *Váltság titka*. The analysis of the sermons supports the statements mentioned in the specialized literature and stating that all of Geleji Katon's speeches contain polemic sections. Debate is a constant part of his speeches, however the location always differs. He had several debate partners, they varied depending on the danger the church was exposed to. In many speeches he debates the same way: presentation-regrouping-doubt. The thorough text analysis revealed also that regardless of the polemic items Geleji Katona aimed at teaching religion and at defining the church and the teachings of the church. The self-defining items of polemic implies the disarming of the enemy. The solutions concerning style and duplicity are clearly separated in the speeches in polemic and in teaching sections.

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