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Literary aspects
of the Jesuit Mission in Transylvania in the 17-18th centuries:
the example of Pál Baranyi

Doctoral thesis – Abstract

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Abstract

This doctoral thesis inquires into the works of a Hungarian Jesuit author from the early modern period, who makes his appearance in the international literary, spirituality, and church history speciality literature with the emblematic literature and the translation literature he represents (e.g. the adaptation of Iacob Marlo Horstius's work, *Paradisus animae*), and also, with his Romanian catechism and his key role in the unification of Transylvanian Romanians with the Catholic Church. Pál Baranyi (1657–1719) lived and worked in a period full of conflicts and transformation, his 13-year service in Transylvania coincides with the last decade of the Principality of Transylvania and the very first years of Habsburg authority, the disintegration and resistance of the Protestant power structure, and the strengthening of the Catholic presence. Baranyi's biography is usually present as barely a short article in the various works, which frequently perpetuate mistakes. That is why, in the first part of my thesis, I attempt to rewrite the biography, following my endeavour to enrich and refine the biography by processing elogia (eulogy), letters, and other handwritten sources collected from various archives.

The discussion of the oeuvre begins by first examining the manuscripts and then the printed works, in chronological order. Among the manuscripts, I examine, for example, the collection of Sunday sermons, the previously unreviewed description of Szekler (Székely) and Saxon Seats, the manuscript called *Anatomia*, which offers a perspective on the relations between the Reformed and the Catholics of the time, which contains some church politics aspects, and borders on polemic literature.

The fourth, largest chapter of the thesis is divided into a total of six sub-chapters, presenting the examination of the works published in print. The first sub-chapter contains a detailed presentation of Baranyi's first volume, a Latin book titled *Viaticum spirituale*, with special attention to the paratexts, the significance of the concurrence of image and word, and emblems. The second sub-chapter includes the little-known work, also in Latin: *Raphael archangelus*;

here, we offer a comprehensive presentation, which also includes the central figure of the book, the archangel Raphael, and the question of angels in general, the cult of angels and their importance in early modern period, the users of the volume, and finally we conclude the issue with an overview of the publication history. The third sub-chapter discusses another less-known work, the volume *A' Szent Irás Summaja* (Summary of the Holy Scripture): after describing the volume and the dedication, it draws attention to the theoretical, biblical, and exegetical texts in the volume, then explores the issue of a specific genre: the biblical *summa* (summary), looking for parallels with other works of a similar character in Hungarian, Latin, or even English. The fourth sub-chapter examines the research of the prayer book *Lelki paradicsom* (Spiritual Paradise), as well as certain parts of the volume that have not been explored so far. Since my research has indicated that this text contains a hitherto unidentified Hungarian original of Baranyi's catechism in Romanian, the same sub-chapter includes the examination of the catechism entitled *Pânea pruncilor* (Bread of infants), as well as the presentation of the relationship between the catechism and *Lelki paradicsom*. Another chapter, which offers prospect on the afterlife and transformations of *Lelki paradicsom*, could not be missing. The fifth sub-chapter examines two volumes of Pál Baranyi's funeral sermons, within which it analyses in detail one sermon as a separate sub-unit, entitled *Örvendetes prédikáció* (Joyous Sermon), which differs from the others in its subject and type; it is also noteworthy due to its historical references, and the Jewish-Hungarian parallel of fate that can be recognized in the speech makes it a particularly important text of the collection. In the last, sixth sub-chapter, we provide a less voluminous introduction and analysis of the small book entitled *Szentek laistroma* (List of saints), which expands the range of translation literature.

After the examination of the biography and oeuvre, the fifth chapter contains a kind of excursus about Pál Baranyi's mission and his literary activity, which can undoubtedly be considered a kind of applied literature, always subordinated to the main goal: the success of the mission.

The sixth chapter is a conclusion, a summary. The seventh chapter contains the appendices. In the appendix, we provide the transcriptions of the newly identified archival sources or other texts discussed in the previous chapters, and in some cases their Hungarian translation, as well as the various reports based on funeral sermons in the last subsection of the appendix, such as reports by chronology, type, territorial extent, and persons.

My doctoral thesis examined this Jesuit author and his oeuvre with a monographic aim, however, due to the limited frames and time, an exhaustive examination in all respects could

not be carried out. On the other hand, I conducted my research in seven archives of three countries to find archival sources and manuscripts, with the intention to use the most significant Hungarian and international speciality literature during the processing. Even if the monographic aims were not completely met in all respects, my research results clarified and added to formerly disputed or unknown biographical moments, it highlighted the importance of several hitherto unknown works, and contributed new findings and additions to the discourses of literature, spirituality and church history. The personality of Pál Baranyi, his literary work, and the issue of the Transylvanian Jesuit mission have been enriched with new and valuable information.

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