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THESES OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION (PhD)

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JESUITS OF HUNGARY AND THE CZECH PROVINCE  
(CZECHIA, MORAVIA, AND SILESIA) UP TO 1773

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## 1. Premises of the research, problem posing

The purpose of this paper is to explore to what degree the activity of the Society of Jesus contributed to the cultural cooperation between the Czech lands and Hungary. Research of the Czech-Hungarian interactivity has great traditions on both sides, but the role of churches has, for a long time, only received marginal attention in this field, or only protestant connections were researched. The detailed grid of catholic connections in the 16-18th centuries have so far been uncharted, even though the topic offers several opportunities. The workings of the Jesuit Order deserve special attention in this respect. It is clear from the historical writings by 17-18th century Jesuits that Czech and Hungarian scholars had a good knowledge of each other's research and findings. It was the result of the work of Jesuits that the veneration of a number of Czech saints (St Cyril, St Methodius, St John Nepomuk) appeared and is still present in Hungary. In my dissertation I attempt to explore the visible impact as well as the roots of the cooperation between the Czech and Hungarian Jesuits.

In my thesis submitted in 2005, I examined the Hungarian connections of the Jesuit residence in Olomouc, and I found that the topic deserves further elaboration. Therefore, I extended my research to the whole area of the Czech province of the Jesuit Order, which includes all regions of Czechia, Moravia, and Silesia.

The Jesuits of the Czech lands and Hungary were divided into separate provinces only after 1623, but a better understanding of the topic also requires knowledge of the preceding events. Therefore, I determined that the subject of my studies should be the period between the establishment of the Jesuits in Prague (1556) and the dissolution of the Jesuit Order (1773). The last chapter of the dissertation (*Cultural Impact*) does not integrate into this time span, since the cultural impact of the Jesuits' work lived on after the dissolution of the order, in fact, they appeared strongest at the end of the 18th century.

## 2. Methodology followed

In the first chapter, I collected the findings of the research concluded so far. This chapter aims at presenting how Czech-Hungarian relations in the catholic church reach back even before the appearance of Jesuits. The Jesuits carried on this tradition. The cooperation between the two countries in the 16-18th centuries were not solely the result of their work, either, it was present in the protestant churches as well as on a secular level.

There are very good resources written on the history of the Jesuit Order in Hungary. The most important of these is a publication of the catalogues of the Austrian province, edited by László Lukács (*Catalogi personarum et officiorum provinciae Austriae Societatis Iesu. I - XI. collegit et edidit Ladislaus LUKÁCS, Romae, 1978-1995.*) This was my main source for chapters 2 to 4.4. Similarly good resources were written of the matriculas of the University of Nagyszombat (*Matricula Universitatis Tyrnaviensis 1635-1701.* ed. and notes by ZSOLDOS, Attila, Budapest, 1990; *Külföldi hallgatók magyar felsőoktatásai intézményekben,* ed. HEILAUF, Zsuzsanna, Budapest, 2006), and about the Hungarian students of Czech universities (VARGA, Júlia: *Magyarországi diákok a Habsburg Birodalom kisebb egyetemein és akadémiáin.* Budapest, 2004). I used these sources in chapters 4.2 and 4.5.

There are hardly any resources of this kind in the Czech Republic, however, there are excellent comprehensive histories of the Jesuit Order. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jesuits in the Czech lands, Johannes Schmidl wrote a history of the Czech province which he only completed up to the mid 17th century. Nevertheless, it is quite useful as it is, since he not only processed but also copied the original source materials. He incorporated the yearly reports into his work virtually unchanged (SCHMIDL, Johannes: *Historia Societatis Iesu provinciae Bohemiae I-IV.* Prague 1747-1759). Another comprehensive work was published at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Alois Kroess (KROESS, Alois: *Geschichte der böhmischen Provinz der Gesellschaft Jesu I-II.* Wien, 1910-1938), even though he did not get beyond the period that Schmidl had written up, either. However, he did explore the early history of the Order meticulously. I used their work for writing the

chapters on the 1618 upheaval and the superiorship of Gregorius Rumer. In addition, for the chapter on Gregorius Rumer, I used the resource types typically available for the history of the Jesuit Order, such as catalogues, diaries and *historia domus* of residences, yearly reports (*litterae annuae*), deeds and documents. For the same chapter, I used as my source the arraignment and defense documents created under the upheaval. I researched these documents at the Brno Archives (Moravský Zemský Archív), the manuscript archives of the National Library of Austria in Vienna (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek) and the National Library in Prague (Národní knihovna Praha) as well as the Central State Archives in Prague (Státní Ústřední Archív). Further, I studied the separation of the Czech province and the main issues related to the first province congregation in the central Jesuit archives in Rome (Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu). I used the same sources for chapter 4.

The subject of chapter 5 is a borderline case of history and literary history. Here, more emphasis is given to 17-18th century histories and hagiographies, songbooks, and dramatic texts. The language of the prints is usually Latin, but from as early as the beginning of the 17th century, we can find important German, Hungarian, and Czech publications, as well.

### 3. The new findings

Hungarian and Czech Jesuits in the same province (from the beginning up to 1623)

According to our subject, we can divide the examined period between 1556 and 1773 into two phases. The first would cover a period up to 1623, the year that marks the formation of a separate Czech Jesuit province. At this phase, the Czech and Hungarian Jesuits would belong to the same province, allowing greater mobility between the two territories.

At the beginning, Czech boarding schools were much more important to Hungarian Jesuits than vice versa. In Hungary, the network of Jesuit schools had not yet been set up, which lended an important role to Czech and Moravian colleges in the training of

Jesuits. Between 1556 and 1623, 155 young people joined the Jesuit Order in Hungary, and 93 of these spent more or less time in Czech or Moravian residences. It can be said in general that the Czech lands were primarily an educational centre at the time, and the houses with universities (Olomouc, Prague), and novitiates (Brno) were the most popular. Minor settlements had hardly any Hungarian and Transylvanian Jesuits attending. The outstanding Jesuits of the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (e.g. István Szántó, György Káldi, Mátyás Hajnal, Gergely and Dániel Vásárhelyi, Martinus Undo, Péter Pázmány, Gregorius and Johannes Rumer, Georgius Forró, Zacharias Trinckel, Georgius Dobronoki, Michael Tamásfy, Johannes Antaly etc.) all studied (at least for a period of time) in the Czech lands.

Of the residences, Brno was the most popular, mainly because of its novitiate. The second most visited was the one in Olomouc, Prague being only third. The college in Prague was only significant in Hungarian Jesuit training during the time the novitiate operated there. As this was moved to Brno in 1573, the college in Prague saw the number of attendees from Hungary drop sharply. From Hungary's point of view, therefore, Moravia was more important than the other territories of the Czech crown. The majority of Jesuits studying in the Czech provinces did not return immediately to Hungary on completing their studies, because the school system was not as advanced there as to employ highly educated teachers in such numbers. Following the upheaval, however, few chose the Czech lands for education and preferred to stay in Hungary where the Order had just begun to flourish. After the separation of the Czech province in 1623, only a fraction of Hungarian Jesuits living in Czechia and Moravia stayed in the province. They regarded Czechia and Moravia mainly as a place of education and gaining experience, but few would prefer to stay there in the long term.

Thus, in the period between 1556 and 1623, very many Hungarian Jesuits lived in Czechia and Moravia, while comparatively few Czechs, Moravians, or Silesians visited Hungary. This was mainly because only few Jesuit residences existed in Hungary at the time, with a low number of Jesuits living there, and their schools only offered secondary education. They did not operate

institutions that would have been attractive to foreign members of the order. Besides, it is important to note that the situation of Jesuits in the Czech provinces was much safer at the time than it would be in Hungary. The order had managed to set foot in Hungary (and Transylvania) after a number of failed attempts, and even afterwards they were often forced to flee. On the other hand, in the Czech lands they could operate undisturbed up to the 1618 upheaval, and could return to their residences quite soon after the upheaval, receiving all the help to start anew. Up until 1623, the dominance of the Czech provinces in the interactions of Czech and Hungarian Jesuits was conspicuous.

### Gregorius Rumer

Of the Hungarian Jesuits living in the Czech province, Gregorius Rumer was the most prominent. Rumer was an acclaimed theologian of his time, an expert of Biblical studies. He also joined the effort to translate the Bible into Hungarian. He was the director of the University of Olomouc between 1613 and 1618, and the Provincial Superior of the Austrian province between 1618 and 1623. He was staying in Prague during the 1618 upheaval, and became a participant of the events himself. He formulated his thoughts about the upheaval in a letter to one of his fellow Jesuits Wilhelm Lamormaini. He wrote that he did not see a possibility for a peaceful resolution of matters, but the upheaval might provide an opportunity to undo the ordinances providing religious freedom. This letter stirred a lot of passion widely, and was made a central momentum in all major protestant apologies. It was translated to a number of languages.

Following the battle of White Mountain, the Jesuits could return to the Czech lands and begun the restoration of their buildings so that they could resume their educational and missionary work as soon as possible. Earlier they had applied for separation from the Austrian province to form their own. Restoration work complete, the issue resurfaced. The plan was approved by the superior general, and the Czech province was separated from the Austrian. The new Czech Jesuit province included the territories of Czechia, Moravia and Silesia.

Gregorius Rumer became the first superior of the Czech province. He remained on this post until his death in 1627. During his short term as provincial superior, he established three new colleges (Jičín, Kutna Hora, Prága-Malá Strana), two in Moravia (Znojmo, Jihlava), several residences and missionary stations, and the establishment of the Jesuit Order in Silesia is also owed to him. He reorganised the Jesuit missions which had been disrupted by the upheaval. These had been extended to the whole territory of the province by 1627, and only the Silesian missionary network was at an immature stage of organisation.

The first congregation of the Czech province was summoned in 1625. The issues discussed at the meetings are a clear indication of the nature of problems the young province had to face. Most issues had to do with restoration and the missions. Rumer felt that he was unable to live up to the challenges on account of his failing health and advanced age, and requested his release from the office of superior, but he was refused. In his last years, he worked on the codes of the Czech province. The rules he had written up were approved by the Superior General, but as he died, these were introduced only by his successor Christophorus Gresning. Gregorius Rumer died in 1627. His successor had a well organised and dynamically progressing province to take over.

#### The Czech province and Hungary (1623-1773)

After 1623, the majority of Hungarian Jesuits left the Czech province. The first superior of the province, Gregorius Rumer, was of Hungarian origin. In addition to him, Johannes Urbani, Franciscus Petheó, Johannes Antaly, and Michael Tamásfy stayed in the Czech province. Between 1623 and 1773, a total of 26 Jesuits marked as *hungarus* can be found in the catalogues of the Czech province. In a majority of cases it is difficult to determine whether they were indeed born to Hungarian families, for everyone born in the territories of Hungary was marked as *hungarus* in the catalogues. As both Czech lands and Hungary was part of the Habsburg Empire, military officers and clerks often travelled to foreign countries with their families. Therefore, it often happened that children of Czech families were registered as *hungarus*, as in the case of Josef Dobrovský and Franciscus Heislert, for instance. At the same time, it

is also possible that Jesuits from Hungarian families were registered as *bohemus*, *moravus*, or *austriacus* and, as such, they have fallen out of our scope of examination. The catalogues at our disposal are incomplete, thus we have data on only a few Jesuits with regard to what language they spoke, and none of them are indicated to have spoken Hungarian. In general, it is easy to tell about Hungarian Jesuits living in the Czech province during the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century whether they were from Hungarian families (Franciscus Petheó, Michael Tamásfy...), but later, it is only their registration as *hungarus* indicates Hungarian origin. Before 1623, the Czech lands had been the most popular place of training with Jesuits in Hungary. After the separation of the provinces, however, training was provided within the Austrian province. By the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Hungary had had its own university and novitiate – with the Jesuit school system developing dynamically – which facilitated the academic training of priests in the home country. Hungary belonged to the Austrian province, which enabled Hungarian Jesuits to study at the excellent universities of Austria (Vienna, Graz, Passau). As a result, the number of Hungarian Jesuits living in the Czech lands had dropped to a minimum after the separation of the two provinces.

It is worth mentioning a few names who did stay. Johannes Antaly achieved significant missionary success near Prague. He later fell sick and died looking after plague-stricken. His biography can be found in major Czech hagiographies and order histories. Johannes Urbani became famous trying to protect the Čejkovice residence – risking his own life – against Tartars who were attacking along with the army of Gábor Bethlen. Michael Tamásfy was an acclaimed scholar of his day, headed several colleges, and was advisor to the provincial superior. Another Hungarian Jesuit who rose to leadership was Johannes Institoris. In the area of Uherské Hradiště, where a large number of Hungarian families had settled down, there was a need for Jesuit missionaries from Hungary (Franciscus Floder, Mathias Halgasch). Johannes Roehr was a Hungarian Jesuit who belonged to the Czech province, and later went to Peru as a missionary and designed the restoration works of the cathedral in Lima.

A significant number of *hungarus* students still attended Czech universities. As these students were not Jesuits, the separation of the Czech province did not affect their attendance levels. Most

Hungarian students applied to the University of Olomouc, Prague was less popular at the time. The foundation of the University of Nagyszombat had stayed the number of Hungarian students flowing to Olomouc for a while, but their number was to rise soon again. The university lost from its significance in the 18th century as the spirit of the age began to favour education for military and diplomatic careers rather than the scholarship of traditional philosophy, theology, and antique literature.

The significance of the University of Olomouc was also recognised by Péter Pázmány. In his last will he ruled that his nephew might use his Moravian properties but was not allowed to sell them, instead, should his family line end, the income of his properties should go into the foundation of a priest training institute for Hungarian students in Olomouc, under the coordination of the Jesuit Order. These plans were never realised, however, as Miklós Pázmány sold the mentioned properties in his own life.

While the number of Hungarian Jesuits staying in the Czech lands had dropped, that of the Czech, Moravian, and Silesian Jesuits in Hungarian residences saw a marked increase from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was only under the Thököly movement and the Rákóczi uprising that the numbers decreased, but then Hungarian Jesuits had to flee, as well. The number of Czech Jesuits was on a steady rise in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, peaking in 1765, when 56 of them lived in Hungarian residences. From then onward, their number decreased to 37 in 1773. [text of the diagram: Czech, Moravian, and Silesian Jesuits living in Hungary up to 1773 — number of Jesuits]



The majority of Czech, Moravian, and Silesian Jesuits living in Hungary had applied to the Austrian province from the start. There may be several reasons to this. Most likely, when the House of Habsburg rose to the throne, more and more Austrian, Hungarian, Spanish, and Italian families were given land in the territories of the Czech crown, and this was even more so after the Battle of White Mountain, when the properties confiscated from the protestants participating in the uprising were donated to the monarch's loyalists. These were mostly of foreign origin. The towns also had an increasing number of foreign citizens settling in. A significant percentage of (*bohemus*, *moravus*, and *silesius*) children born in the Czech crown were not from Czech parents, therefore, they must have had such strong attachments to Austria, Hungary, Croatia that they preferred to belong to the Austrian province. It is very hard to determine the ethnicity of Jesuits on the basis of catalogue entries.

Not everyone decided to live in the Austrian province from the start, though, it did happen that Jesuits left the Czech province for the Austrian. Most of them arrived simultaneously with the expulsion of the Turks as field missionaries and did not return to their home countries (e.g. Rudolf Brzensky, Lucas Kolich, Joachimus Hilari). Others applied to the Austrian province but later returned to the Czech province. This happened quite frequently in the years following the separation of the Czech province, but it was more seldom in later years (e.g. Christophorus Wratislav). Many

returned temporarily to the Czech province during the military campaigns against the Turks and the sieges of Vienna and Buda by the Turks, mostly to complete their studies, but the dangers gone they chose to live in the Austrian province.

The role of Jesuits living in the Hungarian residences has also changed after 1623. Earlier, Hungary had been a missionary target, and the Czech Jesuits would usually pursue pastoral activities here, but from the second half of the 17th century, an increasing number of Czech students and teachers appeared at Hungarian schools. A majority of Czech Jesuits carried out practical duties, physical work, kitchen work, supervised the order of churches or hospitals, worked as chemists, or managed the economics of colleges. Pastoral work remained important, but they mostly did other kinds of work.

Few Czech, Moravian, or Silesian Jesuits lived in Transylvania. Most of them were active in Northern Hungarian colleges. From a Czech viewpoint, the most important colleges were the ones in Nagyszombat, Kassa, Pozsony and Trencsén. In addition, Szokolca, Sopron, Lőcse, Győr, and Besztercebánya became also important in the 18th century. Not only major centres, but also minor residences and missionary stations had Czech Jesuits working in them.

Of the colleges in Hungary, the one in Nagyszombat was the most popular, mainly because of its university. It was frequented not only by members of the Jesuit Order, but we find a great number of lay students from Czechia, Moravia, and Silesia in the university's matriculas. The university of Nagyszombat rose even more in importance during the Swedish invasion of Moravia, when the students of the university of Olomouc came to finish their studies there.

By the end of the 17th century, the Austrian province had become oversized to the point of unmanageability. By this time, circumstances in Hungary had also made feasible the formation of a separate province. From the mid 1600's, Hungarian Jesuits made some failed attempts to form their own province, but they were turned down on each occasion. In 1660, the idea to create a Hungarian-Moravian province cropped up, but it met such strong resistance from Czech Jesuits that it had to fail. The Czech Jesuits later applied to the General to have him refuse all similar attempts in

the future. Instead, they suggested for the new Hungarian province to be established with Transylvanian or Croatian territories.

The defining event of the end of the 17th century was the expulsion of the Turks. The Czech Jesuits supported the fights against the Turks with substantial amounts of money. In 1683, each college paid a certain sum based on its size, and in 1685, the Pope ordered them to give for the cause a third of the wealth they had accumulated over the last 30 years. Later they did not have to donate set amounts. Looking at the sources, we have reason to suppose that they paid war contributions right until the order was dissolved. Beside monetary means, they also helped the fighting armies with personal services. In each year, about 10 Czech field missionaries lived in Hungary. The best known of these were Lucas Kolich and Rudolf Brzensky. They were in charge of the pastoral duties of Czech, Moravian, and Silesian soldiers in the first place, but also took on the evangelisation of civilians. The impact of their activities is still present in the Carpathian basin, manifested, for instance, in the veneration of St John Nepomuk.

### Cultural impact

The mutual communication between the Czech and Hungarian Jesuits left traces in the cultures of the two countries. Hagiography is the academic field where this is most detected. Not only the veneration of the saints which were traditional in both countries was revived, but also Hungarian saints and blessed were integrated into Czech national hagiographies (e.g. St Elizabeth of Hungary, Johannes Antaly, Eszter Bossányi), and typical Czech saints were imported to Hungary (e.g. Blessed Zdik, Bořivoj, Blessed Břetislav).

The cult of Saints Cyril and Methodius also appeared in Hungary at this time. Our first record of this is the preamble appended to Slovak version of the hymnbook of Benedek Szöllösi (*Cantus Catholici, Pysně Katolické latinské y slovenské: nové y starodavné*). From then onward, Cyril and Methodius appear regularly in Hungarian hagiographies. Their cult was present among both Hungarian and Slavic (Slovak, Rusyn) speaking populations. The cult of Cyril and Methodius was reinforced by a transformation in the approach to history. Historians in the 17-18<sup>th</sup> centuries

focussed on the events in the Carpathian basin from ancient times to their day. This included the history of the Moravian Empire. Jesuits in the Czech lands and Hungary (Sámuel Timon, György Szklenár, Bohuslav Balbín, György Pray) all studied this field, for they all looked on the history of the Moravian Empire as that of their own. They differed on many points, but they definitely knew each other's research. The cult of Cyril and Methodius and the myth of the Moravian Empire lingered on after the dissolution of the Jesuit Order, and they have been part and parcel of Slovak national identity to this day.

Besides Cyril and Methodius, the veneration of St John Nepomuk is the most wide-spread. In the course of the 18th century, his statues were erected on several bridges, chapels and altars were dedicated to him, and we even know of mills which were dedicated to the patronage of St John Nepomuk. He was the patron saint of bridges, waters, water workers, and the protector of reputation. A host of folk legends were woven around his figure. As we know from the yearly reports of Czech field missionaries, St John Nepomuk's holiday was celebrated every year as early as the end of the 17th century, that is, even before his canonisation. Besides field missions, the cult of St John Nepomuk lived strong in major Jesuit centres. His illustrations can be found in several Jesuit churches. The Jesuit church in Székesfehérvár was built in his honour. Even a Jesuit musical drama about St John Nepomuk survives. It was a production by the students of the grammar school of Nagyszombat in Latin in 1749, entitled *Innocentia Laesa Divinitus vindicata in sancto martyre, confessore et virgine Johanne Nepomuceno*. The same year, the play was performed in Győr in Hungarian language. The original story of the play comes from the books *Bohemia Sancta* and *Epitome rerum bohemicarum* by Bohuslav Balbín, as well as the chronicles of Václav Hájek z Libočan.

My dissertation does not elaborate on all the aspects of the connections between the Czech and Hungarian Jesuits. There are plenty more traces of interactions in our cultural heritage of the 17th and 18th centuries. Further study of these is likely to reveal new results.

#### 4. Publications in the field

*Az olmtüzi jezsuiták magyarországi kapcsolatai 1566-1773* In: *A magyar jezsuiták küldetése a kezdetektől napjainkig* ed. Csaba Szilágyi, Piliscsaba: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 2006. 513-519.

*Pázmány Miklós és Olomouc.* Magyar Sion, (új folyam 2.) , 2007. year 1 issue 2

*Gelasius Dobner történetírói munkásságának magyar vonatkozásai* address at the conference *A piarista rend története Magyarországon 5 November, 2007.* Publication as a study in preparation.

*A Morvaországban élő magyarországi nemesi családok szerepe a fehérhegyi csata utáni katolikus megújulásban* In: *Egyén és nemzet Európa történetében* ed. Strausz Péter-Zachar Péter Krisztián Budapest, Heraldika, 2009. 11-30.

*Knihy M. Pázmánye v Olomoucké knihovně* address at the conference *Problematika historických fondů v českých knihovnách* (Problems with Old Prints at Czech Libraries), Olomouc, 5 November, 2008. Publication as a study in preparation.

Forgách Eszter életrajza Bohuslav Balbín Bohemia Sancta című könyvében, (Publication as a study is projected in Magyar Sion (új folyam 2.) 2009/1.)