Studii

Mihály Balázs
Propunere privind interpretarea procesului lui János Körmöczi. 159

János Pál
În slujba puterii comuniste. Activitățile de agent ale pastorului
Ferenc Sebe II. 214

Atelier

Sándor Kovács
Încercarea eșuată a înființării unei tipografii a lui Gergely Kozma și
János Körmöczi. 237

Varia

Elek Rezi
Întâlnirile episcopului unitarian József Ferencz cu împăratul Franz Joseph I
al Austriei, regele apostolic al Ungariei 258

Recenzie

Gábor Petneházi
Kees Teszelszky, *The Holy Crown and the Hungarian Estates. Constructing Early Modern Identity in the Kingdom of Hungary* (Refo500 Academic Studies 92). (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023) 271

Rezumate 279

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ABSTRACTS

Mihály Balázs

Interpreting the Case of János Körmöczi

This article explores two texts: an unpublished document by Unitarian bishop János Körmöczi (1763–1836) where he defends charges brought against him, and a related document of the reversal of charges against some of his students. Both documents are included in the article's appendix. The article presents the circumstances of the defence document, which has not yet been discussed in detail, and then analyses the bishop's defence. The article refutes the accusation that the bishop was a man of two religions by sketching the background of church history. It reveals that Körmöczi cultivated and kept alive a tradition in a manner that was completely unusual for the time, one that the pastors of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church were silenced after the 1638 Diet of Dés, and which most clergy were probably unaware of by the end of the 18th century. This makes Körmöczi a remarkable figure. He provided his students with readings that he considered useful. The article presents the careers of József Gedő (1778–1855), Gergely Kozma (1774–1849) and Mihály Kiss (1781–1837) as relevant analogies, who were able to make significant contributions to the modernization of their communities. The article shows that Körmöczi's defence is a very insightful and linguistically powerful paraphrase of certain details of Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Jerusalem's (1709–1789) uncompleted masterwork *Betrachtungen über die vornehmsten Wahrheiten der Religion (Reflections on the Noble Truths of Religion*). The article's conclusion emphasizes that in order to form a fuller picture of Körmöczi's œuvre, it is essential to compare the findings revealed here with his published works.

Keywords: 1638 Diet of Dés, man of two religions; Gedő, József (1778–1855); Jerusalem, Johann Friedrich Wilhelm (1709–1789); Kiss, Mihály (1781–1837); Körmöczi, János (1763–1836); Kozma, Gergely (1774–1849)

János Pál

In the Service of Communist Power: The Agent Activities of Pastor Ferenc Sebe II.

This article continues the investigation of the complex and controversial dual role of Ferenc Sebe (1915–2000), a Unitarian minister and senior church

official in communist Romania, who also served as a Securitate agent under the codenames "Alexa" and "Ambrus Géza" for nearly three decades. Drawing on archival documentation, the article explores Sebe's activities within the state security apparatus, and the implications of his collaboration for the Unitarian Church and its internal dynamics. It reflects on: the opportunities his recruitment opened up for the Securitate, which was struggling with a lack of information about the Unitarian Church, the degree to which he succeeded in infiltrating the innermost circles of the bishop's office, and the attitudes of its officials toward the system. According to Sebe's Securitate file, he performed excellently in exposing enemies. In recruiting him, the Securitate found an agent who helped them successfully accomplish several tasks at once: monitoring the innermost circles of the church leadership (the enemy), following the church's international relations, influencing domestic and, above all, foreign public opinion, and legitimizing the system. The analyses show that Sebe skillfully navigated the maze of power and was able to profit from the unrestrained service of the system; as an agent, he became a prominent figure in church life and enjoyed privileges (study trips abroad, official and tourist trips) that very few of his fellow clergymen were granted. In his case, we cannot speak of a victim role. His dossier paints a picture of a church leadership that was infiltrated by agents and lost its initiative and ability to act independently after Bishop Elek Kiss's (1888–1971) episcopate. All this was, of course, related to the fact that, unlike Elek Kiss, Lajos Kovács (1972–1994) took over the leadership of the church as an agent recruited through blackmail, in a committed position, having directly experienced the terror of the system. Criticism of the system at the level of church officials and believers never reached a critical mass, and there was no question of anti-communist actions or initiatives coming from the Unitarian Church.

Keywords: church leadership, clergy informants, communism, religious surveillance, Romania, Securitate, unitarians; Kiss, Elek (1888–1971), Kovács, Lajos (1972–1994), Sebe, Ferenc (1915–2000)

Sándor Kovács

Gergely Kozma and János Körmöczi Failed Printing House Attempt

This article examines a significant but ultimately unsuccessful attempt by the Transylvanian Unitarian Church to establish its own printing house in the early 19th century. The Unitarian community had been without a printing facility since losing their press during the Catholic restoration in 1716, forcing them to rely on external publishers for their theological and liturgical works at considerable expense.

In December 1812, Reverend Gergely Kozma (1774–1849) of Szentgerice proposed establishing a "book printing workshop" to newly elected Bishop János Körmöczi (1763–1836) and the Consistory. Kozma's detailed plan, supported by the Maros district clergy, outlined the urgent need for a press to publish important manuscript works, including theological treatises, prayer books, catechisms, and educational materials, that had remained unpublished due to the lack of printing facilities. The proposal gained momentum when Bishop Körmöczi, enthusiastic about the project, purchased high-quality type from Döbrentei Gábor in 1814 for 1,200 Rhine florins. With promises of financial support from benefactors totaling approximately 1,500 florins, the establishment of the printing house seemed imminent. However, the project encountered a legal obstacle when the Gubernium (Transylvania's provincial government) denied permission, citing Maria Theresa's (1717–1780) 1773 royal decree that prohibited the establishment of new printing houses without supreme authorization.

Despite multiple appeals between 1815–1817, arguing for equal rights with other denominations, the authorities consistently refused permission. The purchased type was stored in a college room dubbed "typographia" by students before eventually being sold, likely to the Catholic Lyceum Press. Based on manuscript sources, including Kozma's original proposal preserved in the *História* by Kozma János, this article illuminates the challenges faced by religious minorities in the Habsburg Empire regarding publishing rights and cultural autonomy. The failed attempt reflects broader patterns of denominational inequality and administrative restrictions that hindered the intellectual and cultural development of the Unitarian community well into the modern period.

Keywords: 19th century, Catholic Lyceum Press, Consistory, denominational inequality, Habsburg administration, printing history, religious publishing, Transylvania, Unitarian Church; Körmöczi, János (1763–1836); Kozma, Gergely (1763–1836); Maria Theresa's (1717–1780)

Elek Rezi

Meetings of Unitarian Bishop Ferencz József and Franz Joseph I, Emperor of Austria, Apostolic King of Hungary

This article presents, evaluates and draws conclusions about the meetings between the Unitarian Bishop Ferencz József (1876–1928) and Franz Joseph I (1830–1916), Emperor of Austria, Apostolic King of Hungary. They met five times in a spirit of mutual respect and appreciation.

The bishop highlighted the concerns, successes, and faithfulness of the Unitarian church, its schools, and Unitarian communities during their meetings.

The King received the speech of the honoree with thanks and appreciation and assured the bishop and the Unitarian Church of his support. The article proposes that their meetings will become valuable historical and cultural events.

Keywords: Austria, bishop, church, emperor, Hungary, meeting, moral values, nation, recognition, respect, school, society, state; Ferencz, József (1876–1928); Franz Joseph I (1830–1916)

Gábor Petneházi

The Crown That Remains Unknown

This article offers a review and critique of Kees Teszelszky's book, *The Holy Crown and the Hungarian Estates: Constructing Early Modern Identity in the Kingdom of Hungary*. It proposes that the book is characterized by unclear conceptual and historical frameworks, a fragmented and disproportionate structure, questionable sources, and missing contexts. It concludes that it remains an open question what identity (if any) the crown myth actually represented in early modern Hungary, and whether it might not be the case that we are simply talking about competing political representations, associated with, and embodied by, the crown.

Keywords: crown, Holy Crown of Hungary, Hungarian Estates, Hungary, Kingdom of Hungary; Teszelszky, Kees (1972–)